A CORPUS-BASED TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF IRONY AND SARCASM IN SCRIPTED DISCOURSE

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

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_____ (Signed)

_____ (Name of student)

To my late father,

in whose footsteps I'm following

Abstract

The elusive nature of irony and sarcasm, being the pragmatic concepts they are, is seized from the point of view of lexis and grammar. The thesis takes a corpus linguistic and textual analytic orientation. The idea is that, contrary to most previous research bringing out pragmatic aspects as essential in detecting irony and sarcasm, specific lexico-grammatical patterns may be just as good indicators of these phenomena. To test this hypothesis, a soap opera corpus is called in that is representative of spoken data; however, in a written format without intonational marking. The premise is that irony and sarcasm can be identified based on lexico-grammatical patterns. Whereas, irony boasts numerous theories and approaches both theoretical and experimental, sarcasm in its own right is a far more neglected area. The methodology involves the annotation of a tweet dataset for evaluative expressions (as defined by Thompson & Hunston, 2000) of which the most frequent ones are subjected to search in the soap opera corpus. This preprocessing phase involves fifteen keywords, of which five are verbs and ten are adjectives. Once a sample of five hundred examples is obtained for each keyword, they are filtered for ironic/sarcastic examples based on the notions of contrast (Colson & O'Brien, 2000b), reversal of evaluation (Partington, 2007), and conflict (Camp, 2012), which are adequate in cases where tone or facial gestures are not available. In the subsequent step, potentially irony and sarcasm-prone patterns are identified and more examples are generated based on these patterns. These are manually analyzed in terms of lexical and grammatical aspects often invoking corpus linguistic notions, such as semantic preference and semantic prosody. The results support the few studies that ventured to claim that irony and sarcasm research could benefit from considering the lexical properties involved. Certain patterns in themselves can point toward irony and sarcasm in the text as they have been conventionalized to a sufficient extent, while others need the aid of the context. While all keywords are equally prone to both irony and sarcasm, certain fixed patterns show preference to either one of them. Irony and sarcasm are distinguished along the lines of evaluation reversal advocated by Partington (2007). Whereas irony fits the proposed *good/bad* dichotomy, sarcasm cannot be described in such a diametric and clear-cut way. Sarcasm, namely, involves two meanings which might not be diametric opposites. Further on, the ill-intention and hostility attributed to sarcasm, which is missing in irony, prompted the introduction of a new term of art, *sarcastic prosody* to encapsulate all those cues found in the sarcastic remark and in its co-text that convey this ill-intention and hostility either through lexico-grammatical cues or a "virtual intonation" accompanying the pattern. *Prosody* here is meant as a derivative of its "original" sense in semantic prosody (Sinclair, 2003). The data analysis suggests that each word (and pattern) is best examined on its own merits; and that irony and sarcasm do show interesting differences in their manifestations depending on the word (and pattern) under consideration. The main contributions of the thesis are the employment of lexico-grammatical patterns in the analysis as well as the treatment of irony and sarcasm as discrete concepts.

Acknowledgement

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Where we begin

A quick overview of the state of the art shows us that in the time period between 1975 and 2016 altogether 93 articles have been published in linguistically-related scholarly journals or conference proceedings containing in their title *irony*, *sarcasm,* or both. These are only those articles that explicitly state their subject. Table 1 summarizes the tendency of these articles in terms of their being theoretically or empirically-oriented. What is immediately noticeable is the striking prevalence of irony-centeredness. Theorizing about irony gave way to application in the mid-nineties, whereas in the case of sarcasm there has virtually been no theory and (understandably) no application either, up until recently. After 2005, with the advent of computational linguistics, attempts have been made at the automation of sarcasm detection. This phenomenon should be highly suspicious on the grounds that it tries to put *something* into practice that has no established theoretical background at all. The last column of the table warrants a more detailed discussion. The one article published between 1975 and 1994 tries to incorporate sarcasm into an irony framework. The articles published between 1995 and 2004 talk about the concepts as separate phenomena except two, one that introduces the concept of *sarcastic irony* the raison d'être of which idea is worthy of discussion in its own right and the other which seems to use the two concepts as synonyms. As for the period between 2005 and 2015, apart from a computational study and a study on advertisements, the question of what exactly the relationship is between irony and sarcasm has apparently been put on hold. 2016 brought with it a computationally-oriented study (one of its kind), the goal of which was to empirically verify the fact that irony and sarcasm are distinct phenomena. The present thesis is an endeavor to both compensate for the void in research and add to the little we know about the distinct workings of irony and sarcasm. As regards its methodology, it takes the nowadays so widely acknowledged corpus linguistic direction to bring to the surface naturally-occurring examples of both irony and sarcasm. The extraction of examples is based on evaluation theory, while the analysis is based on existent irony identification criteria, expandable over sarcasm too. The analysis takes place on the level of lexis and grammar. As regards the terms used throughout the thesis: Both *irony* and *sarcasm* will be used simultaneously to highlight the underlying idea

of their constituting discrete concepts. However, since previous literature does not consistently uphold this assumption, whenever someone is cited or quoted, only the term preferred by the given researcher will be mentioned.

Table 1 Overview of irony and sarcasm studies in the past 40 years

Time period	Irony		Sarcasm	Both
1975-1994	Theory	13	0	1
	Application	4	4	0
1995-2004	Theory	7	1	0
	Application	19	3	5
2005-2016	Theory	2	2	0
	Application	12	19	3
Total		55	29	9

1.2 Why we begin

1.2.1 Hypothesis

There is a clear tendency in the literature (as well as perhaps in folk understanding) to treat irony and sarcasm as pragmatic concepts. Meaning is hidden, implied, underlying, to be deciphered, derived, and inferred but never overtly present in the words. The hypothesis stemmed from an initial curiosity concerning the question what if not all cues are available to identify irony and sarcasm. For example, in the case of a soap opera corpus that consists of spoken data; however, has been transcribed without the marking of paralinguistic and kinesic features that are so often linked to the detection of irony and sarcasm: Would there be another path to reliably identify irony and sarcasm in such texts? The dissertation follows in the footsteps of the few studies that consider the not exclusively pragmatic potential of the question. In other words, emphasis is placed on studies that are preoccupied with words, word combinations, and grammatical constructions that might point towards the presence of irony and sarcasm in a text that has all the properties typical of spoken language but is now available in written format. The assumption is that an approach focusing on the co-selection of lexis and grammar allows for analysis on a more concrete and tangible level. Being able to attach particular words and patterns to irony and sarcasm will have far-reaching consequences for computational studies and machine learning as well. The hypothesis, according to which irony and sarcasm can indeed be conveyed through specific words and patterns, entails the following research question: Is there an ironic

and sarcastic repertoire in the English language that is characterized by a distinctive vocabulary and grammatical patterns? Pinpointing lexico-grammatical features in figurative language is not a novel thought in itself. Due to Spitzbardt (1963), the lexico-grammatical repertoire of hyperbole in British and American English has already been identified and described. Hyperbole maintaining a close relationship with irony and sarcasm (see e.g. Roberts & Kreuz, 1994; Colston, 1997a; Colston & Keller, 1998; & Colston & O'Brien, 2000b) may easily have some overlaps with these notions in terms of lexico-grammatical features. Considered the founding father of corpus linguistics by many, Firth (1957) said that "you shall know a word by the company it keeps" (p. 179). The aim is to extend this idea to irony and sarcasm and show that irony and sarcasm can also be 'known' by the company they keep.

1.2.2 Motivation

I am well-aware that hypothesizing irony and sarcasm's embedment in the sentence construction and lexis may go against some established researchers' points of view, such as Sperber and Wilson's (1981) who categorically claim that "it is clear that the choice between literal and ironical interpretation must be based on information external to the utterance– contextual knowledge and other background assumptions– rather than the form or content of the utterance itself" (p. 301). Ever since the publication of their work, however, a number of sources have provided complete or partial support to pursue my hypothesis. As regards irony and sarcasm's manifesting in grammatical constructions, Alba Juez (1998) mentions ironic strategies which, although not stated explicitly, seem to be related to grammatical structure and syntax "independently of the words or expressions being used" (p. 11). Despite not representing academia, in a similar fashion, Rudnick and Anderson (1989) have a firm view on the role of irony in language: "irony is treated as an ever-incipient (but never realized) grammatical category like the future tense or the subjunctive mood […]" (p. 17). With regard to lexis, Kreuz and Caucci (2007) claim that "previous theory and research has largely ignored the potential role of lexical factors in the delivery and detection of sarcasm" (p. 3) but which may be a fruitful research direction as certain words and collocations may be indicative of sarcasm by themselves. They specifically claim that "sarcastic statements may be more formulaic than previously realized" (Kreuz & Caucci, 2007, p. 1). Liebrecht, Kunneman, and van den Bosch (2013) are even more concrete when they claim that specific intensifiers are relatively good predictors of

sarcasm in Dutch tweets, and they also add that positive words are considerably more frequent in sarcastic tweets than negative words. Their study being concerned with Dutch points toward the cross-cultural potentiality of the issue[1]. Partington, Duguid, and Taylor (2013) also note the frequent occurrence of adverbial intensifiers in the presence of explicit irony (i.e. the word *irony* and *ironic*). Moreover, both Veale and Hao (2010) as well as Reyes, Rosso, and Veale (2013) note that irony affects language in various aspects, such as pronunciation, lexical choice, syntactic structure, semantics, as well as conceptualization. I subscribe to this. Nevertheless, what is not the focus of their study is in what proportion these aspects influence the detection/recognition of irony. Not to mention that depending on the nature of the data, not all of the features may be present or available at all times. However, overall what is encouraging is that apparently, both irony and sarcasm have already been considered in terms of grammar and lexis; the only thing missing is a comprehensive study confirming these aspects. The present thesis is an endeavor to achieve this goal and show the raison d'être of the hypothesis proposed in 1.2.1.

1.2.3 Implications

The implications of such a treatise can be manifold. If results can indeed indicate that both irony and sarcasm have fixed manifestations in terms of particular lexico-grammatical patterns, it would entail the possibility of much more conscious exploitation of them. With a burgeoning number of computational linguistic attempts to teach a machine to recognize irony and sarcasm, the biggest challenge is the lack of tangible surface features associated with these phenomena (see Claridge, 2001). If the findings in this thesis can, at least in part, be utilized in computational linguistics, it would mean a breakthrough in the automatization process.

Further implications on a research level concern the research community who would benefit from the teasing apart of irony and sarcasm in a way that sarcasm could henceforth be studied in its own right. The field of sentiment analysis would definitely benefit as well from having specific patterns associated with highly subjective language use.

On a more general level, having an ironic and sarcastic repertoire may have influence on both writing and speaking styles inasmuch as more conscious choices could be made.

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[1] A more recent source on Dutch as well as French is Kunneman, Liebrecht, van Mulken, & van den Bosch's (2015) paper.

1.3 How we begin

Possibilities for the studying of irony and sarcasm are abundant. The present dissertation takes the road less traveled in the sense that it incorporates corpus analysis and text analysis apart from theoretical studies on irony and sarcasm. The methodology involves several steps: i) deciding on a representative enough corpus, ii) deciding on the extraction method of examples, iii) deciding on the irony criteria most suitable in identifying ironic instances and can also being extendable to sarcasm (as there is no sarcasm theory *per se* in the same sense that there is a variety of irony theories), iv) determining what lexico-grammatical patterns arise from the extracted examples, and v) proving the hypothesis out. A soap opera corpus has been chosen for the present purposes and the Antconc corpus analysis software (Anthony, 2014) was implemented for search purposes. The examination of existing irony theories brought to surface their common shortcoming of not being able to properly incorporate sarcasm; thus, features apparent in all prominent theories have been assembled and complemented with further criteria in order for them to be usable in the identification process. These working criteria were then expanded into a full-fledged identification method based on the analysis of the examples, making it corpus-driven to some extent. In the relevant sections, details will be provided on pilot studies and preliminary results that fine-tuned the identification strategy and led to promising results concerning all fifteen keywords that were subjected to the final data analysis.

1.4 Thesis organization

After this brief introduction of the whys and the hows of the thesis, an overview of the rest will be given. Chapter 2 is dedicated to the literature review and assessment divided into two subsections focusing on theory (2.1) and practice (2.2) separately. The former brings to light the purely linguistic aspects associated with irony and sarcasm (2.1.1, 2.1.2, and 2.1.3) with special emphasis on the distinguishing factors (2.1.4) and the several issues that inevitably come up when discussing differences. These include the trouble with defining the terms (2.1.4.1), what place sarcasm occupies in the figurative speech taxonomy (2.1.4.2), the role of the victim (2.1.4.3), the role of politeness (2.1.4.4), the role of humor (2.1.4.5), the role of empirical studies (2.1.4.6), and what the 'territorial' restrictions of irony and sarcasm are (2.1.4.7). What follows are some concluding remarks on the relative abundance of theories (2.1.5). The practical part (2.2) explores concrete subfields from a psychological (2.2.1), computational (2.2.2), and corpus

linguistic (2.2.3) angle. Chapter 3 elaborates on the methodology employed, starting with a description of the corpus (3.1) followed by a detailed account on the theoretical framework (3.2) that is divided into four subparts; 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 dealing with relevant notions, including evaluation, semantic preference, and semantic prosody; while 3.2.3 and 3.2.4 dealing with irony and sarcasm identification strategies both in general and in particular for this study. Chapter 4 is reserved for the research design, where in 4.1 a previously conducted study is semi-replicated. 4.2 is a report on the explicit manifestations of irony and sarcasm in the corpus and how their behavior can tell the two concepts apart. Three separate sections deal with the words and their lemmas: *irony* versus *sarcasm* in 4.2.1, *ironic* versus *sarcastic* in 4.2.2, and *ironically* versus *sarcastically* in 4.2.3. 4.2 as a whole serves as a precursor for what follows. 4.3 focuses on implicit manifestations of irony and sarcasm, including subparts to discuss the preprocessing part of the data in terms of source (4.3.1), the preprocessing in terms of extraction method (4.3.2), two pilot studies (4.3.3 and 4.3.4), and finally a full-scale study (4.3.5) that also serves as the prologue to the data analysis and discussion. Within 4.3.5, a brief subsection is given to all keywords in turn (4.3.5.1-4.3.5.14) with some final remarks given about the utilization of the data in the end (4.3.5.15). Chapter 5 is the part and parcel of the thesis which aims at demonstrating to what extend the hypothesis can be confirmed and what answers can be given to the research question. In an unusual manner fashion, the chapter is subdivided into 17 subsections, 15 of which are dedicated to a specific keyword and two (5.6 and 5.16) dedicated to a summary and discussion of the verbs and adjectives, respectively. Each keyword section is further compartmentalized into subheadings that represent the various patterns under scrutiny; there are altogether 27 patterns. In the first part of Chapter 6 (6.1), some previously introduced concepts are revisited, such as sarcastic prosody (6.1.1), conventionalized sarcasm (6.1.2), evaluation reversal (6.1.3), and the operational definitions of irony and sarcasm (6.1.4) and related to the findings, while the second part (6.2) wraps up the thesis by recapitulating the purpose, the method, the findings, and whether the hypothesis was proven. The subsections are dedicated to the limitations (6.2.1), the contributions made (6.2.2), and the future plans and vistas (6.2.3). The appendices and references are found at the very end.

Chapter 2: Previous studies

Philosophizing about irony and sarcasm started in Roman times and continues up until today with newer and newer facets involved in the discussion. The chapter is divided into two main sections, one devoted to theory (2.1), while the other one to application (2.2). The subsections in 2.1 will recapitulate the evolution of the literature concerning irony and sarcasm beginning with the ancient theories that laid the foundation for what I will refer to as modern-classic theories (2.1.1), then move on to names ineluctable when discussing the treatment of irony in the 20th century (2.1.2), and the most notable theories evolving from this treatment (2.1.3). The relationship between irony and sarcasm is discussed in 2.1.4 and a postscript is given in 2.1.5 concerning the relative abundance of irony theories. 2.2 comprises three subsections devoted to various applications, such as psycholinguistic (2.2.1), computational (2.2.2), and corpus linguistic (2.2.3).

2.1 Theoretical background

2.1.1 On the classic treatment and its modern variants

It is deemed redundant to go into too much detail as to what position irony occupied in the *old times* and how it was treated. The reason for this is that a cursory glance at irony studies can already tell us that the area of research has come a long way since Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Cicero's *De Oratore*, Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*, and Donatus' *Ars Grammatica* who treated irony (or *eironeia*) as a verbal strategy, more often referred to as a rhetorical figure[2]. Linguistic research (Myers Roy, 1981; Sperber & Wilson, 1981; & Kotthoff, 2003) often quotes these sources when discussing the origins of irony regardless of the fact that these preeminent public figures were putting forth their ideas in terms of rhetoric and philosophy. Even if it were not unreasonable to adapt these very same descriptions and directions to an area where the meaning of irony may be at variance with the rhetorical and philosophical interpretations, there are other factors preventing them from adaptation. Namely, these classic theories of irony are not concrete enough. The comic character Eiron, repeatedly outwitting a more boastful character, is all what irony meant in the beginning. This often took the form of understatement or what is today

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[2] A comprehensive summary of the classic treatment can be found in Muecke (1970).

considered the prototypical use of irony, a statement based on opposition. Even though research has since shown that there are indeed a number of different types of irony, some recent studies have returned to the notion of opposition and extended it in certain ways. Haverkate (1990) differentiates between opposition based on the negation of a proposition and opposition based on the contrary meaning of the predicate or one of its components (p. 83). Much in the same vein, Yamanashi (1998) makes a distinction between reversal and negation; his example being: "We admire those who are honest," which after reversal would be "We despise those who are honest"; and after negation "We do not admire those who are honest" (p. 273). The conclusion he reaches is that in order for irony to manifest, both the main and the relative clauses have to be reversed resulting in: "We despise those who are dishonest" (p. 273). Channell (2000), in the example "easy-going, right-on but brilliantly off-beat post-daisy age hip-hop," talks about pragmatic opposition between *right-on* and *brilliantly off-beat*. Kotthoff's (2003) approach covers not only propositional opposition but *evaluative opposition* which as it turns out gives new impetus to the archetypal irony (see section 3.2.1) as does Partington's (2007, 2011) corpus-based approach of opposing evaluative polarity. In sum, classic theories in themselves have a crucial role in informing us about the origins of irony; however, are, in their raw format, not adaptable to modern linguistic research and thus are in need of some enhancement.

2.1.2 On violation, echo, and pretense

The twentieth century brought about a wider array of irony research, which is hallmarked by some groundbreaking work. Grice's (1975) philosophical-logical treatment of irony, despite it being a small part of a generic discussion on conversation, has undoubtedly been the most influential description of irony in that it both laid the foundation for future theories and ever since its publication has been subjected to severe criticism. None the less, it is still the one theoretical account that no truly complete irony study can forgo. Due to the omnipotence of Grice, a general knowledge of his Cooperative Principle and related maxims is assumed and only those tenets that are closely linked with the present research will be expounded on. Grice lists irony as a form breaching the quality maxim of the cooperative principle, according to whose main tenet our contribution to a conversation should remain truthful. This translates into two sub-maxims: (i) do not say what you believe to be false, (ii) do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence (p. 46). In Grice's view, irony flouts the quality maxim in a way that the most

logical expectation for the audience would be to assume "[…] the contradictory [proposition] of the one he [the speaker] purports to be putting forward" (p. 53). Although Grice never claimed that this is the only possible expectation, since he has not elaborated on it further, this point has often since been taken up for criticism[3]. In the meantime, it has been shown that not only the flouting of the quality maxim can result in irony but the flouting of the other maxims as well (Alba Juez, 1995). A further flaw of Grice's treatment is its implicit presumption of a cooperating audience (or listener) for whom it is obvious that what has been said was not truthful, which cooperation as convenient as it may seem may not always be realized. Last but not least, the claim "saying the opposite of what we mean" cannot stand its ground against literally true ironic utterances, such as *That was a curb you just drove over* (cited in Myers Roy, 1981, p. 412) or *I love children who go to bed early* (in a situation where it is late and the children are still not in bed) (cited in Yus, 2000, p. 28)[4]. Moreover, such a claim operates along the dimension of trueness and falseness which inevitably dooms this theory as it excludes potential irony "caused" by inter alia questions or requests that are not truth-sensitive (*cf.* Leonard, 1959). All in all, in subsequent research, Grice's name is still associated with *the standard pragmatic theory* (Kumon-Nakamura, Glucksberg, & Brown, 1995) or alternatively *the traditional implicature model* (Camp, 2012), which designations indicate that Grice's name is without doubt inscribed into the "irony hall of fame".

Sperber and Wilson's (1981) amply quoted paper on irony being related to notions, such as use and mention (borrowed from analytic philosophy) and referred to as echoic mention in their paper, starts out by dismissing classic semantic theories of irony, followed by a criticism of Grice's (1975) pragmatic treatment of irony. Sperber and Wilson pick holes in both approaches along the same lines ultimately repudiating the claim that "what the speaker of an ironical utterance intends to get across is the opposite of what he has literally said" (p. 296). They take pride in their alternative proposal in which there is no mention of an utterance's figurative senses, there is neither semantic, nor pragmatic substitution mechanism involved[5], and it accommodates non-propositional irony as well (i.e. cases where no truth-sensitivity applies). An additional,

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[3] In Grice (1978), the issue of this contradictory meaning is addressed once again and complemented by the mention of a certain ironic tone. All in all, the essence of the argument is not altered: irony is still attributed to the fact that an utterance is taken in reverse (p. 53).

[4] For examples from natural discourse see Partington (2007) who calls this kind "true-seeming" or "verisimilar" irony.

[5] By this, they are referring to the senses involved in irony, contrasting the literal sense that carries an additional sense with the literal sense that is substituted by some other sense (p. 299).

crucial departure in their account is the claim that the ironic utterance is to express a certain attitude of the speaker. As a result, what irony means to Sperber and Wilson is, on the one hand, the speaker's mentioning of a proposition in a way that makes it obvious that the speaker thinks the proposition to be "ludicrously false, inappropriate, or irrelevant" (p. 308); and, on the other hand, the hearer's recognizing the *mention* aspect of the proposition as well as the speaker's attitude towards it. An apparent shortcoming of the echoic mention theory is the definition and scope of the echoic mentions involved (see also Garmendia, 2010 on this point). Sperber and Wilson assert that echoic mentions can be "of many different degrees and types" (p. 308) which makes their theory rather vague in an "anything goes" sort of way. Moreover, according to the echoic mention theory, "there are no particular victims when the thoughts echoed are universally shared ideas, norms, hopes, or expectations […]" (Sperber, 1984, p. 134). The few studies that deal with the difference between irony and sarcasm (Kreuz & Glucksberg, 1989; & Lee & Katz, 1998), published since Sperber and Wilson's original article, throw an obvious obstacle in the way of the echoic mention account as they attribute the difference between irony and sarcasm to the presence or absence of a victim. It is thus explicable why sarcasm, targeted at a specific victim, cannot be included in the echoic mention account. In addition, Seto (1998) proposed the existence of so-called echo-markers, in the form of certain words, such as *definitely*, *really*, or *indeed*, which are irony-prone depending on their position in the sentence (p. 241). Their denomination, i.e. echo-marker, comes from their signaling this echo that, according to Sperber and Wilson's (1981) original theory, inevitably points towards irony. Thus, in a simplistic equation this can be depicted as:

Echo-marker + Specific position in S = Irony

On the other hand, there is mention of "ironically specialized words" (Seto, 1998, p. 247), such as *lot*, *fine*, or *lovely*. Regrettably, Seto does not go into further explanation as to what makes these words ironically specialized[6]; neither does he utilize any corpus to verify his hypothesis. The question of echo-markers also remains hanging in the air especially after he questions whether all ironies involve echoes. However, the idea of particular words in particular positions implying irony foreshadows the hypothesis of the present thesis to some extent (see section 1.2.1 as well as chapter 5).

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[6] *Fine* has made it into the dictionaries in a specific construction, i.e. *a fine friend you are*; however, the same cannot be claimed about *lot* or *lovely*.

Clark and Gerrig (1984) published their rebuttal a few years after Sperber and Wilson (1981) devised their theory, and ever since the two proposals have routinely been compared and contrasted to each other. Clark and Gerrig return to Grice's (1975) ideas and pick up on the use-mention distinction Sperber and Wilson (1981) employed to highlight why it cannot appropriately account for irony. They claim that Grice never really assumed that the speaker is *using* a proposition to be ironic; rather the speaker is *pretending to use* a proposition to be ironic, which then constitutes the cornerstone of their pretense theory. They self-confidently claim that their theory covers all ironic mentions as well as ironic cases that could not be interpreted via the echoic mention theory. Their pretense theory assumes a speaker who is pretending to be an "unseeing or injudicious" (p. 122) person talking to the listener, and there is a third party involved too, that is the audience. The goal is to ensure that the audience identifies the pretense, which, by extension would mean that they also identify the underlying attitude that is either directed against the injudicious speaker (i.e. the speaker the ironist is pretending to be), or the audience. Their assertion that "in the pretense theory, ironists do not tell their listeners they are making a pretense but let them discover it for themselves" (p. 125) raises the question whether the echoic mention theory (or any previous theory for that matter) states otherwise. Clark and Gerrig refer back to Grice (1978) who warned that announcing the pretense spoils the effect of irony (p. 54). In the light of subsequent research, it is clear now that the announcement of irony corresponds to what has been referred to as explicit irony by many (e.g. Barbe, 1993, 1995; & Partington, Duguid, & Taylor, 2013). Explicit irony does not automatically entail that the effect is spoilt, but it certainly implies another kind of irony that is related to a perceived situation (see Lucariello, 1994 for situational irony). What helps the audience interpret the irony, in Clark & Gerrig's view, is mutual beliefs, knowledge, and suppositions between the speaker and their audience, which they call common ground (p. 124). They believe that there are cases that cannot be explained via echo, but instead of laying the blame on the lack of previous reference points that could be echoed, they explain it via the lack of common ground between the interlocutors.

What is characteristic of the theories of Grice (1975, 1978) and Sperber and Wilson (1981) is that neither theory considers the interactional nature of irony but treat the ironic utterance in and of itself. Clark and Gerrig (1984) do encapsulate the interactional nature to some extent when elaborating on the participants; however, are not preoccupied with the response that may be given to an ironic remark. Moreover, a conspicuous lack of treating sarcasm is characteristic in

the abovementioned approaches in general[7]. This may be attributable to the unspoken tradition of either treating sarcasm under the heading of the umbrella term irony, or of using it as a near synonym of irony (see section 2.1.4). On a final note, what makes all these modern-classic theories inapplicable in the present study is their focusing on a very restricted kind of discourse (i.e. where at least two participants acquainted with each other are present engaging in a conversation about topics familiar to all of them), which prevents them to be used with any other kind of data.

2.1.3 Offshoots

Having said that, Grice (1975, 1978), Sperber and Wilson (1981), and Clark and Gerrig (1984) evidently had an ineffaceable influence on how irony research would evolve. Evidence for this can be seen in the numerous theoretical offshoots of their groundwork. Kreuz and Glucksberg (1989) devised the echoic reminder theory of verbal irony[8] that places particular emphasis on Sperber and Wilson's (1981) idea of past reference points that may be echoed in an ironic remark. Kreuz and Glucksberg draw a distinction between explicit and implicit antecedent state of affairs (p. 374). Their hypothesis is that "explicit antecedents should be much more important for understanding negative sarcastic remarks than for understanding positive sarcastic remarks" (p. 376). What they consider negative sarcastic remark is an ostensible positive utterance with an underlying critical attitude; whereas a negative sarcastic remark would be the much less expected ostensible negative utterance with an underlying appreciation, praise, etc.[9] A specific victim whose behavior can be ironically criticized would make for an explicit antecedent in a negative sarcastic remark. In contrast, the nonexistence of a specific victim would not be comprehensible (i.e. would not imply sarcasm very "straightforwardly"). They further claim that Sperber and Wilson's (1981) echoic mention can be subsumed under reminders in general as a special case where "allusions to prior occurrences or state of affairs" (p. 375) are made. In their conclusion they highlight the superiority of their echoic reminder theory to both the echoic mention theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1981) and the pretense theory (Clark & Gerrig, 1984) in that it is applicable to cases where neither mention, nor pretense is to be found. The confusion that

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[7] Sperber & Wilson (1981) very briefly raise the issue in relation to predicting the victim of irony through mention; however, no further details are given.
[8] Although their theory is meant to explain verbal irony, they talk about sarcasm throughout their article.
[9] The apparent asymmetry in the use of irony is explained by the Pollyanna Principle (see Boucher & Osgood, 1969) even if the concept is not explicitly spelled out thus.

their article evokes is based on their taking irony theories to explain what they designate as sarcastic. Not only do they provide insufficient justification for doing so, they also fail to explain why the term *sarcastic irony* is favored.

Kumon-Nakamura et al. (1995) further improved the existing theories. What is unique in their allusional pretense theory of discourse irony is that it brings together elements of the echoic mention theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1981), the pretense theory (Clark & Gerrig, 1984), as well as speech act theory (Austin, 1962; & Searle, 1969, 1979). They coin the term *discourse irony*, which they claim has a wider scope than *verbal irony*. The authors give clear guidelines as to what counts as ironic and argue against the echoic mention theory and the pretense theory covering all cases of irony in themselves. *Allusion* takes the place of *echoic mention* and it is proposed that "a necessary property of discourse irony is an allusion to some prediction, expectation, preference, or norm that has been violated" (Kumon-Nakamura et al., 1995, p. 5). The second tenet of their theory touches upon speech acts and goes as follows: "all ironically intended utterances involve *pragmatic insincerity*, in that they violate one or more of the felicity conditions for well-formed speech acts" (p. 5, original emphasis). Pragmatic insincerity presupposes intentionality and a breaching of one or more felicity conditions, which occurs when a speaker asks a rhetorical question, for instance, where no answer is sought. Well-formed speech that reckons with felicity conditions would only allow a question to be asked if an answer is desired. Pragmatic insincerity neatly encompasses Grice's (1975) four maxims. The allusional pretense theory has a wider scope than co-theories in the sense that it includes instances where truth is not an applicable factor. "Such utterance types are neither true nor false, but they can be sincere or insincere" (Kumon-Nakamura et al., 1995, p. 5). This idea seems to gain empirical justification in the experiments conducted by the authors, in which the sample material consisted of ironic cases from four speech act types (assertives, directives, commissives, and expressives). The expectation was that since assertives is the category manifesting the most typical cases of irony (operating on the true-false dimension), thus being the ones most often examined in research, they would be rated as most ironic. This hypothesis was proven wrong, and it turned out that expressives[10] made for more salient ironic utterances. What this entails is that apparently laypeople are "aware" that irony is not restricted to assertives; i.e. it is not restricted to the true-

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[10] Expressives are characterized by the direct conveyance of feelings, such as in "Thank you for your concern" addressed to someone who does not show any concern (Kumon-Nakamura et al., 1995, p. 6).

false dimension. Kumon-Nakamura et al. (1995) are thus right to claim that sincerity and insincerity are more inclusive notions. What gives further credit to this theory is the positive resonance it created in the literature (see, e.g. Camp, 2012). A final remark on the offshoots of traditional accounts would include a thumbs-up for their throwing sarcasm into the mix. While, Kreuz and Glucksberg (1989) use the term interchangeably with irony, Kumon-Nakamura et al. (1995) delineate possible differences between irony and sarcasm, which in part reflects the etymology of the two words. That is, irony means dissimulation, assumed ignorance, whereas sarcasm literally means "to strip off the flesh" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2001). This brings us to the question of definitions and delineations and how they evolved through research, which will be elaborated on in the next section.

2.1.4 Irony versus Sarcasm

Both the introductory paragraphs in Chapter 2 as well as Chapter 1 adumbrated the current state and perplexing kinship of irony and sarcasm which apparently cannot be amended so easily. An attempt to do so would have to touch upon issues, such as their definition, their position relative to each other and other figurative devices, the question of a victim, how concepts like humor or politeness come into the picture, and the contribution of relevant empirical studies. The subparts of this section will give more details of these factors. It is a combination of past reviews on and some theorizing about this intricate relationship existing between irony and sarcasm.

2.1.4.1 Defining or not defining

By the time, this dissertation has been put into writing, the conclusion has been drawn that endeavoring to present an all-inclusive, universal, and distinct enough definition for both irony and sarcasm would not be productive. As Camp (2012) so adequately enunciated it: "merely imposing different labels does nothing to elucidate how the various phenomena actually work, and threatens to distract us from a close examination of their similarities and differences" (p. 604). However, in a linguistic world abundant in labels and definitions, a further reason is that depending on the discipline we are focusing on, the definitions will necessarily vary in order to include all that is central to that particular field. Hence, a pragmatic definition of irony, for example, phrased by Sperber and Wilson (1998) will highlight its echoic use and critical attitude. A definition in computational linguistics, on the other hand, will emphasize the issue of polarity

(e.g. Davidov, Tsur, & Rappaport, 2010; & González-Ibáñez, Muresan, & Wacholder, 2011). Not to mention that depending on what level a researcher wishes to approach these phenomena, (word-level, sentence-level, or context-level, among others), it will also affect the defining process. A further reason was emphasized by Barbe (1995), and although it has been written more than twenty years ago, with the advancement of technology, it is more valid today than ever: "language change […] entails a change in the understanding of linguistic concepts, including the concept of irony, and thus renders many definitions dated" (p. 9). Thus, effort will be made to pinpoint the distinguishing features between irony and sarcasm with the help of a corpus without imposing unnecessary restrictions by trying to provide a comprehensive definition for them. As Reyes et al. (2013) notes: "one does not always need to understand the concept of irony to understand the use of irony" (p. 258), which statement can be applied to sarcasm as well.

2.1.4.2 Where does sarcasm belong

Sarcasm can be regarded as a special commodity when talking about it independently of irony as up to this date it has mainly constituted a fragment of irony studies. Even though undeniably related to each other, irony and sarcasm are not necessarily synonymous terms. Already their etymology suggests different spectrums as was pointed out at the end of section 2.1.3. The evident dissimilarity has become gradually less evident throughout history and as far as contemporary research is concerned, it is always admirable when researchers lean towards either one of the terms, i.e. irony or sarcasm, and use this one term consistently throughout the study instead of lumping them together and using them interchangeably without justifying their doing so. Justification is crucial because, regardless of the issue not having been resolved yet, some papers (e.g. Kreuz & Glucksberg, 1989; Lee & Katz, 1998; & Camp, 2012) do attempt to enumerate the potentially distinguishing features, which implies that consideration is indeed given to the problem. Apart from the few publications preoccupied with the differences, studies often treat sarcasm as a subcategory of irony (see e.g. Barbe, 1995; Colston & O'Brien, 2000a; Colston & O'Brien, 2000b; Leggitt & Gibbs, 2000; Recchia, Howe, Hildy, Ross, & Alexander, 2010; & Bowes & Katz, 2011)[11]. When doing this, they often mention sarcasm together with

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[11] One paper was found that, interestingly enough, sees sarcasm as the more salient of the two terms and thus could cover all forms of irony. Details can be found in Claridge (2001).

other figurative language uses, such as understatement, overstatement, and rhetorical question. Nevertheless, there are good reasons that make this a stillborn classification. Firstly, the one rule about taxonomies is that they consist of a hypernym and several hyponyms. The hypernym in the irony taxonomy would be irony itself making up the general category. As soon as it is claimed that irony is the hypernym under which all other abovementioned rhetorical devices belong (i.e. they are its hyponyms), it is, by extension, asserted that all hyponyms share the properties of the hypernym and they do this at all times. The problem arises when it turns out that not each and every overstatement (e.g. *I'm starving*), understatement (e.g. *It is a bit cold today* when the temperature is below zero), and rhetorical question (e.g. *To be or not to be?*) necessarily implies ironic usage. Whether each and every instance of sarcasm can be considered ironic as well is also questionable[12]. What is clear is that treating sarcasm, understatement, overstatement, and rhetorical question as co-hyponyms is misleading.

An alternative way of approaching the issue would be thinking about these concepts in terms of degrees that can be depicted on a scale[13]. It is one thing to place these concepts on the scale; however, what is even more probable is that all individual instances of these rhetorical devices would represent different degrees. Rodríguez Rosique (2013), although concerned with Spanish, believes that it is the specific word that determines where that word falls on a scale. Her idea chimes in with that of Holdcroft's (1983) who claimed that an ironical utterance, such as "this is F" can be interpreted within a range of "this is not an F", "this is not much of an F", and "this is overdone as an F" (p. 496–497) (also indicating the possibility to exploit other figurative devices for ironic use). With regard to irony and sarcasm, it is not far-fetched to assume that neither is every instance of irony ironic to the same extent, nor every instance of sarcasm sarcastic to exactly the same extent. Culpeper (2011) also believes that certain words (e.g. taboo words or

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[12] Littman and Mey (1991) provide an example that they claim to be sarcastic but not ironic. A big boy addressing a small child: "You think you're so big, eh? Well, big guys catch big blows, so take this, … and this, …" (p. 148). The term *sarcastic* describing the example which is centered on physical attack, thus a situation, instead of verbal attack, may not be to most fortunate choice as sarcasm is confined to the verbal realm. Simply describing the episode as malicious or mischievous may be more appropriate in this case.

[13] Kreuz and Glucksberg (1989) present a scale to their experimental subjects to rate the sarcasm degree of their examples. Aguilera (2009) positions irony and sarcasm on the two extremes of a continuum based on their relation with politeness as understood by Brown and Levinson (1987). A scalar approach was introduced by Colston and O'Brien (2000a) to argue for verbal irony and understatement making use of the same dimension of contrast. The idea of an evaluative scale can also be found in Camp (2012). Reyes et al. (2013), perhaps unwittingly, hint at irony's scalar nature when they note that "we encounter [irony] every day in a variety of guises and with varying degrees of obviousness" (p. 243).

modifiers) help in placing an offensive formula on a scale[14]. Examples of irony and sarcasm would certainly represent various intensities. According to Bowers (1963), intensity refers to the "quality of language which indicates the degree to which the speaker's attitude toward a concept deviates from neutrality" (p. 345). Once *intensity* is transferred to a linguistic environment and thought about in terms of irony and sarcasm studies interesting parallels arise. *Evaluation* which enjoys widespread popularity in the latter area shows some overlaps with *intensity* in the sense that evaluation is also meant to indicate the attitude that one has, and by definition this implies a certain subjectivity (i.e. deviating from neutrality). Interestingly enough, as often as evaluation (alternatively attitude or stance) is given prominence in irony and sarcasm theories (i.e. practically in all modern theories), no guidance is offered as to how to work out this evaluation. This is one of the key points where irony and sarcasm research can benefit from evaluation theory (see the edited volume by Hunston and Thompson, 2000). The issue, as it is making up the core part of the empirical section of the thesis, will be revisited in more detail in Chapter 3.

2.1.4.3 The issue of the victim

Haiman (1997) is often quoted in relation to sarcasm; however, his providing a definition for only sarcasm is by no means indicative of his idea of what irony might be, on which subject he is silent. He says that "not all sarcasm involves hostility toward one's actual interlocutor: the target may be the "conventional wisdom" or an absent parodied speaker, and this target may be the straight, sexist, or racist bigot" (Haiman, 1997, p. 23). His mentioning of *conventional wisdom* is reminiscent of Sperber & Wilson's (1981) original proposal, according to which irony may echo social norms, popular wisdom, thoughts universal to people, etc. Upholding the idea that sarcasm is a more hurtful, more stinging form of language (based on its etymology), it begs the question if conventional wisdom (and other non-human references for that matter) are "suitable" enough targets for this 'sting.' One distinguishing feature of irony and sarcasm seems to be that while irony can target both animate and inanimate agents, sarcasm can target exclusively human agents. Haiman's claim that "the ostensible message in cases of sarcasm is invariably positive" (p. 23) awaits verification as it is not clear if what is emphasized here is that contrasted with irony, sarcasm is *always* embedded in a positive "coating" not allowing for the theoretically possible

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[14] Culpeper (2011) is primarily concerned with impoliteness formulae; which, however, can easily be seen to have an intuitive connection with sarcasm.

although much less common negative ostensible message (see Sperber & Wilson, 1981; Clark & Gerrig, 1984, Kreuz & Link, 2002; & Attardo, 2013 for the asymmetry prevalent in irony). Lee and Katz' (1998) article serves as a glimpse of hope in the literature. They employ the concept of ridicule to empirically point out the difference between irony and sarcasm, the theoretical underpinnings of which had been laid down by Kreuz and Glucksberg (1989) previously discussed (see section 2.1.3). Lee and Katz expected a greater correlation between ridicule and sarcasm than between ridicule and irony. Their experiment was quite comprehensive in the sense of employing multiple variables, such as identity of the victim (self vs other) and prediction of outcome (correct vs incorrect). In their conclusion they assert that "a sarcastic utterance brings to mind the expectation of a specific person who is identified by that expectation, whereas irony brings to mind the collective expectations of numerous people" (p. 10). This conclusion is again evocative of sarcasm being directed at a certain person, whereas irony being not. At last, Kumon-Nakamura et al.'s (1995) viewpoint will be mentioned and taken as a preliminary differentiating criterion between irony and sarcasm even though it has the admitted purpose of only differentiating between the examples they analyze in their study. Sarcastic irony (i.e. sarcasm) expresses a negative attitude but is also meant to insult and hurt the victim; whereas nonsarcastic irony (i.e. irony) expresses either positive or negative attitude but without the intention of insulting or hurting anyone in particular (p. 4n). The adaptation method of this heuristic to the corpus data will be discussed in Chapter 5.

2.1.4.4 The issue of politeness

Barbe (1995) attempts to draw a distinction between the two concepts emphasizing the politeness strategies at work: "Instances of sarcasm constitute a face-threatening action, whereas irony is face-saving criticism" (p. 28). She further elaborates on the possible differences (not failing to claim that there are overlaps):

> (i) [Sarcasm] is more personal, (ii) its sarcastic potential is immediately obvious to all participants in a situation, i.e., shared experience and knowledge is not a necessary factor, (iii) […], the utterance still has a face-saving capacity, but only for the hearer and not for the speaker. That is, a hearer can decide to ignore the sarcasm. (p. 28)

The first observation about sarcasm being more personal than irony falls in line with experimental studies showing that sarcasm targets a person, as opposed to irony that can target

inanimate things as well (see section 2.1.4.3). The third observation does not seem to draw a clear line between irony and sarcasm as irony can also be ignored by the hearer. The fact that Barbe (1995) eventually sides with the camp that put sarcasm in the irony set, annuls her previous attempts at delineating the differences, and her conclusion entails that all sarcasms are necessarily ironic too.

2.1.4.5 The issue of humor

Tannen (1984), in her widely influential book, tackles the difference between sarcasm and irony from the point of view of humor by postulating that the intent in sarcasm is not humorous and often hostile, whereas irony may elicit a smile or a chuckle (p. 163). Fifteen years later, in his experimental study, Gibbs (2000) equates irony with jocular statements (i.e. their purpose is most frequently related to eliciting humor) and claims that sarcasm is more critical and mocking of others (p. 23). As the present thesis is not directly preoccupied with humor, it would go beyond the scope of it to further involve humor in the discussion. There is no lack of studies examining the humorous potential of irony and sarcasm, the journal *Humor* being an especially rich source for those interested.

2.1.4.6 Empirical studies

Creusere (2000), drawing on earlier studies (Andrews, Rosenblatt, Malkus, Gardner, & Winner, 1986; & Happé, 1993) notes that with regard to the acquisition of nonliteral language forms, sarcasm precedes irony. This observation implies that children, even if unwittingly, can and do make a distinction between the two concepts. It may be the case that the aforementioned humorous intention (or the lack of it) is what children pick up on. Alternatively, the reason for perceiving a difference may be sought in the identity of the victim. A child being the apparent target of sarcasm has arguably a more palpable effect on him/her than if he/she hears an ironic remark targeted at an inanimate entity or someone unknown to the child. Kreuz (2000) draws attention to the fact that the distinction is most conspicuous when theoretical papers and experimental studies are being compared. What this implies is that while it may be challenging to grasp the differences from an academic and research point of view, laypeople (i.e. participants in an experiment) do intuitively distinguish between the two concepts. Apparently, this is contradictory to what Kreuz, Kassler, Coppenrath, & McLain Allen (1999) found, namely that

experimental subjects equated sarcasm with verbal irony. However, when discussing their results it is revealed that "subjects found sarcastic statements to be less acceptable than ironic statements" (p. 1693), implying that there is indeed a perceived difference. Kreuz (2000) further claims that the discourse goals take precedence over the rhetorical labels (i.e. *irony* and *sarcasm*), thus the distinguishing properties might best be observable via their respective discourse goals. It is unfortunate that in the subsequent discussion no mention is made of the discourse goals of sarcasm but exclusively irony. It is possible that the discourse goals of these two phenomena overlap to some extent and only display differences in intensity or degree. Rockwell's (2005) treatment of sarcasm is not more convincing either. The experimental results she obtained, namely that the most common emotion associated with sarcasm is happiness, raise some suspicion. It is noteworthy that subjects were given a list of emotions (happiness, fear, anger, annoyance, contempt, and other) to choose the one they attached to sarcasm (i.e. to the speaker uttering the sarcastic remark) instead of being given free choice. Upon double-checking the coding method, it becomes apparent why this study cannot possibly show a genuine picture of neither sarcasm, nor irony; "coders were blind to the focus of the research project– sarcasm" (Rockwell, 2005, p. 114). In clear opposition stands Leggitt and Gibbs' (2000) findings which show that speakers were more often prompted to use sarcasm by anger, irritation, and scorn (p. 12). The mentioning of happiness is nowhere to be found in their account. It is important to note here that Rockwell's (2005) "subjects" were talk show participants, and the analysis took place by playing taped material, whereas Leggitt and Gibbs (2000) were employing undergraduate students in their studies. The latter authors remark in their conclusion that "the sarcastic speaker might experience an uncontrolled 'temper tantrum' at times, but also might pretend to have a temper tantrum for an effect" (p. 20). This assertion seems to draw the two studies somewhat closer to each other on the grounds that real temper tantrums might indeed entail negative feelings, while a simulated temper tantrum can, in theory, be related to positive feelings, such as happiness.

2.1.4.7 Marking the territory

Fortunately, an apparent unanimity prevails in the research community regarding the question of irony and sarcasm's operational domain. Whereas irony boasts a number of forms (verbal, situational, dramatic, etc.), sarcasm is restricted to the verbal realm (i.e. *situational* or

dramatic sarcasm is nonexistent). Littman and Mey (1991) say "while we can perceive a situation as ironic, sarcasm cannot exist independently of the communication situation, without its speakers, listeners, and utterances" (p. 148). In other words, whereas the expression *how ironic is it that…* is feasible, *how sarcastic is it that...* is not. This seems to be one solid point in the literature on which we can rely and that can easily be tested in a corpus study (see section 4.2). All in all, there exist a number of modest claims with regard to what distinguishes sarcasm from irony; nevertheless, there has not been a systematic corpus-based study conducted up to this point that would reveal how these distinguishing features manifest in naturally occurring discourse on a lexico-grammatical level. The empirical part of the thesis aims at filling this void.

2.1.5 Note on the relative abundance of irony theories

The question why the field of irony studies seems to provide a fruitful substratum for newer and newer theories and approaches often disregarding previous ones is a fascinating one. The exposure to a large amount of naturally-occurring examples may shed some light on the reasons. When looking at individual examples in any corpus and trying to delineate as objectively as possible what it is exactly that makes them ironic or sarcastic, it seems that there are as many ways of doing it as there are examples. With certain ironic/sarcastic remarks, it may be sufficient to detect the obvious underlying opposition in them (perhaps even without any context) to know that the ostensible message does not correspond to the message intended to be conveyed. Whereas, in other cases it may be necessary to search for clues in the wider context, find incongruity in the text because there is no overt opposition involved (as in the case of literal remarks that are meant ironically/sarcastically). Yet other cases may warrant the search for pretense or echo or the flouting of a maxim to make sure that it is indeed irony/sarcasm that we have at hand. Barbe (1995) voices the issue in a similar fashion: "ironic meaning can be described as the opposition, negation, or contradiction of the sentence meaning" (p. 17). The various theories "out there" have stemmed from the same desire; namely to be able to account for the particular examples discussed in connection with the theory (Burgers, van Mulken, & Schellens, 2011 come to a similar conclusion). It seems that the issue has not yet been tackled at its roots. Leaving the pragmatic realm behind and examining the lexico-grammatical features may bring us closer to a more widely applicable irony and sarcasm theory.

2.2 Theory in practice

2.2.1 Experimental studies

Experimental studies are relevant if for no other reason than to represent an opposing pole to what this dissertation is aimed at proving as well as introducing paralinguistics and kinesics to the discussion. In certain cases, although a given study started out with a hypothesis that is in diametrical opposition to the one this dissertation is focused on, in the end that hypothesis was disproved lending some support to the hypothesis we are concerned with. An example of this sort would be the study conducted by Winner, Windmueller, Rosenblatt, Bosco, Best, & Gardner (1987) where the authors placed special emphasis on the intonation and facial gestures concomitant to sarcasm[15]; however, since the experiment did not make use of facial expressions at all and intonation was not shown to facilitate understanding, the idea that sarcasm was dependent on these cues had to be dismissed. Kreuz and Roberts (1995) claimed that irony is special in the sense that it is the only nonliteral use of language that is associated with a certain tone of voice (unlike e.g. idioms or metaphors). This does sound reasonable. Nevertheless, asserting that there exists an ironic tone of voice and claiming that this tone of voice is indispensable in recognizing irony is assuming a cause and effect relationship where none might be. Bryant and Fox Tree (2002) preoccupied with the interrelation between acoustics and context in inferring irony begin their report with the following example: *That's certainly a good idea!* (p. 99), which they propose to be either a compliment or an insult. They then pose the question what determines whether we take this remark as a compliment or an insult: is it the way it is uttered (i.e. acoustics) or what preceded it (i.e. context)? Unless this remark is at least somewhat conventionalized (in which case the concomitant intonation would arguably be conventionalized with it), it is the context that comes out as the more superior factor as the intonation with which we utter the remark depends on the very context it is uttered in. Rockwell's (2007) reviewing of the literature in her article preoccupied with solely the vocal features accompanying sarcasm says it all: "findings have been contradictory, particularly with regard to vocal cues" (p. 362). She goes on listing particular vocal cues and providing references with conflicting conclusions (i.e. sarcastic speakers use a lower pitch versus sarcastic speakers use a higher pitch, monotone

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[15] Winner et al. (1987) use the term sarcasm in their paper, although their definition corresponds to the traditional, Aristotelian definition of irony that is based on mere opposition.

or "flattened" pitch range versus wide pitch range with exaggerated pitch changes, shorter pauses in sarcasm versus longer pauses in sarcasm, etc.). Of course, the fact that there is precious little with regard to vocal features in sarcasm the literature agrees on, does not necessarily mean that the whole idea needs to be dismissed. Rockwell believes the contradictory results are due to the diverse methodologies used in the studies. Another possibility for such discrepancies may be that sarcasm is illegitimately treated as a phenomenon having its own vocal features when it may just as well be that the emotions driving a sarcastic remark are what are endowed with particular vocal features, such as anger or contempt. Murray and Arnott (1993) show how these two emotions 'come with' their own set of vocal characteristics; thus, depending on what the emotional drive behind a sarcastic remark is, the vocal cues of sarcasm may show different acoustic patterns. The potentiality to search for cues of sarcasm in other areas in the meantime, such as lexis and grammar seems justified. In a recent article, Woodland and Voyer (2011) are concerned with the interrelationship of context and tone of voice (*cf.* Capelli, Nakagawa, & Madden, 1990) and strive to answer the question to what extent prosody and context interact or take precedence over each other in the recognition of sarcasm. It is confusing why the authors felt the need to approach the problem once again as they themselves are readily admitting that previous literature on the topic has brought out context as the superior component; and they are not proposing a disparate hypothesis either. They, however, find that it is both constituents (i.e. tone of voice and context) that play a role, and most probably other factors beyond these as well.

On a different note, the abovementioned studies all employ artificially constructed examples, be it a single utterance or contextualized vignettes (in which latter case it is usually also a single utterance that is under investigation thereby neglecting the interactional aspects of irony and sarcasm). There are crucial drawbacks to this, namely that these examples inevitably lack a quantitative nature that is indispensable for being able to detect certain patterns. Rarely is it explained in these, otherwise valuable studies, what guidelines have been employed while devising the examples. One might argue that psycholinguistic studies do not aim at performing textual analysis; however, their hypotheses often involve questions that would warrant the use of larger data and naturally-occurring conversations, i.e. all studies that are concerned with how context influences the recognition or irony and sarcasm (see e.g. Capelli et al, 1990; & Woodland & Voyer, 2011). Unless these studies are replicated, we may never know if the same results would be obtained with the utilization of larger corpus data. Rockwell (2007) aptly

summarizes the challenge studies searching for vocal cues of sarcasm in naturally occurring conversation face: "speakers may sound sarcastic but not intend to be sarcastic or, contrarily, speakers may not sound sarcastic but intend to be sarcastic" (p. 363).

2.2.2 Computational linguistic approaches

The relatively recent breakthrough of computational linguistic treatment of irony and sarcasm holds much promise. A number of studies have been published, and it is worth mentioning some of their results. Littman and Mey's (1991) computational model of irony is to be considered the seminal work in this area. Their central question is whether existing theories could be applicable in a computer program concerned with irony. Three tasks are listed as essential: distinguishing irony from nonirony, describing the reasons for a situation being ironic or nonironic, and generating descriptions of ironic situations (p. 131). These concerns remain unresolved problems still today when computational linguistic approaches to irony and sarcasm have been more and more widespread. The authors recognize the importance of context and also assert that if ironic language is used it must have been preceded by an ironic situation, by which they mean the surrounding context. Moreover, they pose one of the crucial questions in terms of the differentiation of irony from sarcasm, namely whether this difference is of degree or of quality. They seem to lean towards quality; however, they do not reach a firm conclusion. More recent papers are still preoccupied with teaching computers automatic detection with special focus on data extracted from social media platforms (e.g. Twitter). Computationally-oriented papers talk about feature extraction, bootstrapping, and devising of various algorithms to train computers to perform this automatic detection. The task being as challenging as it is, these studies are usually not concerned with the differences between irony and sarcasm[16]. The concepts are mostly used as synonyms, and it is typical to treat them unanimously in terms of negative versus positive sentiments. Irony and sarcasm are mainly tackled from the point of view of polarity and essentially opposition (see e.g. Davidov et al., 2010; González-Ibáñez, Muresan, & Wacholder, 2011, Riloff, Qadir, Surve, De Silva, Gilbert, & Huang, 2013; & Xu, Santus, Laszlo, & Huang, 2015), and that is right as it is. Claridge (2001) specifies the crucial issue at

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[16] With the exception of a recent study by Ling & Klinger (2016) whose primary aim is to find the distinguishing features of irony and sarcasm. One of their findings, and most relevant to the present study, is that taking word-specific features into consideration improves the accuracy of their classification model. That is, specific words are associated with ironic and sarcastic use, respectively.

hand: "it is hard to have the computer automatically search and find a phenomenon that does not have a (range of) corresponding surface structure(s)" (p. 136). This can be viewed in two ways: i) if irony and sarcasm could be related to specific lexico-grammatical patterns, computational studies could use these patterns as a springboard in automatization tasks (see section 1.2.3); ii) until automatic identification brings about convincing and firm results on the level of opposition, there is clearly no reason to deal with the more pragmatic, finer nuances involved in irony and sarcasm.

2.2.3 Corpus linguistic contributions

The final part of the literature review concerning irony and sarcasm has been reserved for corpus linguistics and what benefits it could provide for irony/sarcasm studies. Within the theoretical framework (section 3.2), relevant corpus linguistic terms will be introduced, which will later be utilized in the data analysis (Chapter 5). However, a brief introduction is due here. Claridge (2001) shows how corpus analysis is ineluctable in studying irony by pointing out that irony can manifest on the word-, utterance-, and context levels, and both speaker and hearer have to be considered in the analysis (p. 134). It is clear from the above that it is corpora that can provide the platform of sufficient width and breadth where potentially all manifestations of irony can come to the surface. Sinclair's (2004) *semantic reversal* (p. 134) entertains the possibility of irony being present in a sentence, and also considers the role of the surrounding text. In order to talk about semantic reversal, meaning has to arise "predominantly from the textual environment rather than the item choice" (p. 135). "Situations frequently arise in texts where the precise meaning of a word or phrase is determined more by the verbal environment than the parameters of a lexical entry" (p. 134). Sinclair attributes the need for an alternative interpretation (that includes irony) to incoherence in the text arising from the two meanings of a lexical item (the meaning created by the surrounding text and the item and the meaning created by the individual items) not being close and connected. Of course, semantic reversal *per se* does not sufficiently serve as a 100% sure cue for irony as alternative interpretations can vary, but the idea of semantic reversal definitely brings irony (and sarcasm) closer to lexico-grammatical aspects. Partington et al.'s (2013) corpus study is worthwhile to mention as it constitutes a relevant basis of comparison with the present research. Similarities between the two studies include the use of corpus-based methodology, the data being of interactive nature, and the search being focused on

implicit irony. What is different in Partington et al.'s approach is their technique for extracting ironic examples. Instead of applying an established theory of irony, laughter is used as a primary touchstone, followed by the search for intensification and evaluation reversal, which latter constitutes the cornerstone of their definition of irony. The present dissertation borrows evaluation reversal from their methodology. Now that we have familiarized ourselves with the state of the art, we can turn to the methodological and empirical chapters of the dissertation.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In a study assembling elements of various research areas (i.e. corpus linguistics, irony studies, and text analysis) the methodological steps are accordingly more heterogeneous. The introduction of the corpus will be followed by an expansive account on the theoretical frameworks employed ranging from evaluation theory through semantic preference and prosody to apposite and inapposite irony criteria.

3.1 Corpus characteristics

Corpora are generally used for discovering patterns of natural language use through the analysis of authentic data (Krieger, 2003). Any definition of natural language should include that it is unpremeditated communication (i.e. speech, sign, touch, or writing) between human beings, which contrasts it with constructed or formal language applied in computational models and in logic (see, e.g. Hausser, 2014). A recurring criticism in irony and sarcasm research is the lack of naturally-occurring examples. Utterances are either invented to represent intuitively "good" examples (presented in isolation or embedded in an artificially fabricated context) that are used both in experimental research (e.g. Capelli et al., 1990; & Woodland & Voyer, 2011) as well as in descriptive accounts (e.g. Grice, 1975; & Sperber & Wilson, 1981), or in an attempt to produce natural data, tape recordings or notes are being employed. However, neither of these solutions enable a researcher to browse through large data. Tape recordings and notes could be infinite in number, in theory, but this is usually not the case. On the other hand, corpora can lend the researcher a helping hand allowing them to identify not only good examples but patterns and regularities as well among a large set of potentially good examples (for further support of this point see Claridge, 2001). A spoken corpus can be beneficial in several ways as it consists of real-life speech whether it be television talk shows[17], radio broadcasts, or conversation among friends. Corpora have so far been modestly employed to examine irony-related issues (see e.g. Alba Juez, 1998; Claridge, 2001, & Partington, 2007) despite the endless possibilities offered by corpus queries. The text collection utilized for this research is a 135-million word soap opera corpus, the source of which is the TVMegaSiteInc (2003), a website dedicated to providing transcripts of American daily soap operas by volunteers. The immediate advantage of this corpus

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[17] Sinclair (1991) calls film and drama scripts quasi-speech.

over other spoken corpora (e.g. the spoken part of the BNC corpus) is its specialized nature. In contrast, most spoken corpora include various sources of spoken language (oral presentations, reports, keynote speeches, interviews, friendly chats, etc.) which makes it all the more tricky to draw conclusions regarding the separate sources. The advantages of using soap opera transcripts do not end here: it is consistent in the sense of relying exclusively on soap operas, soap operas are popular, otherwise they would simply not exist, they build on everyday communicative situations and personal interaction, their language is well-understood in contemporary discourse, which latter observation is significant when compared to, for instance, any sublanguage which would differ from real conversation in fundamental ways. The factors characterizing sublanguage, such as limited subject matter (e.g. electronics), lexical, syntactic, and semantic restrictions (e.g. no exclamation, or polysemous words) "deviant" rules of grammar (e.g. no past tense), text structure (e.g. the particular format of a cookbook) (Lehrberger, 1982) are not posing any problem in the soap opera corpus. Moreover, resorting to a corpus with fictional characters guarantees that no potentially false preconceived ideas will be evoked in the researcher's mind concerning the interacting people. Where real people are concerned, there is inevitably some presumption that may affect the research outcome, especially when concerned with a sensitive topic, such as irony and sarcasm where prior knowledge of the interlocutors is an often quoted factor (Tannen, 1984 & Clark, 1996). Furthermore, soap opera characters are modeled after real people and are thus similarly coherent and rounded (Pelsmaekers & Van Besien, 2002, p. 247). Finally, the absence of ethical concerns with regard to the exploitation of such a corpus makes for a further unbeatable advantage. In addition, in terms of the research question, the fact that this corpus is not a multimodal one proves to be the ideal source of information as it consists of spoken data characterized by conversational nuances but, at the same time, is now in written format allowing a closer inspection without concern for these very conversational nuances (e.g. prosody or kinesics) that could bias the research. Finally, the way this soap opera corpus is tagged is ideal for the present purposes not being too compact due to its not utilizing too much detail with regard to transcription symbols, such as prosodic features (which would come in useful for conversational analysis). In the mirror of the goal of the present research, this corpus happens to display only what is essential for it to be utilized for irony and sarcasm identification.

3.2 Theoretical framework

The lack of an all-enveloping irony-sarcasm theory necessitates various methodologies. It is exactly the many possibilities of examining these phenomena in context that reveals how much needs to be done until a universally accepted framework evolves. The theory of evaluation *per se* has been linked to irony and sarcasm (see section 3.2.1); however, a systematic corpus study utilizing evaluation theory has not been conducted up to this date. Similarly, corpus linguistic notions, such as collocation, semantic preference, and semantic prosody have been sparsely used with regard to irony and sarcasm; however, a comprehensive account utilizing all these notions at the same time has not been published yet. In the subsequent sections, all these concepts and the nexus between these and irony/sarcasm will be expounded.

3.2.1 Evaluation

The edited volume by Hunston and Thompson (2000) is a collection of articles around the common theme of evaluation. Certain aspects of it seem to be able to accommodate irony and sarcasm, which makes evaluation as such a suitable starting point for our analysis. In the introductory chapter, Thompson and Hunston point out the importance of context which can serve as a disambiguation cue in the case of, what they call, expressions with "referential content" (p. 1). Their example is the phrase *practically deserted* which depending on the context (an otherwise highly frequented touristic place versus an underground car park at night) can have positive or negative connotations (for more details on connotation see section 3.3.2). These kinds of examples are contrasted with phrases that carry an inherent, thus immediately overt connotation, such as *perfect* (p. 1). *Evaluation* is used as the cover term including language items with connotations as well as items expressing speakers' feelings. Leech (1981) refers to the same contrast as connotative meaning versus affective meaning. Louw's (1993) discussion on semantic prosody (see section 3.2.2), Partington's (2007) discussion on phrasal irony and the reversal of evaluation have links to connotative meaning, while others talk about speaker attitude (Sperber & Wilson, 1981). Partington (2007) is the one frequently associated with corpus-based irony research. He, in a sense, simplifies the problem of defining irony by seeing the essence of it in the evaluation embedded in an ironic remark. It is the notion of evaluation exclusively that is exploited in his analysis and his propounding of irony being "an implied reversal of the *evaluative* meaning" (p. 1547, original emphasis) certainly makes for an intriguing hypothesis.

The claimed advantage of this view compared to the view upheld by Grice (1975), among others, is that the reversal of evaluative meaning relaxes the restriction that the negation of propositional meaning imposes. The example provided is *John is a genius*, which after negating the propositional meaning would become *John is not a genius* (p. 1565). Partington claims that the reversal of the evaluative meaning in *John is a genius* would make the listener arrive at the conclusion that the underlying meaning of this ironically intended statement is, in fact, that *John is an idiot* (*cf*. Giora, Fein, Ganzi, Alkeslassy Levi, & Sabah, 2005). If this is the case then this idea does not essentially set the reversal of evaluation theory apart from earlier theories that based irony on the notion of opposition. Thus, a necessary addition to this theory would be to see evaluation in irony not merely in terms of the two end points of a scale but being more flexible; an idea that has incidentally been discussed recently in Alba-Juez and Attardo (2014). A book chapter born out of the collaboration of these two notable scholars links evaluation with verbal irony and concludes that evaluation does not only include criticism (i.e. negative evaluation) but can be positive and even neutral in the case of irony. There arises a slight contradiction here due to neutrality and evaluation being mentioned in the same context. As was shown in section 2.1.4.2, *evaluation*'s links to intensity and subjectivity entails its deviation from neutrality. Accordingly, an evaluation cannot be ironic and neutral at the same time. What sets Alba-Juez & Attardo's study apart from this work is their disparate methodological orientation inasmuch as their devising of a questionnaire containing various irony-prone situations as well as their concern for lexicalized expressions (e.g. *Break a leg*). Evaluation as represented in grammar and lexis has recently been taken up by Gray & Biber (2015), where *evaluation* is replaced with *stance*. They examine stance in the wider discourse context and in terms of concrete grammatical structures, such as *that-* and *to*-complement clauses. Their paper is relevant for the current study for they list a number of stance adjectives and nouns with information about the prevalent grammatical structures they occur in. None the less, neither Gray, nor Biber are preoccupied with irony research; thus, their contribution to this study necessarily ends here, not to mention that their primary source of data are academic texts. The abovementioned esteemed figures all impart relevant information to the current research; however, none of them assembles the separate pieces of irony, sarcasm, evaluation, and corpus in an all-comprehensive fashion. This entails that exploring the connection between evaluation and irony/sarcasm in a corpus may indeed hold much promise. Turning back to the beginning of the section, the definition for evaluation used by

Thompson and Hunston (2000) is as follows: "evaluation is the broad cover term for the expression of the speaker or writer's attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about" (p. 5). It is a deliberately vague definition that leaves room for anything to be included that "is compared to or contrasts with the norm" (p. 13). The contrasting aspect is a further nexus between evaluation and irony/sarcasm. As for identifying evaluation linguistically, the authors elaborate on lexis, grammar, and text. The last item will be disregarded in the present research as it refers to longer stretches of written texts. Lexis is relatively straightforward inasmuch as there are individual lexical items carrying an evaluative function, which is identified by the majority of people (p. 14). In terms of grammar, it is the different grammatical categories, such as modal verbs or certain adjectives that are linked to evaluation.

3.2.2 Semantic preference and semantic prosody

When it comes to corpus linguistic concepts, such as semantic preference and semantic prosody, we owe names like Sinclair (1991, 2003, 2004) and Stubbs (1996, 2001) a great deal. Due to these remarkable scholars, the foundation for a paradigm shift has been laid with regard to corpus-related research. Although semantic preference and semantic prosody make up a crucial part of the empirical part of the thesis, their not being the centerpiece of the discussion, an elongated description of their evolution will be waived for the time being. It suffices to give the basic definitions of these collocational phenomena before commenting on more recent examinations of the terms. Sinclair (2003) defines semantic preference as follows: "the structure of a phrase shows repeated choices of words with similar meaning (though not necessarily the same words)" (p. 146). As for semantic prosody, in Sinclair's (2003) understanding it is when "a corpus enables us to see words grouping together to make special meanings that relate not so much to their dictionary meanings as to the reasons why they were chosen together" (p. 178). A slightly more straightforward definition of semantic prosody is saying that it is "simply connotation spread over several words" (Whitsitt, 2005, p. 285). Partington (1998) claims that "an awareness of the connotational value of lexis is a vital part of the communicative competence of a speaker– the knowledge of what is the right thing to say at the right time in the right circumstances" (p. 65). The latter part of his claim bears a resemblance to Grice's (1975) tenets regarding the Cooperative Principle and the maxims included. However, what Partington

fails to consider is the function of non-cooperative forms of communication, such as irony or sarcasm, which also have the tendency to exploit the notion of connotation but in an "inside out" sort of fashion. When talking about the connection between semantic prosody and irony, the discussion cannot be complete without mentioning one of its earlier contributors. Louw's (1993) contribution to semantic prosody proved to be a determinant study for irony research as well. He believes that semantic prosody can help perceiving the irony in a particular message or at least show how sincere the speaker is, which is shown via establishing the semantic prosodies of certain adjectives and adverbs based on their behavior in a corpus[18]. At one point, it is mentioned that "the instantiation of irony through a prosodic clash would relieve one of the responsibility of providing a particular tone of voice" (p. 167). Apparently, a prosodic clash is enough to disambiguate a remark that was meant to be ironic in the first place. Louw's example is "a fine friend you are" where *fine* has a typically positive semantic prosody unless "it appears before words which refer to family membership or friendship" (p. 168) where it has a tendency to take on an ironic meaning, i.e. *fine friend* is a form of prosodic clash. It is questionable though if a particular tone of voice may be disregarded due to the prosodic clash or due to the fact that *fine friend* is a typical case of so-called conventionalized irony[19] (in which case the tone would have arguably been conventionalized with the expression)? What makes the concept of semantic prosody relevant in a study on irony and sarcasm in discourse is aptly phrased by Stubbs (2001): "Since [discourse prosodies][20] are evaluative, prosodies often express the speaker's reason for making the utterance […] (p. 65). Any discussion on irony and sarcasm can thus benefit from semantic prosody since they share the same underlying evaluative nature. Morley and Partington (2009), after claiming that "maintaining connotational harmony is very important to avoid sending 'mixed messages'" (p. 144), highlight the connection between semantic prosody and irony by explaining that by upsetting this collocational harmony, it is exactly irony what the mixed message might imply. The example they provide is *I had to sit through a really exciting concert* where the connotational *disharmony* is due to the use of *sit through* more frequently associated with negative events. It is interesting to note that connotational disharmony in this case seems to be more apparent due to the presence of the phrasal verb *sit through* than the

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[18] The corpus employed was the Bank of English, a subset of the COBUILD corpus.
[19] According to Kapogianni (2010), we talk about conventionalized irony "when [an ironic expression] is consistently used to denote the same meaning" (p. 52).
[20] Various denominations, such as semantic prosody, evaluative prosody, discourse prosody, and pragmatic prosody, exist in the literature all referring to essentially the same phenomenon.

modified adjective *really exciting* which has the potential to carry an ironic meaning regardless of the verb attached to it (see Stenström, 1990 for a discussion on the various functions of *really* & Seto, 1998 for irony-prone words). Lately, studies have picked up the topic of semantic preference and prosody in an effort to re-evaluate some of the original claims. Bednarek (2008) treats semantic preference as the general heading under which semantic prosody is subsumed. She substitutes *semantic preference* with *semantic collocation* (collocation being the keyword) for the sake of easier understanding and sees it as "the habitual collocation of lexical items with linguistic expressions that belong to certain semantic fields" (p. 120). Examples she mentions include *completely, utterly, totally* which collocate with negative words (see examples 1-2); whereas *perfectly* collocates with positive words (see example 3). Examples are borrowed from Bednarek (2008, p. 121, original emphasis):

(1) Geoffrey Bailey, head of Southern Region Testing Team: **utterly** and **completely** failed to raise standards or curb excessive overtime.

(2) I think you've got a **totally** illiterate person, no doubt.

(3) He was **perfectly** amiable to her on the few occasions when they did meet; sometimes she even felt that he liked her.

She then mentions *totally* collocating with neutral or positive items (instead of the expected negative item) as an example of "non-conformant" (p. 131) collocation to refer to Sinclair's (2004) semantic reversal idea (see section 2.2.3), which by extension is linked to irony and evaluative meaning. The fact that such unexpected collocations, i.e. collocational clashes, are seen as ironic[21] or evaluative is a pleasant reminder of evaluation having close relations with irony (see section 3.2.1). To illustrate the abovementioned behavior of *totally*, the soap opera corpus has been searched for relevant examples. The search yielded 14,520 tokens of which a sample list of concordances is inserted here (Fig. 1):

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[21] Of course, not all collocational clashes are readily seen as ironic too. For instance, Hunston (2007) cites the atypical collocation *to the point of being reverential* (p. 262), which, taking the wider context into consideration, still does not necessarily imply ironic use.

Figure 1 sample concordances for *totally*

```
875   ge: Oh, no. </p> <p> Eve: Yeah, well, she completely misread the situation, sweetheart, and totally flew off the handle. And of course, if I had known that they had be
876   ope: No, you don't. You don't have to say anything. </p> <p> Aiden: I was completely and totally out of line last night. </p> <p> Ben: You were kissing me, and yo
877   are. I am your friend. But that doesn't mean that I don't notice that you are completely and totally screwing up-- </p> <p> Theresa: No, no, just go, Anne, okay? Jus
878   CKY: YEAH? ELIZABETH: ALL THREE OF MY ART SCHOOL SUBMISSIONS ARE FINALLY AND TOTALLY COMPLETED. LUCKY: WHEN'S THE GRAND UNVEILING? ELIZA
879   ELIZABETH: YOU KNOW, I'D BETTER CALL GRAM. SHE IS NOT GOING TO BELIEVE ME AND TOTALLY FREAK OUT. LUCKY: WELL, YOU JUST TELL HER THE TRUTH, YO
880   'T TELL SONNY? BOBBIE: NO. AND I COULD INTERFERE WITH THE BEST INTENTIONS AND TOTALLY ALIENATE MY DAUGHTER. I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. ROY:
881   SECURE -- LUKE: AND SOMETHING THAT'S COMPLETELY RISKY AND WILD. FELICIA: AND TOTALLY UNPREDICTABLE. LUKE: ON THE EDGE. FELICIA: YEAH. IS THAT
882   r you almost get arrested for blackmail, and after you jumped to the wrong conclusion and totally humiliated me in front of the nicest, most caring man that I have e
883   o you think? </p> <p> Edward: Well, I think it is presumptuous and counterproductive and totally unacceptable. </p> <p> Skye: Grandfather, we're going to be co-
884   n do to help, let me know. </p> <p> Kristina: Okay. Nikolas, how conniving, deceptive, and totally insincere can you be? </p> <p> Elizabeth: Get out of my way. </p
885   t of here. </p> <p> Skye: Oh, A.J. Love is magic, like it or not. It's completely irrational and totally inconvenient, but love always wins, even for people like us. You kr
886   ? I'll talk to you guys later? </p> <p> Maxie: Yeah. </p> <p> Ric: I've been completely and totally honest with you and your husband. </p> <p> Carly: Really? Then
887   at? </p> <p> Summer: That they are ruthless in competition, persistent, mischievous, and totally egocentric. </p> <p> Jax: That's true. </p> <p> Summer: Oh. Uh
888   , Jason. You know, you've never failed me in my life, and now you're 100% completely and totally failing me! </p> <p> Scott: You going to tell me who's trying to k
889   get it for you. </p> <p> Carly: You really are insane. </p> <p> Ric: No, I'm completely and totally justified. What's happening right now is Sonny's fault, and he des
890   t have me to worry about. </p> <p> Dillon: Hey, if I didn't have you, I'd be completely and totally alone. If I didn't have you, I wouldn't have had that -- that great ni
891   here? </p> <p> Dillon: Yes, sir. </p> <p> Manager: Oh. </p> <p> Dillon: Completely and totally alone. </p> <p> Manager: The room was rented by a young wom
892   ake my own choices. </p> <p> Dillon: Well, yeah, and I'm sure that part is completely and totally true and that's probably why it worked, you know? I mean, that's t
893   s appeal. </p> <p> Alexis: Oh. </p> <p> Ric: But if you'd like to go out, I completely and totally -- </p> <p> Alexis: I don�t. </p> <p> Jason: So you monitor Co
894   ring to go after Edward -- that was to protect you. In case you missed it, I'm completely and totally in love with you. I thought you understood that. </p> <p> Luke: \
895   tually be good for him. </p> <p> Carly: Well, it's not Sam. She's cheap and desperate and totally wrong for Jason. </p> <p> Emily: It drives you crazy that he's foc
896   </p> <p> Skye: Oh, just about to make an observation that's probably way out of line and totally none of my business. </p> <p> Lorenzo: Hmm. Sounds fairly om
897   y, then Carly ends up back in your arms, only this time she will be grieving, vulnerable, and totally dependent. You win. </p> <p> Lorenzo: That's not a win. The trut
898   s whole thing, but she was about to make a lot of false accusations that are completely and totally unnecessary. </p> <p> Jax: Don't kid yourself, Ric. I didn't do it fc
899   Nadine: Don't take this the wrong way. You seem like such a smart and compassionate and totally amazing guy. </p> <p> Spinelli: How could I take such a welcome
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A quick overview of the concordance lines confirms Bednarek's (2008) unspoken sentiment that *totally* collocates more often with negative (and neutral) items. Whether the positive collocations imply irony or evaluation could only be answered upon closer inspection of the text. What has been noted by Partington (2004) and Whitsitt (2005) has been strongly emphasized by Bednarek (2008); namely that "the co-occurrence of an item with negative collocates does not automatically indicate the presence of a negative collocation" (p. 130). Examples taken from the literature and cited in Bednarek (2008) include *heal, relieve, soothe* often collocating with unpleasant words but still not resulting in an overall negative meaning or *brook* showing similar tendencies. A sample search of *relieve* in the soap opera corpus shows what the abovementioned scholars are referring to (Fig. 2):

Figure 2 sample concordances for *relieve*

TE. [DEEP VOICE] I LOVE THESE EGGS. KEEP IT GOING. O.K., THAT'S ENOUGH. BAYER CAN RELIEVE JOINT INFLAMMATION AND STIFFNESS. TYLENOL CAN'T. AND TAKEN REGULARI
? Must be losing my touch. </p> <p> Lexie: It's not you. I just -- I don't think anything can relieve my stress right now, honey. </p> <p> Abe: I didn't realize you were under so much
l, but she would have the baby? </p> <p> Dr. Solomon: Yes. </p> <p> Erica: But you can relieve the pressure, can't you? </p> <p> Dr. Solomon: We have a drug that will reduce th
:p> Dr. Hillman: As long as we act quickly, before the hematoma grows any larger, we can relieve the pressure by drilling a hole in the skull to drain the blood. </p> <p> Nick: Drillir
find a way to tell the family. </p> <p> Elizabeth: And -- and there's no procedure that can relieve this condition? </p> <p> Kelly: According to noah, surgery isn't an option. Sam wo
pull my weight and if I'm close, like across the courtyard, that way I can -- you know, I can relieve you in the middle of the night, so you can get some rest, that's all. </p> <p> Kenda
s silly. </p> <p> Paul: You're right, that's silly. My bad. </p> <p> Rosanna: Hi, guys. I can relieve you now. </p> <p> Paul: You want me to go? </p> <p> Parker: Can't we finish ou
very stressful. </p> <p> Emily: Why? </p> <p> Paul: So that when you get home, you can relieve your stress. </p> <p> Emily: Hmm. You know what, you're bankrolling this whole t
<p> John: Me too. </p> <p> Caroline: I can't wait to tell shawn, you know. It will certainly relieve his mind. </p> <p> Cassie: Hey. How's your grandfather? </p> <p> Shawn-d: Um
<p> Daniel: His brain had severe swelling and bleeding. We were able to remove the clots, relieve the pressure, but there's still a lot of fluid in there, which could lead to complication
the mission statement says, but I have a feeling that Adam just came up with it so he could relieve his guilt. </p> <p> Lily: Well, we'll have to distance it from him somehow, you kno
alked the floor with you when you had colic. Your father got a job at night so that he could relieve me in the morning while I worked. </p> <p> Mr. Evans: Best part of my day. </p>
na go work out my stress in the gym. </p> <p> Sharon: Mm. I don't think anything could relieve my stress. </p> <p> Avery: Nick told me you weren't able to get Adam to admit he
e going to see that. </p> <p> Bob: Well I think would prescribe a mild sedative that could relieve some of the anxiety. </p> <p> Lucinda: Oh, that might be a very good idea. </p> <
do some laps or something... </p> <p> Daniel: Mm. </p> <p> Lily: You know, that could relieve stress. </p> <p> Daniel: (Sighs) </p> <p> Lily: Or focus on your art, you know, wh
iously going to need his dad. And maybe we could just move in for a little while. We could relieve you with the boys. We could give you time to process this, to grieve, to heal. </p> <
> <p> Greenlee: Not when you're thoroughly confused. </p> <p> Carlos: Perhaps I could relieve your confusion. </p> <p> Greenlee: You know you can. </p> <p> Carlos: How? Te
more to be done. </p> <p> Lexie: Yes, there is. We could take him to O.R. for craniotomy, relieve the pressure on his brain. </p> <p> Woman: He's not stable enough to withstand s
DIAMONDS. YOU HAVE YET TO DELIVER THEM. LUKE: THAT'S TRUE. HOWEVER, YOU DID RELIEVE ME OF A SATCHEL FULL OF CUBIC ZIRCONIUM IN THE DESERT, AND THAT WAS
iael's temporal lobe right behind his ear. Dr. Drake was able to extract the bullet, and it did relieve some pressure on his brain. </p> <p> Jax: Okay, so based on the damage, do you t
Who do you love the most? And you don't think Alan knows that, huh? So go ahead, Dinah. Relieve your conscience. Tell the police everything. Let Bill have his moment for a day or tw
When has that ever made anything less complicated? </p> <p> Molly: Never. But it does relieve the tension for a while. </p> <p> Rosanna: Oh, my goodness. [All laugh] Please. I'n
always breathe a little easier now. </p> <p> Reva: Joshua. </p> <p> Josh: It's okay to feel relieve. </p> <p> Marah: Dad, I don't feel relieved. I still feel sick over the whole thing. I
manently. You know, you don't look good, Jason. Better catch a movie, go see a ball game, relieve the stress. It will kill you. </p> <p> Sam: I told you the lost-and-found would have
ing in there. </p> <p> Will: Well, um, I guess you call your guy and whatever and I will go relieve Gabi. </p> <p> Adrienne: [Clears throat] </p> <p> Sonny: Were you out there the

Relieve's collocating with *joint inflammation and stiffness, stress, pressure, guilt*, etc. does not result in an overall negative connotation[22]. A related note comes from Mihalcea & Pulman's (2007) paper concerned with automatic humor recognition, who discuss the example *I love deadlines*. They presume that the reason why *deadlines* has been identified as a negative word by the computer, and thus the whole statement has been annotated as negative is "perhaps because of the frequent occurrence of *deadline* in negative contexts" (p. 345). Of course, the fact that their example is one of a humorous one-liner where 'normal' tendencies are upset, and that is necessarily discriminating their example from the previous ones, cannot be ignored. A further noteworthy point Bednarek (2008) makes concerns attitudinal meanings of all sorts being embedded in semantic prosody (not only positive or negative evaluation). This idea directly endorses the view outlined in section 2.1.4.2; namely that irony and sarcasm can be seen as scalar concepts.

3.2.3 Inapposite irony criteria

There exists a good number of irony theories and heuristics, some of them more widely acclaimed than others. In what follows, a brief description is given of the ones potentially deemed feasible to apply to the present study highlighting their shortcomings that eventually render them inapplicable.

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[22] Hunston (2007) also elaborates on the issue with regard to the collocation *to the point of*.

Kreuz's (1996) irony heuristics seem to be an easily applicable set of rules to a corpus study at first sight. The heuristics tackle counterfactual statements ("the larger the deviation from reality, the greater the certainty of ironic intent", p. 25), hyperbole ("the more extreme the statement, the greater the certainty of ironic intent", p. 26), tag questions ("if an utterance ends with a tag question, it may be ironic", p. 27), and direct cues (using the word "not" as in You're really something-not! p. 28)[23]. A closer (and more critical) look at the individual heuristics, however, immediately reveals their vagueness. For instance, the heuristics for a counterfactual statement can easily correspond to a lie which is not equivalent to irony. Because of the acknowledged fallibility of the individual heuristics, it is emphasized that the more heuristics apply at the same time, the more certain we can be about the ironic intent. None the less, even if these heuristics indicate irony they are not essential to it, which by extension, diminishes the chances of recognition. Hyperbole, although an acknowledged sign of irony (see Colston & Keller, 1998 & Colston & O'Brien, 2000b; Gibbs, 2000; & Wilson, 2013) along with tag questions (see Kreuz et al., 1999) are not necessary concomitants to it, thus reducing the possibility to spot a higher number of heuristics. Not to mention that depending on the specific patterns a keyword is analyzed in, tag questions may not even be part of the analysis. Kreuz himself admits that these rules of thumb are not unerring (which coincides with the very definition of heuristics being an educated guess or intuitive judgement). There are several more well-defined theories that may do better in aiding the recognition process.

Clark (1996) provides a comprehensive four-stage description of an ironic[24] situation based on face-to-face conversation. The four stages are as follows:

1. Calibration: during this phase, the participants have to make sure that there exists a shared viewpoint or understanding of the topic in order for the next phase to succeed.

2. Delivery: an utterance that is to be understood ironically is delivered with the help of not only actual talking but the raising of eyebrows or laughing, for example.

3. Acknowledgment: the participants indicate to each other that the irony has been understood by exchanging a smile, for example.

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[23] He also talks about kinesic, prosodic, non-visual, and typographic cues; however, as these do not apply in the corpus at hand, they were not considered further.

[24] Note that he discusses this four-stage setup under the heading "Irony and Sarcasm"; however, makes mention only of irony in the subsequent sections.

4. Closure: the participants signal to each other that the ironic episode has ended and that serious discussion can be resumed now. (p. 370)

Other than a clear delineation of the disparate stages, there are several factors that make this account not easily applicable. One of them being that the idea of *face-to-face* conversation is not further elaborated on. As Clark's data consists of videotaped conversations, for his analysis, the consideration of various forms of face-to-face conversations would be redundant. Thus, his four stages can only be applied to conversations where all kinesic and prosodic features are "acted out". Readily admitting that this would certainly be the ideal case, not all data are so well-endowed. A written corpus that is compiled of face-to-face conversations (like the soap opera corpus employed in this study); even though lacking kinesic and prosodic annotation, is still face-to-face conversation. Presuming that ironic episodes occur in such data collections too and that it is not only kinesic and prosodic factors that point toward the ironic episode, a description of an ironic situation should not put such heavy emphasis on these markers. In the light of this, certain points in Clark's model need to be re-defined in order to fit a different kind of spoken corpus. As for the *delivery* phase, the ironic intention could alternatively be searched for on the lexical level. The specific words used, the position of the specific words, and so forth might shed light on the underlying meaning at least as much as kinesic and prosodic features do. As for the *acknowledgment* phase, Clark's claim is that the exchange of smiles can reliably indicate that the irony hit the mark. However, there has not yet been a study evincing the fact that a mere smile is a sure sign of the irony having been understood. What would intuitively be a more obvious sign is what particular words follow the remark on the listener's and/or victim's part, which not only indicate whether the remark has been understood but whether it has been appreciated or not. The four-stage model exposes a crucial point about irony theories; namely the unidirectional nature of them inasmuch as they describe irony but are hardly applicable to actual analysis of examples.

Kumon-Nakamura et al.'s (1995) allusional pretense theory (see section 2.1.3) is briefly recapitulated here. Irony involves: i) allusion to prior events or expectations and ii) pragmatic insincerity in the form of violating felicity conditions. It is worth mentioning that the authors themselves note that while allusion and pragmatic insincerity are necessary conditions for irony, they are not sufficient. What the authors seem to overlook is elaborating on how pragmatic

insincerity can actually be perceived[25]. Merely by saying that questions should only be asked when an answer is desired or compliments should be given as real compliments and not rebukes does not imply that the listener would recognize the difference between a literal question seeking answer and a rhetorical question posed with an ironic purpose, or a compliment that is genuine and one that is ironic (thus not truly a compliment). The missing ingredient to decipher irony is proposed to be sought in the context. In their conclusion, the expression of one's attitude and having a shared understanding of the failed expectation or the violated norm are added as elements necessary for effective irony whereby the issue of context is partly redressed. The authors seem to acknowledge Sperber and Wilson's (1981) idea of an evaluation (mostly critical) being communicated through irony as well as Clark and Gerrig's (1984) embrace of the idea of common ground which might as well correspond to context. Thus, a slightly modified version of their model for irony includes: i) allusion to prior events or expectations, ii) pragmatic insincerity in the form of violating felicity conditions, iii) the speaker's evaluative attitude, and iv) participants' shared knowledge of prior events or expectations. Taking into account all four elements still leaves the analyst too much subjective space in interpreting the examples. What counts as allusion? Is it verbal or can be conveyed through other means (i.e. non-verbal)? Is the speaker expressing his/her evaluative attitude through words or is showing it via action? If we are preoccupied with ironic/sarcastic tweets (as are numerous studies, see, e.g. Davidov et al., 2010, González-Ibáñez et al., 2011, Liebrecht et al., 2013, Riloff et al., 2013, & Xu, Santus, Laszlo, & Huang, 2015), how can (i) and (iv) be realized? Knowing that tweets consist of short messages composed by one person may prevent us from observing these points on the grounds that they are not relevant in all text types. Thus, it once again seems that the above irony theory cannot provide a satisfying solution in the present study.

Utsumi's (2000) account of irony as an implicit display of ironic environment starts out self-assuredly claiming that it is a "more adequate and comprehensive theory of verbal irony than the traditional pragmatic theory, the echoic interpretation theory, the pretense theory, and other theories" (p. 1777). This should raise a red flag as irony theories circumscribing what irony is and what it is not do not necessarily coincide with the circumscribing of strategies that can be used to recognize irony in text, as could be seen with Clark's (1996) four-stage model. Utsumi

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[25] Apart from a rather intangible claim stating that *pragmatic insincerity* includes semantic and propositional insincerity that is obvious from a speaker's using a counterfactual assertion (p. 19).

believes that ironic language presupposes an ironic situation/environment in the discourse context. Two problems arise already: what exactly is meant by ironic language in the sense of what its confines are is not explained as well as the designation *ironic situation* is a misnomer knowing that situational irony is a distinct concept[26]. Whether *ironic situation* is a broad context-based or co-text-based concept is also not clear. Implicit display is a collective term for allusion to speaker expectation, pragmatic insincerity, and the speaker's negative attitude, all of which bring to mind the above discussed allusional pretense theory (Kumon-Nakamura et al., 1995). The description is linked to prototype theory in a way that certain linguistic properties are responsible for these so-called implicit displays but which properties are present in varying degrees in an ironic instance. Therefore, "utterances with more properties of implicit display are perceived as being more ironic" (p. 1779). If the utterance bears no resemblance to the prototype, we are dealing with nonirony. What this entails is that all three properties are only needed for prototypical irony; however, not all three properties are needed to have 'some sort of' irony. At this point, the theory seems to slip through our fingers as the bare minimum for irony is not further determined. Not to mention that the sometimes necessary nonverbal cues cannot be dispensed with regardless of how many of the properties are satisfied, according to the author himself. Utsumi's incorporation of previously well-acknowledged concepts makes it an eligible theory as well as the commendable attempt to distinguish irony from nonirony; nevertheless, the application of it seems to only work with textbook type of examples where the context is given in parenthesis followed by an isolated sentence displaying the irony. This is indeed a pivotal point as the majority of irony theories have been devised at a time when corpora were not routinely utilized, nor was social media around[27].

Attardo's (2000a) redefinition of irony as relevant inappropriateness is as much a tribute to Grice's (1975) maxims and Sperber and Wilson's (1995) relevance theory as it is a fresh way of looking at irony. His five points as to what constitutes irony tackle the question from a purely pragmatic viewpoint. An utterance *u* is ironical if

    (i)   *u* is contextually inappropriate,

    (ii)   *u* is (at the same time) relevant,

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[26] Even though Utsumi (2000) addresses the difference between ironic situation and situational irony, the potential confusion remains.

[27] Social media platforms, such as Twitter, a popular data collection for irony studies, does not have the visible ingredients delineated by earlier studies (e.g. ironic environment, speaker interaction, broad context, etc.)

(iii)   *u* is construed as having been uttered intentionally and with awareness of the contextual inappropriateness by S, and

(iv)   S intends that (part of) his/her audience recognize points 1-3,

(v)   unless H construes *u* as being unintentional irony, in which case 3-4 do not apply.

The impracticability of Attardo's criteria to the present study lies in its purely pragmatic nature which discounts the possibility of semantic correlates. Context is seen as the main factor that can disambiguate irony. On the other hand, whereas Kumon-Nakamura's (1995) framework allows for the differentiation of sarcasm and irony (by mentioning the speaker's evaluative attitude which, by extension, can be indicated on a scale based on specific lexical items, see section 2.1.4.2), Attardo's list does not leave opportunity for this same distinction. This is not surprising, considering the fact the he considers irony and sarcasm to be the same phenomenon (p. 795). Last but not least, once again we run into the problem of the article not having had mentioned the specific text type the theory could be applied to.

In a way, positively divergent from the previous ones, Burgers et al. (2011) introduce the Verbal Irony Procedure (VIP), which is labelled as the "first systematic method for identifying irony in natural discourse" (p. 187). It acknowledges the need for a theory that can cover examples drawn from natural discourse; however, another problem arises: as much as the VIP is efficient in certain types of discourse[28], its applicability to other domains is questionable. For instance, it is not well-defined what the appropriate length of a discourse is. The authors' first proposed step is that coders read through the whole text to obtain the stance the author takes. Since the majority of their data consists of DVD reviews, the average length of such a review is taken as a basis. In a larger corpus, this manual annotation process may be way too time-consuming, but whether shorter texts in dialogue format could benefit from their identification method is not stated clearly either. Moreover, whose stance is of relevance in their data is the author's exclusively. A strict distinction is drawn between descriptive and evaluative clauses in the VIP which might also be misleading. An agreement prevails in the research community that evaluation is a necessary concomitant to any ironic or sarcastic remark (see section 3.2.1). Nevertheless, it has also been demonstrated that this evaluation can easily be embedded in a descriptive clause too (see, e.g. Wilson & Sperber's (1992) example *Ah, Tuscany in May!* p. 55). Consequently, what is an ostensible description might as well turn out to be an ironic evaluation.

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[28] The authors use Dutch advertisements and DVD reviews as their source of data.

A collective criticism that can be raised in these different theories is their inconsideration for various text types. With newer and newer media appearing where the issue of context is endowed with a new meaning or is simply missing, it is crucial that an irony theory be able to accommodate different discourse types. Most of the abovementioned theories work with fabricated examples where what is meant by context is the additional background information given in vignettes; however, in natural discourse, context may cover a broader spectrum. There exist several irony theories that have been devised mainly to explain the examples deployed in the same study they were introduced. The importance of context and interaction between speaker and hearer cannot be emphasized enough; however, at the end of the day it is the words in the text that will make up the context and determine the nature of interaction between participants. Furthermore, apparently irony theory does not correspond to irony recognition strategy. An irony theory *per se* is not fit to conveniently be applied in a corpus study to scan through larger sets of data relatively quickly. A corpus-based study focusing on lexico-grammatical features of irony and sarcasm could make use of very specific cues and markers without which irony theories unavoidably come across a little too abstract. In addition, these theories do not provide a fertile ground for the differentiation between irony and sarcasm.

3.2.4 Apposite irony and sarcasm criteria

Attardo, Eisterhold, Hay, & Poggi (2003) may have come to our rescue by offering a distinction between markers and factors of irony. The central claim is that an ironic utterance would remain ironic if its *marker*s were to be removed, however, would lose its ironic nature if its constituent *factors* were removed (p. 244). Markers may be phonological (e.g. intonation, pitch, etc.) and facial (e.g. raising an eyebrow, winking, etc.); whereas factors include the co-presence of two distinct meanings, their antiphrastic nature, and contextual inappropriateness (p. 244). This distinction allows for the possibility to see irony detached from extralinguistic cues even though the authors place only a modicum of emphasis on lexis involved in irony. However, the fact that after their empirical study the evidence for phonological markers being absolute disambiguators of irony remains inconclusive lends even more support to the decision of these markers to ultimately be omitted when identifying irony. Attardo et al.'s mentioning of indispensable elements (i.e. factors), on the other hand, repeat throughout the irony literature and can supply us with the necessary cues for our analysis.

In choosing the right irony and sarcasm recognition strategy, the main concerns were as follows:

(i)   It should include the absolutely necessary elements in the analysis that the research community agrees upon

(ii)   It should be easily applicable to large corpus data in a way that the inevitable manual analysis is hindered as little as possible

(iii)   It should pertain to lexis or be easily adaptable to lexis

(iv)   It should be able to accommodate irony and sarcasm rooted in a common foundation but still allowing for making a distinction between them

In the next paragraphs, the idea of contrast and reversal of evaluation will be touched upon following the scope from general to specific. Taking the key notion of contrast into consideration in the current study is warranted by a largely consistent body of psycholinguistic research bringing out contrast between an utterance and some aspect of the context (or co-text) as an essential irony detection tool (see Colston, 1997b; Colston & Keller, 1998; Colston & O'Brien, 2000a; & Colston & O'Brien, 2000b)[29]. The gist of these studies is summarized as follows: "the degree of perceptual contrast caused by the discrepancy between an ironic comment and its referent situation enable direct prediction of the degree to which several pragmatic functions are expressed by a speaker" (Colston, 2002, p. 136). This summary lends two ideas to the present analysis: 1) contrast, here, not being a stable factor but displaying degrees makes it appropriate to expand it over sarcasm reflecting the previously delineated view of irony and sarcasm being distinguishable along the lines of a scale (see Section 2.1.4.2); 2) this degree of contrast will be examined on the lexical level to see how particular words contribute to the different degrees. In their experiments, Colston & O'Brien (2000b) include a distinction between strong and weak verbal irony (*cf*. Barbe's idea of strong vs weak irony, 1993) based on a list of randomly chosen modifiers, such as *agreeable*, *pleased*, *magnificent*, and *absolutely brilliant*. An example situation presented to the participants is as follows:

Sheila was looking forward to her boyfriend Walter's visit. When Walter arrived, he was in a terrible mood and was snapping and yelling at Sheila and her housemates. Sheila turned to him and said,

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[29] The idea of some kind of contrast being a central element in irony is acknowledged outside of psycholinguistics as well (see, e.g. Koestler, 1964; Barbe, 1995; Kapogianni, 2009; & Partington, 2011).

"Aren't you in a bad mood?"

"Aren't you in an agreeable mood?"

"Aren't you in a magnificent mood?" (p. 188).

The authors were interested what degrees of difference between the three possible questions the participants perceived. Working with various lexical items and trying to find out how these different words embedded in the same question format affect the perception of participants is a pleasant reminder of the validity of studying lexis in irony (and sarcasm) from the field of psycholinguistics. What the present study can contribute to this is employing a systematic list of words and patterns as well as using natural discourse to retrieve the examples by also relieving the restriction of only examining adjectives. The notion of contrast will be extended over the soap opera data analysis in terms of reversal of evaluation.

With contrast being checked as an indispensable factor in irony and sarcasm, we now turn to the related albeit more specific notion of reversal of evaluation. A study preoccupied with lexis perforce invites irony/sarcasm criteria that are concerned more with the lexical level. Corpus linguistic studies tackling semantic preference and semantic prosody (not rarely including the issue of evaluation in their treatise) seem appropriate. Partington's (2007) reversal of evaluation theory is the closest to a lexico-grammatical approach to irony and sarcasm. Firstly, he elaborates on the notion of evaluation in sufficient detail for it to be adopted in the present analysis; and secondly, his theory seems to be the least pragmatic among all. This entails that the sorting and filtering of examples could be done in an arguably more objective way than if a theory had been applied that draws heavily on the pragmatic nature of irony and sarcasm. Irony, in his model, is essentially seen as an evaluation reversal, which is considered a sufficiently powerful tool that obviates earlier proposed irony recognition aids, especially those linked with Grice (1975) and Sperber and Wilson (1981) (see section 2.1.2), such as propositional negation or speaker dissociation (Partington, 2007, p. 1566). The notion of contrast makes an appearance in this theory too in a way that certain incongruous elements between a remark and the co-text are recognized by the listener which serve as a subconscious reminder for the need to evoke what Partington calls the *irony frame*[30]. The *irony frame* basically allows the listener to interpret what has been said in a potentially ironic way. The evaluation reversal model relies on the listener

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[30] A similar idea comes from Burgers, van Mulken, & Schellens (2013) who call it *non-serious frame* indicating irony's connection with humor.

interpreting the irony based on the underlying dichotomy between good and bad (in a very general sense). In any situation, potentially ironic, two so-called narratives are constructed, one being the dictum (what is being uttered), the other one being the implicatum (what is being meant). The admitted advantage of dealing with irony through this model is that it accommodates a wide range of ironies, such as the ones embedded in hyperbole or in literal statements. It is concluded that, by extension, this model can incorporate ironies based in opposition, negation, etc. The question of how to spot this reversal of evaluation is where Partington's and my method diverge. Initially the somewhat ambiguous cue of laughter is used as a primary touchstone, followed by the search for intensification and rhetorical devices, such as hyperbole as one way of finding reversal of evaluation (i.e. irony). It is also noted that this reversal of evaluation needs to be emphasized either through grammatical, lexical, or phonological means to recognize its presence. Pertinent to the current study is the lexical manifestations of reversal of evaluation. The assumption is that relying on semantic preference and prosody, or rather the upsetting of 'normal' semantic preference and prosody, can help us spot certain kinds of ironies in the examples. To exemplify this, let us look at the classic example from a passage ending with the phrase *bent on self-improvement* (taken from David Lodge's novel *Small World* and cited in Louw, 1993 and Partington, 2011, inter alia). The irony comes from the unusual collocation of a verb, *bent on* normally favoring negative items, such as *revenge* or *destruction*[31] with the inherently favorable noun, *self-improvement*. In the method favored in this thesis, search words are determined prior to the analysis of concordance lines. As will be seen in section 4.3.5, the word list consists of quite generic words, such as *love*, *hate*, etc. Such a treatment, rooted in lexis, has clear advantages: (i) whether the corpus is a spoken or written one does not seem to be of relevance, (ii) prosodic cues are an easily negligible factor, and (iii) evaluation as conveyed through vocabulary leaves room for the inclusion of sarcasm in a way that it is the specific lexical item (and pattern) that determines what passes for irony and sarcasm (to be verified by the corpus analysis in Chapter 5). The reason for establishing apposite irony and sarcasm criteria based on a deductive approach (from general to specific) is to bolster the data analysis: generic words (*love, hate, etc.*) may not have a very evident collocational behavior, such as *bent on* (for the very reason for their being common); however, may exploit

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[31] These examples were extracted from the soap opera corpus utilized for the present study.

semantic preference and prosody in an unusual way, thereby highlighting the evaluation reversal and thus the contrast in the examples.

Upon revisiting the precursory criteria, it seems that now all four prerequisites can be ticked off:

(i)   It should include the absolutely necessary elements in the analysis that the research community agrees upon

The appearance of contrast (or its alternative denominations) throughout the irony and sarcasm literature from early stages up to this date lets us presume that it is indeed an essential element in recognizing irony and sarcasm. Evaluation (or its alternative denominations) is a younger concept in this research area but a more and more aggrandized one; and today barely any approach to irony or sarcasm makes do without the mentioning of it.

(ii)   It should be easily applicable to large corpus data in a way that the inevitable manual analysis is hindered as little as possible

Looking for some kind of contrast is a straightforward enough method to scan through relatively large numbers of data. Once the initial filtering takes place, remaining examples can be sorted according to their evoking the previously mentioned irony frame. The method is seen as the golden mean between too much restriction as to what can pass for irony (and sarcasm) and too much intuitive freedom on the part of the researcher.

(iii)   It should pertain to lexis or be easily adaptable to lexis

The reversal of evaluation is wedded to lexis and the broader concept of contrast can easily be transferred to the lexical level as well to highlight examples which do not reveal 'typical' cases of irony (e.g. phrasal irony, such as *bent on + positive term*).

(iv)   It should be able to accommodate irony and sarcasm rooted in a common foundation but still allowing for making a distinction between them

The common foundation being contrast and evaluation reversal, the difference between irony and sarcasm is assumed to manifest in the specific ways the evaluation reversal and contrast take place.

Having established the essential ingredients in irony and sarcasm, mention needs to be made about the fundamental factors that will aid the scanning process. One of them is context, considered in its general sense to include the wider conversational setting, preferably involving a dialogue between two interlocutors with the potential of shedding light on enough information

for us to follow the dialogue and know what the conversation is about. Co-text is also included in context, which is to bring us closer to lexis and grammar as it focuses on the words surrounding the ironic remark and their position. Co-text is meant in the original Sinclarian (2003) sense, according to which the co-text of a lexical item "is the group of words that occur on either side of it in a text" (p. 174). Verbal context or verbal environment are alternative denominations. In the same place, Sinclair remarks on the width and breadth of co-text which bears relevance to the corpus study to be presented in Chapter 5. The reason for the flexibility in the number of items that can appear in the surroundings of the key lexical item is that "individual words vary in the influence they exert on the co-text" (p. 174), leaving the analyst with an arbitrary choice as regards the span. This admitted arbitrariness is realized as a set of 4 or 5 words on either side, which is usually "sufficient for most descriptive purposes, and not so large that a great deal of extraneous material is also collected" (p. 174). However, a corpus study on irony and sarcasm is exactly that exception that cannot fit the usual scenario due to the weight the co-text gives to the establishing of the underlying meaning. In fact, it is crucial to ask how much context is necessary to firmly determine the ironic or sarcastic intent. Reyes et al. (2013) may have just offered partial answer to this question with regard to tweets, the dataset they are focused on. They claim that in irony the majority of negative terms is concentrated in the first 7 words, while for positive terms no such restriction applies. Kreuz (1996) points out how the context can aid us in detecting irony (note the connection with contrast): "a statement that is at odds with the current situation will be perceived as ironic, as long as it is also at odds with the default assumptions inherent in the situation" (p. 33) (for the related notion of contextual inappropriateness see Attardo, 2000). Incongruity (again some kind of contrast) is seen as a contradiction in the text and it can be any expression that is "perceptibly inappropriate to or not required by the apparent content" (Muecke, 1978, p. 368). Finally, Gibbs' (2000) study reinforces the view that figurative language uses, such as rhetorical questions and understatement can be indicative of irony. Having laid down the points with the help of which the corpus analysis can be conducted we can now move on to the next chapter which is dedicated to the research design. It comprises three subsections dealing with a semi-replica of a previous study, explicit cases of irony and sarcasm and their lemmas, as well as the delineation of the preprocessing of data and the pilot studies preceding the analysis of implicit irony and sarcasm.

Chapter 4: Research design

A series of small-scale studies has been carried out in the initial phase of the dissertation in order to test the waters so to say. The purpose of these trials was first of all, to empirically pinpoint the research gap in previous studies; furthermore, to validate the raison d'être of the hypothesis, according to which irony and sarcasm can manifest on the level of lexis and grammar, and if so, determining what unique characteristics they exhibit. If a need arose to include further criteria for the filtering process, these trial studies were expected to reveal this. An additional goal was to experiment with corpus search settings, such as window size which is a feature of corpus investigation letting the researcher determine how wide a context of a concordance line needs to be in order to make sense of it. It was supposed that the default setting of 50 characters would not be sufficient in a study where context indubitably plays a vital role.

4.1 The irony generator

Kreuz and Roberts (1995) devised a model that promised to generate ironic word combinations (made up of an adverb and an extreme, positive adjective). Unfortunately, their claim, according to which there is a standard syntactic frame for irony in English paired up with a deadpan intonation[32], lacks solid evidence. There is nothing that would guarantee the ironic nature of such a sentence uttered out of context. A simple corpus search in the soap opera corpus yielded less than impressive results. In most of the cases, the question was not whether these word combinations are ironic in the examples but whether they would occur at all. To double-check, the 100–million word British National Corpus (2007) was also employed. The results are summarized in Table 2.

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[32] Not to mention that whenever there is a claim about a certain intonation attached to irony and sarcasm, respectively, it invariably fails to consider that only relying on intonational cues limits irony and sarcasm to an English language context. The very same intonational cues that are claimed to be exclusively reserved for these phenomena might have very different implications in other languages, especially tonal languages, such as Chinese.

Table 2 Phrases from the irony generator with corresponding token numbers

Phrases generated by the irony generator	Tokens in the 135–million word soap opera corpus	Tokens in the 100–million word BNC
Absolutely amazing	132	14
Absolutely adorable	18	2
Certainly brilliant	-	-
Certainly delightful	-	-
Just fabulous	37	2
Just fantastic	38	3
Perfectly gorgeous	4	-
Perfectly great	2	-
Positively incredible	-	-
Positively lovely	-	-
Really magnificent	1	5
Really outstanding	2	6
Simply perfect	-	3
Simply superb	-	7
Simply the best… of my life	-	-
Simply the best… in the world	-	3
Simply wonderful	1	2

As we can see, many of the phrases either do not exist in either corpus, or appear only a few times in one of them. Seven phrases occur in both corpora. Upon a closer look, it became obvious how many of the instances were ironic based on the abovementioned criteria. Table 3 summarizes the results only listing relevant phrases (i.e. those that appeared in at least one of the corpora).

Table 3 Phrases from the irony generator with corresponding ironic token numbers

Phrases generated by the irony generator appearing in one or in both corpora	Tokens in soap opera corpus	Ironic	Tokens in BNC	Ironic
Absolutely amazing	132	4	14	-
Absolutely adorable	18	1	2	-
Just fabulous	39	12	2	-
Just fantastic	38	20	3	-
Perfectly gorgeous	4	-	-	n/a
Perfectly great	2	-	-	n/a
Really magnificent	1	-	5	-
Really outstanding	2	1	6	-
Simply perfect	-	n/a	3	-
Simply superb	-	n/a	7	-
Simply the best… in the world	-	n/a	3	-
Simply wonderful	1	1	2	-

The BNC corpus apparently is not representative of ironic usage as far as these phrases are concerned. As for the soap opera corpus the results are also relatively meager. Examples (4) to (7) show some of the ironic-nonironic pairs with the respective phrase boldfaced:

(4) [Phone rings] *Deacon*: Hello? *Stephanie*: Deacon, It's Stephanie Forrester. *Deacon*: You people are **absolutely amazing**. I'm on my honeymoon. *Stephanie*: Yes, I know. When are you coming back? *Deacon*: I don't know. In a couple days. *Stephanie*: That's too late. *Deacon*: It's too late for what? (ironic)

(5) *Luke*: Let's focus on you and me. What brings you here? It seems like you've been gone a long time. *Skye*: Time flies. *Luke*: You'd never know it to look at you. You look **absolutely amazing**. *Skye*: Are you messing with me, Luke? *Luke*: Not yet, but I remain ever hopeful. *Skye*: Then you look really great, too. It really is nice to see you. (nonironic)

(6) *Hayley*: Well, where's Adam and Liza? Maybe they know what's going on around here. *Tad*: Now they're out of town. *Hayley*: Oh, well, that's **just fantastic**. *Tad*: Okay, don't panic. He's -- J.R.'s an independent kid, you know. *Hayley*: Who just lost his mother. How could you just leave him like that? *Tad*: I had an emergency. (ironic)

(7) can tell your sister to pull her claws in, okay? I'm not gonna intrude on your family gathering. *Devon*: I actually just came over to pass along a recommendation. I took Esmerelda to this hot new club the other night, and it was **just fantastic**. I thought that maybe you and your boyfriend could check it out sometime. It's called the Velvet Room. *Hilary*: What makes you think I have a boyfriend? *Devon*: I don't know. (nonironic)

The phrase *absolutely amazing* emanates an inherently positive semantic prosody, which presumes a positive environment. The difference between (4) and (5) is first visible in the flow of the conversation. The contrast between the key phrase and the context, interpretable as a reversal of evaluation, in (4) makes the dialogue less smooth due to the presence of an element not fitting. The sentence *I'm on my honeymoon* raises awareness. Even though, nothing in particular seems to explain the ironic effect due to this sentence, however, taking it out from the dialogue immediately reveals its critical nature. The contrast seems to be evoked between our concept of honeymoon being the time of privacy only belonging to the married couple and the phone call that happens in the wider context and which serves as a disturbance and interruption in this case. Accordingly, the reversal of evaluation manifests also between the key phrase and the subsequent sentence, which is also reinforced by the fact that negating the propositional meaning in the key phrase would not make much sense (*You people are not *absolutely amazing*)[33]. Example (5) fulfills an additional role in the analysis; namely, showing us the extent

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[33] Chapter 5 will reveal why such examples are actually analyzed as sarcastic.

of context needed sometimes to disambiguate a sentence. The listener first assumes that the speaker is being insincere; however, the wider context indicates that there was a misunderstanding and the discussion resumes its normal smooth flow.

In (6), we can again see how the key phrase *just fantastic* does indeed have some sort of fixed status as the negation of the proposition would again sound not only unnatural but downright ambiguous, resulting in not negating the sentence but actually intensifying it (*Oh well, that's not just fantastic). The contrast manifests between the key phrase and the subsequent sentence once again. Namely, the assumption is that the adjacent sentence to the right of the key phrase would be responsible for comprehending the irony; however, the wider context is necessary to further disambiguate it serving as a double check. In (7), there is no disrupting element which again hints at nonirony in the dialogue. These examples are suggestive of the following: the interactive nature of irony cannot be denied, which, by extension, implies that context is indeed a crucial component in deducing the ironic effect. This has direct implications for the window size when a search is performed: the window size is set to 450 characters which translates into 2-3 sentences prior and after the search phrase allowing us to grasp the full context in most of the cases. Some general observations based on the ironic examples are demonstrated in Table 4:

Table 4 General observations based on the ironic examples

	Stand on its own	Embedded in a sentence	With demonstrative pronouns
absolutely amazing	✓	✓	
absolutely adorable		✓	
just fabulous	✓	✓	✓
just fantastic	✓	✓	✓
really outstanding			✓
simply wonderful	✓		

Naturally, the above observations are not quantifiable due to the overall low number of instances found in the corpus. However, they are sufficient to stimulate a more exhaustive corpus analysis. The reason for these word combinations yielding so few results altogether in both corpora, and essentially the problem with the irony generator is that it is too concrete without

sufficient justification to be thus. Having said that the idea that certain grammatical categories are more irony and sarcasm-prone than others has been noted on several occasions since Kreuz and Roberts' (1995) publication (for adverbial intensifiers see, e.g. Partington, 2007; for verbs see, e.g. Riloff et al., 2013). A corpus that allows for parts of speech search (e.g. adverb + adjective) may hold better chances of spotting ironic word combinations.

4.2 Explicit irony and sarcasm

The demarcation between explicit irony and implicit irony is an oft noted issue in the literature (see, e.g. Barbe, 1995; & Partington, 2007), the bottom line of which is that explicit irony signals the ironic nature of a given remark by metareferential words, such as *ironic* or *ironical*. This relates explicit irony to forms other than verbal irony, mainly situational irony. An example of explicit irony from the soap opera corpus can be seen in (8) where the metareferential word has been boldfaced:

(8) *Anna*: Yeah. Well, seems to be a trend, doesn't it? You know, usually I have an iron constitution, but that was pretty close. *Tad*: How **ironic**. Normally, almost getting wrapped around a utility pole sends me scurrying for the bushes. *Anna*: Apparently, me, too.

A fairly straightforward step was to subject these metareferential words to a corpus study not because it has not been done so far but because it has not yet been done with the underlying objective of pinpointing lexico-grammatical tendencies in the examples. The reversal of evaluation and contrast on a more general level can be well-embraced in explicit instances of irony and sarcasm. Not to mention that the use of these metareferential words can shed light on their differences too[34]. Unlike the word *irony* and its lemmas (see Partington, 2007), *sarcasm* has not been studied in this way so far to the best of my knowledge. What can be expected right away is that the examples containing *sarcasm*, *sarcastic*, and *sarcastically* will not be used in reference to situations unlike *irony* and its lemmas which when used explicitly invariably describe situational irony. The corpus search involved six words: *irony, ironic, ironically, sarcasm, sarcastic,* and *sarcastically*. A summary of the keywords with the total number of tokens is shown in Table 5. The results were compared between word pairs (sarcasm versus

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[34] This is confirmed in the data analysis too in the sense that certain keywords were shown to correspond to explicit irony markers (see sections 5.10.1 and 5.13.2).

irony, sarcastic versus ironic, and sarcastically versus ironically). A detailed analysis is given in the following subsections.

Table 5 Summary of tokens and token numbers (irony and sarcasm and their lemmas)

core word	total number
sarcasm	309
irony	498
sarcastic	247
ironic	938
sarcastically	191
ironically	82

4.2.1 Remarks on irony versus sarcasm

The nouns *sarcasm* and *irony* yielded 309 and 498 tokens, respectively. The focus was on what patterns emerged in the examples in terms of lexis and grammar, if any. Sarcasm is generally thought of as the more insulting of the two notions (see section 2.1.4.3), for which verification was sought in the co-text. Words appearing in positions 3L, 2L, and 1L were recorded as what was of interest was what preceded *sarcasm* and *irony*. Table 6 gives a summary of the patterns sarcasm (S) and irony (I) are embedded in in the corpus examples within the span of three words appearing to the left.

Table 6 Patterns sarcasm and irony enter into and token numbers

SARCASM	Token number	IRONY	Token number
Adj+S	8	Adj+I	81
V+S	126	V+I	133
N+of+S	12	N+of+I	17
S stand alone	159	I stand alone	266
S as proper N	4	I as modifier	1
Total	309	Total	498

In the following, four patterns will be expounded on: adjective + sarcasm, adjective + irony, verb + sarcasm, and verb + irony, these being the most relevant to the overall discussion of the thesis[35].

4.2.1.1 Adjectives with irony and sarcasm

In terms of adjectives occurring with the explicit uses of irony and sarcasm, the presumption was that they would function as pre-modifiers in the majority of cases. This presumption proved to be correct with *sarcasm*, exemplified by (9). Nevertheless, in the case of *irony* more examples involved adjectives functioning as post-modifiers (14 instances out of 92). Examples (10) and (11) exhibit two of these instances.

> (9)   *Harley*: You know, Aitoro, I bet there are situations when even you think that your **trademark sarcasm is inappropriate**. *Gus*: You think so?

> (10)   *Jeff*: (Chuckles) *Gloria*: Ooh, the Jack Abbott death stare. Run for your life! *Jeff*: (Chuckles) **Ain't irony grand?** Jackie boy just realized his prize is at his very own cabin. (Laughs).

> (11)   *Rick*: Sure, if she doesn't mind looking cheap. I, on the other hand, will not be there. You can tell Caroline that she's free to go with ridge. [Chuckles] Two adulterers going to a wedding. I mean, **the irony is -- it's absolutely hilarious**.

Two further presumptions were that: i) *sarcasm* would, in general, enter into fewer adjective collocations compared to *irony*; and ii) when *sarcasm* does collocate with adjectives, it would collocate more with negative adjectives compared to *irony*. Table 7 allows us to glance over those adjectives that collocated with *sarcasm* and *irony* more than once compartmentalized based on the inherent semantic prosody they carry (positive +, negative -, neutral n). Bednarek (2008) draws attention to the fact that the polarity of a word is not always evident. In ambiguous cases, the corpus itself served as the "adjudicator" displaying all collocations with the keyword in question, thus allowing an overview of its tendency towards the negative or positive.

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[35] Having said that the N+of+S/N+of+I as well as the S/I stand alone categories are well worth revisiting in the future. An example of "S stand alone" from the corpus is:
> *Nicole*: Oh, you forgot our room number? *Cass*: Now, let's not start off a beautiful day with **sarcasm**. *Nicole*: Ok. I'll be serious if you will. *Cass*: You're on.

"I stand alone" is exemplified in the following dialogue:
> *Aidan*: Are you serious? *Tad*: Yeah. *Aidan*: You're asking me about knowing a secret that can tear lives apart? *Tad*: Oh, very good -- **irony**. I remember this.

Table 7 Adjective collocations with sarcasm and irony based on semantic polarity

	Adj+S (occurring at least twice)*	Total number of adjective collocations with S	Adj+I (occurring at least twice)	Total number of adjective collocations with I
+		0	beautiful, delicious, grand, great, incredible, nice, rich	32
-		5	cruel, horrible, sad, tragic, twisted	29
n		3	biggest, final, real, ultimate	19
Total		8		81

*The Adj+S column is left blank as there were only single occurrences.

Examples are inserted here from each category except Adj+S with positive semantic prosody which yielded no result in the corpus search.

Adj+S with negative semantic prosody:

(12)   *Tyler*: Wow. Let's hear it for all those good fathers out there who are way too deep into their kids' business. Or not at all. *Neil*: Your **rude sarcasm** is appalling. And I am not going to apologize for looking out for my kids or for Jabot.

Adj+S with neutral semantic prosody[36]:

(13)   *Ewen*: [Chuckles] Points for originality... *Elizabeth*: [Chuckles] *Ewen*: ...Canceled out by demerits for **thinly veiled sarcasm**. Again. Make it real this time. Personalize. Don't censor. Free-associate with whatever you're feeling at the moment.

Adj+I with positive semantic prosody:

(14)   *Lulu*: Now I know that he does. He always has. He would give his live for any of his kids. *Helena*: What a **delightful irony** -- Luke Spencer, man of action, unable to lift a finger as I take the life of his bastard son.

Adj+I with negative semantic prosody:

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[36] Reading it in context, of course cancels out the neutrality; however, merely taking into consideration the adjective collocation *thinly veiled sarcasm*, there is nothing that would indicate negativity in it.

(15)   *Amelia*: I wasn't trying to imply otherwise. *Sam*: Well, then what was all that crap about "be careful what you wish for"? *Amelia*: I was just pointing out the **horrible irony** of the situation.

Adj+I with neutral semantic prosody:

(16)   *John*: For identical twins, they're amazingly different. *Michael*: Gotta say, I think it's -- well, I don't know what it is with this family, to tell you the truth. I think there's some kind of **cosmic irony** at work or something.

The expectations about sarcasm collocating with fewer adjectives and collocating with only adjectives with negative semantic prosody were indeed met. What can be deduced from Table 7 is that sarcasm entered into way fewer adjective collocations than irony (8 compared to 81 examples which is less than 10%). However, there were more instances when sarcasm was embedded in a neutral collocation than a negative one; bearing in mind that 8 examples hardly suffice to draw far-reaching conclusions. On the other hand, irony seems to enter into around the same number of positive and negative collocations as well as neutral ones. A possible explanation for these behavior may be sought in the restrictiveness of sarcasm and the permissiveness of irony. In reality, *sarcasm* and *irony* do not start on an equal footing as far as the search for their explicit uses is concerned. As is known, there are forms of irony not related to language, such as situational irony (Lucariello, 1994) and dramatic irony (Muecke, 1970). A search for the word *irony* would mostly exclude forms where verbal irony is what is meant (unless it is mentioned on a meta-level or indicates intonation). The specific adjectives collocating with *irony* possibly reveal either what kind of irony we are dealing with (examples from the corpus include *cosmic irony*, *tragic irony*, and *poetic irony*) or evaluate the ironic situation (e.g. *beautiful irony, twisted irony, delicious irony, etc.*). Since there is a much wider range of possibilities to talk about irony than sarcasm, the occurrence of a much wider range of adjectives is justified. In contrast, sarcasm only exists in the verbal realm; therefore, a search would have to refer to usage necessarily related to language (examples from the corpus include *biting sarcasm*, *bitter sarcasm*, and *judgmental sarcasm*). In addition, sarcasm is a much more content laden word than irony which obviates its "taking" a range of different adjectives. In the same spirit, irony seems not to carry this unambiguous import and can accommodate a fairly wide range of adjectives. This is also indicative of the polarity of the words; namely that whereas *sarcasm* connotes negativity (being faithful to its original sense), *irony per se* is a neutral term

acquiring a specific meaning and polarity only when attached to a particular adjective. Note that even then it can maintain its neutral sense (e.g. *real irony*, *ultimate irony, final irony, etc.*).

4.2.1.2 Verbs with irony and sarcasm

The similar number of verb + sarcasm and verb + irony collocations (see Table 6) makes a closer look at the examples worthwhile. Not to mention that the abovementioned inherent negative semantic prosody *sarcasm* displays becomes even more evident upon looking at the verbs it is collocating with. *Sarcasm* does not fail to deliver; apart from one example which implies that sarcasm is desired (however turns out to be insincere), the rest of the examples categorically dismiss it, usually in imperative mood or in the form of rhetorical question. (17) would make us believe that sarcasm is cherished at first sight; however in the context the underlying meaning becomes obvious[37]:

> (17)   *Adrienne*: You're right, Justin. I guess I'm just too stupid and shallow to have taken that into account. Now I've known the woman forever, but I have no idea how she'd respond to stress. *Justin*: **How I missed the sarcasm.** *Adrienne*: How I missed the lawyerly tone you get when you're setting me straight. Listen to me, Justin. Look at me. I know her better than you do and I'm telling you something is way, way off.

Table 8 shows the verbs that collocate with sarcasm more than once. It can promptly be deduced that the majority of these verbs does not only have a negative semantic prosody (when combined with *sarcasm*) but that the ones in the imperative mood are indeed synonymous. No imperative form actually encourages the other person to employ sarcasm, instead they actively discourage it by giving order to stop (e.g. *save*, *cut, lose*, etc.). Using sarcasm is not a desirable quality based on the corpus, which falls in line with the folk concept of it and also what the literature has stated about it so far. Compared to sarcasm, irony was expected to collocate with more neutral and positive terms, which was confirmed. Inherently positive examples, such as *appreciate the irony*, *enjoy the irony*, and *love the irony* point toward irony's variegated nature. Of course, an analysis of explicit uses does not exclude the likelihood of their being also representative of implicit irony. This would entail that the verbs displaying positive semantic

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[37] Example (17) is a case of explicit sarcasm and implicit irony at the same time. There is a double reversal of evaluation perceivable: What Adrienne says involves a contrast already between having known someone forever but not knowing how they would react in a certain situation, the improbability of which is duly noted by Justin ("How I missed the sarcasm"). The second reversal of evaluation comes after this when Adrienne not only echoes what Justin said ("How I missed…") but mentions it together with the disciplinary actions Justin is apparently using against her, indicating that these disciplinary actions are not welcome.

prosody under 'normal' circumstances are reversed and what is actually meant is not reflected in the literal senses of them.

Table 8 Verbs collocating with sarcasm and irony and their preferred mood

Mood	Sarcasm	Semantic prosody	Irony	Semantic prosody
Imperative	can	-		
	cut	-		
	drop	-		
	lose	-		
	save	-		
	skip	-		
	spare	-		
	stop	-		
Declarative	do without	-	filled with	n
	don't appreciate	-	know	n
	don't need	-	think of	n
	hide behind	-	dripping with	n
	resort to	-	laugh at	-
	recognize	n	miss	-
	use	n	smell	-
			talk about	n
			appreciate	+
			enjoy	+
			get	+
			going for	+
			like	+
			love	+
Interrogative (rhetorical question)	detect	n	see	n

4.2.2 Remarks on ironic versus sarcastic

The words *sarcastic* and *ironic* yielded 247 and 938 tokens, respectively. *Ironic* and *sarcastic* being adjectives, what was interesting to scrutinize was the collocations they enter into with nouns. Therefore, the search was focused on positions 1R, 2R, and 3R. The occurrences that appeared more than once are collected in Table 9. *Sarcastic* being an attribute of humans, it was expected that the nouns would invariably refer to people's personalities or actions. *Ironic*, on the other hand, was expected to collocate more often with inanimate things, such as describing a situation. Interestingly, the token numbers for total noun collocations are similar despite *ironic*

yielding 4 times as many results as *sarcastic*. We can see from the table that *sarcastic* may describe people (e.g. *one, brother, etc.*) but more often it describes language-related concepts, such as *comment, laugh*, or *remarks*. Examples (18) and (19) are representative of both uses:

(18)   *Natalie*: Oh, yeah, I've heard that one before. So, that big match between Picasso and Mike Tyson was huge. *Cristian*: All right, rule number one -- when learning to box, don't be a **sarcastic know-it-all**.

(19)   *Olivia*: You sure it's not just happy people? That's kind of foreign to us. *Phillip*: Yeah. *Olivia*: That's all you're going to say is "yeah"? No witty comeback, no **sarcastic reference** to our ill-fated nuptials in the loony bin? It's not like you to pass up an opportunity to hurt me.

Ironic, on the other hand, frequently recurs as the modifier of more abstract nouns (e.g. *thing, part, etc.*) hinting at the less restricted nature of it inasmuch as it does not prevail in language-related collocations. Examples (20) and (21) show this tendency:

(20)   *Colby*: Where are we going? Asher: We're gonna follow her. *Tad*: The **ironic thing** is I just finished having this whole conversation with J.R. about making mistakes, putting it in the past, being positive, moving ahead, and to be confident -- basically all the things I'm not with Cara.

(21)   *Carly*: Yes, Barbara, it's true. I cannot finish the designs on time. I have much too much going on in my life. So the fall collection's yours. Choke on it! *Barbara*: You know, I just find it so **ironic -- the parallels** in our lives. I mean, when you were ready to take over B.R.O., you were so hungry, you could taste it.

Table 9 Sarcastic + Noun and Ironic + Noun collocations

	Sarcastic + N	Ironic + N
	act, brother, chuckle, comment, comments, laugh, one, remark, remarks, tone	name, part, statement, thing, twist, way
Total number of noun collocations	53	58

A rather conspicuous lack of collocations with animate nouns is noticeable in the ironic column, although it is feasible to designate humans as ironic. This lack of noun collocations

might simply be accidental and a closer analysis of the corpus reveals that *ironic* can indeed be used as a human depicter in other constructions, exemplified in (22):

(22)   *Gabrielle*: Yeah. And wanting to do this for the money -- heavens. That's the furthest thing from my mind. *Troy*: I'll bet **you were just being ironic** again.

The occurrence of *sarcastic* with animate nouns tells us the following: i) being sarcastic is a human property, ii) its semantic preference extends to family relations apart from general references to a person (see example 23), iii) and it works with metaphorical designations of a person (see example 24).

(23)   *Carly*: You don't need your purse. You're not paying. Oh... *Jennifer*: Oh, yeah. This is exactly what I was hoping would happen, that my sweet, insensitive, **sarcastic cousin** would come over here during my most private, embarrassing moment.

(24)   *Maddie*: A gypsy moth? *Jamie*: I got it. Just a bug. Yeah, just a bug. Just a **sarcastic little bug**.

The prevalence of paralinguistic signals (e.g. *slow clap of approval*, *chuckle*, *tone*, etc.) with *sarcastic* is worth mentioning. Collocations with *ironic* referring to aspects of life (e.g. *twists of fate*, *circumstance*, etc.) cannot be found with *sarcastic*. Personality traits (e.g. *sense of humor*) and deeds (e.g. *act*) may be sarcastic, whereas abstract concepts (e.g. *time*) along with objects (e.g. *hair dryers*) may be ironic. Nouns in the sarcastic column promote categorization in a more straightforward manner than nouns in the ironic column due to the more clear-cut semantic subsets once again being suggestive of the realm sarcasm is restricted to. To pinpoint further differences in usage, the overlapping noun collocations are shown next regardless of how many times they appeared in the corpus. Examples contain the following nouns: *applause* (25-26), *commentary* (27-28), *way* (29-30), *wit* (31-32), and *words* (33-34).

(25)   Your relationship, your family gave his life structure. The two of you were, as a team at Forrester, you were absolutely unstoppable. Take it from the woman who spent years trying to stop you. Honey, if you come back to Ridge, I'll support you 100%. [**Sarcastic applause**]

(26)   *Alexandra*: I don't know. I mean, I think it all started, I just wanted to get back here. I knew I had to make some sort of splash, so that Alan could think I was somebody... *Buzz*: Well... *Alexandra*: ...Be somebody worthy. (**Ironic applause**)

Characterizing *applause* as either ironic or sarcastic has a certain degree of arbitrariness involved in it, and what is presumably meant is that the applause is not being a sincere

acknowledgment but precisely the opposite, a discredit to the person in question. Therefore, *ironic* and *sarcastic* fulfill very similar roles in the above examples.

(27)   *Esther*: Well, I'll think about it. For your sake, Sean. *Sean*: Thank you. *Jill*: Oh, yuck. Okay, come on. I'm waiting for your usual **sarcastic commentary** here.

(28)   *Billy*: Ho--whoa. Whoa. Whoa. I mean, seriously? *Victoria*: What? Yeah. *Billy*: You're-- you're really into this? This isn't some sort of kitschy, **ironic commentary**?

The differing pragmatic functions of the uses are highlighted in (27) and (28) where we can gather from the overall tone in (27) that the speaker is provoking her partner and uses *sarcastic commentary* in a derisive remark; whereas, in (28) *ironic commentary*, embedded in a question and thrown together with *kitschy* is raising the suspicion of it not having been meant in its 'prototypical' sense.

(29)   *Ridge*: Yes, so she's made me aware. *Thomas*: And you could do a lot worse. I mean, she's smart, funny in a cool sort of **sarcastic way**.

(30)   *Adam*: I knew, too. I just didn't follow my instincts. *Sharon*: Well, how did you find out? *Adam*: Fate stepped in, in a cruel and **ironic way**.

Way is used as a generic noun to reference a certain trait or situation in (29) and (30), being smart and funny as well as characterizing fate. This usage reflects the human-oriented nature of sarcasm and the situation-oriented nature of irony mentioned previously.

(31)   *Brady*: Don't worry about it. I'm--I'm actually very relieved, because, you know, one less person hovering over me is gonna be better for me. *Melanie*: Of course. No, of course. That's good to know. I'm going to miss your loving, **sarcastic wit**, Brady.

(32)   *Sam*: All right. Take care guys. I love this country. No matter where you are, go to a college party, it's always 1961. *Marah*: You and your **ironic wit** can take a break. I'm not going to be too cool to have fun.

Incidentally, (31) and (32) are opposites in the sense that in (31) *sarcastic wit* (expected to be an undesirable trait) represents a positive quality; whereas, in (32) *ironic wit* (intuitively expected to be associated more with humorousness) turns out to be something undesirable.

(33)   *Diane*: And you're counting on Tuvia to be a success to generate the revenues you need to dig yourself out of this hole. Well, contrary to what some people might believe, I'm not a total airhead when it comes to business. *Jack*: No one has ever accused you of that, Diane. *Diane*: Wrong. Phyllis has to my face in so many **sarcastic words**.

(34)   *Ross*: And you're inferring what by that? *Danny*: Oh, nothing. Nothing. But notice how easy it is to tip things toward the negative? You just dangle a few **ironic words**, say them with a smile.

In (33) *sarcastic* signals negativity where the victim apparently recognized the sarcastic words as insults. In a somewhat similar fashion, *ironic* in (34) is also meant in a negative sense with a hint that whereas *sarcastic words* do not need further explanation as to their offensiveness, *ironic words* are not sufficient in themselves.

4.2.3 Remarks on ironically versus sarcastically

The adverbs s*arcastically* and *ironically* yielded 191 and 82 tokens, respectively. This is the only pair where the lemma of sarcasm outnumbers that of irony. This seems counterintuitive at first due to the difference at default between the two adverbs, *ironically* being more inclusive allowing for expressions, such as *ironically speaking* or *ironically enough*. In contrast, *sarcastically* has no such privilege even though saying something *sarcastically* is very well possible. The assumption is that patterns emerging in the corpus would set these adverbs apart from the previously examined *sarcasm* vs *irony* and *sarcastic* vs *ironic* pairs in a way that the adverbial forms would less frequently contribute to the content of an individual's discourse, instead serve as parenthetical information about the manner in which the discourse is performed. In other words, instead of fulfilling a linguistic function, they would fulfill a paralinguistic function. More specifically, *sarcastically* is expected to provide paralinguistic information exclusively, whereas *ironically* allowed to be used as a sentence modifier (e.g. *ironically speaking*) would exhibit some examples of this sort. Paralinguistic features include laughter, whistling, and so forth; thus, what was observed in the corpus was what sort of paralinguistic-related words collocated with *sarcastically* and *ironically*, respectively. *Sarcastically* turned out to show a much more homogeneous use compared to *ironically* which varied more according to the function it served in the examples. Consistent with expectations, *sarcastically* offered paralinguistic information embedded in square brackets (or parentheses) on the manner in which something was done (e.g. *sigh sarcastically, giggle sarcastically, chuckle sarcastically, etc.*); however, without the verb it was hard to judge if standing on its own (see example 35) would

indicate the tone[38] with which something is uttered or the fact that what is said should not be taken literally. Only three examples were found where *sarcastically* formed part of the content as in (36):

(35)   *Sister Theresa:* You know who you remind me of? St. Joseph. *Rafe*: St. Joseph. St. Joseph. Yeah. **[Sarcastically]** I hear that all the time.

(36)   *Greta*: What do you mean, fun? *Jennifer*: I just -- **I meant it sarcastically**. I mean, it's going to be no fun. I-I need to be extremely sensitive to Jack's state of mind. I mean, seeing as this was such a difficult big secret for him -- you know, and so painful –

In 79 cases out of 191 (41.3%) *sarcastically* collocated with verb forms of laughter (*laughed, laughs*) which is indicative of the apparently distinct phenomenon of being able to laugh sarcastically. In 69 cases (36.1%) it stood alone either suggesting a certain tone or the nonliteral nature of the remark (35). A closer look at the 69 examples revealed that *sarcastically*, when standing alone, often preceded very short replies (e.g. interjections, names, negation markers, etc., called reaction signals by Quirk et al., 1985) without sufficient context; thus, providing a cue to not to take the remark in its literal sense. See, for example, (37) and (38):

(37)   *Kayla*: You know what? She's got to take responsibility for her actions. And, you know, girls are complicated. *Steve*: **[Sarcastically] No**.

(38)   *Jill*: Gloria, I was invited. I'm just not going. *Jeff*: Forget the wedding. We'll have our own party here. *Jill*: **(Sarcastically) Oh, yippee**.

On the other hand, *ironically* was used in a similar fashion to *sarcastically* in only 4 instances, exemplified in (39):

(39)   *Olivia*: I thought that you were talking about your mob business. Oh! I'm -- I'm such an idiot. I thought you were trying to protect me. Not some filthy affair. **[Laughs ironically]** *Sonny*: No...

Apart from such examples as the one above, *ironically* was mostly used as an expression, 68 cases out of 82 (82.9%) standing on its own, such as in (40):

(40)   *Stefano*: I owe you nothing. *EJ*: What makes you think you can just go and undo all of my hard work? **Ironically**, work that I did for you!

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[38] The 'sarcastic tone' has indeed been the focus of some previous literature (see, e.g., Haiman, 1997; Creusere, 1999; & Woodland & Voyer, 2011) as opposed to the 'ironic tone' which is claimed to be non-existent (see Attardo et al., 2003 & Bryant & Fox Tree, 2005). This implies that one significant distinguishing factor between irony and sarcasm is that only the latter has a concomitant tone. However, intonation falling outside the scope of this thesis, this distinguishing factor will not be taken into further consideration here.

The difference between the "stand alone" positions of *sarcastically* and *ironically* can be compared between (35) and (40). The expectation according to which *ironically* would also serve more paralinguistic functions than linguistic ones is not supported by the corpus search inasmuch as *ironically* is more often embedded in the sentence adding to the content of it.

In summary, having taken account of the explicit uses of sarcasm and irony meant to revoke the idea that everyday speech does not distinguish among their usage, which was partly shown in their synonymous use in only some limited cases (e.g. as paralinguistic attribute). In addition, the treatment of explicit sarcasm and irony is meant to be useful in the data analysis of implicit cases.

4.3 Implicit irony and sarcasm

Moving on from explicit cases, what makes irony and sarcasm detection a challenging task from here on is also what makes it especially interesting, namely that conventional corpus observation techniques (e.g. observing patterns in concordances) are not sufficient in themselves to spot irony and sarcasm due to their being the "hard-to-spot" phenomena they are. We need to dig deeper and look behind the scenes. Whatever patterns there might be may be concealed at first sight. Before delving into the corpus study, let us begin this section with an example coming from previous literature. Haverkate (1990) claims that "verbal irony is incompatible with metareferential expressions […]" (p. 79), which is indubitably true; however, verbal irony is not incompatible with certain other words and expressions that essentially elevate it to the status of explicit irony[39] in a sense, at least in terms of recognition of the ironic nature. Haverkate provides an example of implicit irony with a telling explanation:

(41)   Your friend asked me to lend him the nice little sum of $ 100,000.

According to Haverkate (1990), the linguistic context makes the above sentence explicit with regard to its ironic nature, especially the overt contradiction that exists between the sum and its qualification (p. 82). Thus, apparently the author himself can think of instances where the absence of an overt, metareferential word (e.g. *ironic*) does not preclude the presence of a certain other kind of reference that in the end makes the example explicitly ironic indeed.

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[39] This explicit nature is not to be confused with what the literature has referred to as explicit irony; namely, having the word irony or its lemmas spelt out in the example. See Section 4.2.

4.3.1 Preprocessing: deciding on the source of search expressions

The number of possible candidates that can be searched for in a corpus is abundant. One can rely on words and expressions mentioned in the literature (Kreuz & Roberts, 1995; Hay, 2001; Partington, Duguid, & Taylor, 2013; & Riloff et al., 2013) that are often surmised to be representative examples of irony and sarcasm, one can also rely on their own intuition, on everyday conversations, and so forth. What constituted the basis for the present list of search phrases was a Twitter dataset published as the training data for the Semeval task 11 in 2015. This dataset consists of nearly 8000 tweets. Tweets are short messages characterized by the use of 'little space-consuming' elements, such as abbreviations, slang, emoticons, onomatopoeic expressions, etc., instead of using conventional language. They generally consist of no more than 140 characters (Xu et al., 2015). Having introduced the main features, the justification for employing this dataset will be elaborated on next. Firstly, tweets have been an up-and-coming research focus lately, especially as far as irony and sarcasm studies are concerned (see, e.g. Davidov et al., 2010; González-Ibáñez et al., 2011; Liebrecht et al., 2013; Reyes et al., 2013; Kunneman et al., 2015; & Xu et al., 2015). Secondly, the "pre-annotated" nature of tweets (i.e. users indicating irony and sarcasm) makes it appropriate to be used in a study on irony and sarcasm. Thirdly, the shortness of the messages makes annotation work more undemanding; additionally, this same shortness allows the annotators to register the key terms more promptly. Finally, tweets represent everyday conversational topics and constitute natural discourse data. The messages invariably appear in the neighborhood of a hashtag (#) which symbol became an exclusive commodity of Twitter, an online social networking service. Irony and sarcasm were thus marked by the users (i.e. the people posting the tweets) in this dataset in three different ways. The marking was either #irony, #sarcasm, or #not. Whereas, the former two options do not indicate what part of the message the irony and sarcasm refers to, the latter option denies the whole message (proposition), and thus is representative of the traditional, perhaps prototypical usage, of irony exemplified in Grice (1975), for example. Example tweets of all three sorts are shown below:

(42)   Gonna finish this cup of coffee then take a nap. #irony

(43)   I love finding things out from other people. #sarcasm

(44)   Long awkward car rides are my favorite things ever. #not

These randomly selected examples are suggestive of several crucial points. Firstly, (42) clearly shows the vital role context plays in irony, especially if the goal is to make it recognizable to the listener. Context is what makes the ironic/sarcastic episode complete. In theory, the person who tweets should be the most authentic person to judge the nature of their messages; however, from a researcher's point of view, it would be misleading to rely on (only) laypeople's perception. One such ambiguous case is seen in (43) where the literature on the topic may not support the user's perception of the tweet passing for sarcasm mainly due to the lack of a specific victim blamed in the situation. The lack of context is apparent in (44) too. Moreover, in some of the tweets marked with #irony no irony is necessarily discernible (once again from a researcher's point of view). An example is shown below:

(45)   We wake up every day with the same routine ...but expect different results...
        #irony

If we are to accept the presence of irony in (45), it still could not pass for verbal irony, but for situational irony at most. Secondly, the nature of "tweeting" (i.e. sending short messages not necessarily provided with a context) does not take the recently well-acknowledged interactional nature of irony and sarcasm into consideration. Thus, a tweet represents one side of the irony/sarcasm coin only (i.e. the speaker's opinion). Nevertheless, the speaker considering something ironic or sarcastic is never a guarantee for the hearer acknowledging it.

4.3.2 Preprocessing: deciding on the criteria for extracting search expressions

For reasons explained in the previous section, it did not make sense to utilize the tweets in their "raw form". Once again, single tweet messages are in many ways discrepant from conversations with several participants; however, in terms of the purpose of this preliminary step in the research, these tweets proved to be a fruitful source of data. What was deemed a more viable way to get to the bottom of irony and sarcasm from a scientific viewpoint was to annotate tweets for their containing evaluative language. Evaluation, as is clear from section 3.2.1, is intimately connected with irony and sarcasm in a way that a safe assumption would be to claim that no ironic or sarcastic remark lacks a certain evaluative function. Channell's (2000) corpus-based account of evaluative lexis serves as a comprehensive starting point for the preprocessing of these data. Her interpretation of what constitutes an evaluative function will be adopted in the present analysis too with some minor caveats: "the evaluative function is taken to be whatever

carries the expression of the speaker's or writer's attitude or emotional reaction to the content of their text" (p. 39). In the mirror of what irony and sarcasm research maintains about the notion of evaluation, a supplement is necessary; namely that the evaluation can be directed towards the content but also towards a concrete person. Evaluation can take various forms, such as personal and moral views, aesthetic judgements, and so forth (Channell, 2000, p. 54). Similarly to Channell, a restriction applies, namely that the evaluation be carried by either individual lexical items, or fixed expressions, instead of whole sentences. Since Channell's analysis takes a different orientation, the ignoring of expressions whose only function is to convey evaluation is justified in her study; however, for my purposes this restriction need not be imposed. Therefore, evaluative language whose only purpose is to evaluate as well as lexical items which carry evaluation as part of their meaning are considered equally[40]. Only a mild restriction applies in terms of what parts of speech are considered for conveying evaluation, i.e. any word that carries meaning in itself can be a potential candidate. Having said that, certain parts of speech were expected to carry evaluative language more often than others, such as adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. Other than having an expectation as to what part of speech would dominate in conveying evaluation, the conscious decision was made not to restrict the study right at the beginning (i.e. before annotation has taken place) to allow ourselves to take the direction that the data leads us into. A simple test in order to ensure that it is truly an evaluation that is being annotated is to omit the word or expression and see if the sentence still tilts towards the negative or positive end of a scale. Partington (2007) points out that evaluation can take various forms and manifest overtly (on the level of lexis and grammar) and covertly (no obvious linguistic cues) (p. 1553). Since what is of interest in the present study is specific words and word strings carrying evaluation, other types have been neglected. To this end, it is useful to make a distinction here between *evidentiality* and *affect* as is known in the evaluation literature. The notions refer to two types of evaluation, the former being concerned with the epistemic status of a proposition; whereas the latter with attitudes (Gray & Biber, 2015). Intuitively, it is more fruitful to investigate evaluation related to affect for the present purposes. Justification is sought in the fact that while evidentiality expresses certainty, doubt, and actuality, affect comprises attitudes, feelings, and emotions which latter are more closely associated with irony and sarcasm. Two

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[40] Channell's (2000) example for the former is "The Australian press thought he was an *idiot*", while for the latter, "They were, are, the most plodding, bloated, *self-important* slop-bucket in rock history" (p. 40, original emphasis).

pilot studies and one full-scale study were carried out. The statistical measure officially denominated as Cohen's kappa coefficient was applied as it is the most widely-used statistic for qualitative data measurement, such as the one at hand (Mielke, Bloch, & Kraemer, 1989). However, it is worth noting that this calculation was done merely to maintain the protocol associated with studies involving more than one annotator as well as to lend credibility to the study. Keeping in mind that the aim of the tweet annotation task was to extract a list of words and phrases that were deemed evaluative by both annotators (so that the extracted items can be subjected to further corpus analysis), the percentage of agreement, partial agreement, and disagreement is largely irrelevant. Involved in the pilot studies and the full-scale study were (the same) two naïve native English speakers doing the annotation and the present author serving as the adjudicator.

4.3.3 Pilot study 1: remarks and results

In the first pilot study, the two independent annotators were asked to find evaluative language in 40 tweets that were sent to them in an excel sheet. Sufficient information was given to them to be able to annotate the examples; however, no information whatsoever was provided as to the real nature of the study (i.e. it being about irony and sarcasm). The exact instructions for the task and the tweets can be found in Appendix A. There were no special expectations in terms of the outcome; the only concern was whether it would be clear for laypeople what constitutes evaluation. As irony and sarcasm research themselves do not specify what exactly passes for evaluative language, the annotators were given "poetic license" to decide for themselves within the constraints stipulated in the instructions. 34 tweets were subjected to closer inspection in the end out of the original 40 (6 tweets have been discarded for not being annotated in an obvious way by one of the annotators). What was immediately striking was that when there was an adjective in the tweet, it was annotated as evaluative[41]. There was perfect overlap between annotations 11 times out of 34 (ca. 32%). Some interesting points in terms of the difference in evaluation are worth mentioning. The tweet pairs (46-47) as well as (48-49) exemplify one of these points. The annotators' judgement of what constitutes evaluation in a tweet is enclosed in double brackets and is boldfaced:

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[41] Gray and Biber (2015) make a good point noting that for an adjective to be evaluative it has to be the so-called controlling element (p. 236) in a proposition, which they contrast with adjectives having a purely descriptive nature. The adjectives in the tweets are all of this controlling nature, thus evaluative.

(46)	It was **[[so nice]]** of my dad to come to my graduation party. #not (Evaluation of annotator 1)

(47)	It was so **[[nice]]** of my dad to come to my graduation party. #not (Evaluation of annotator 2)

(48)	//**[[Always nice]]** to come back onto clash of clans to see this... #Sarcasm http://t.co/uFddfdyQPG (Evaluation of annotator 1)

(49)	//**[[Always nice]]** to come back onto clash of clans to see this... #Sarcasm http://t.co/uFddfdyQPG (Evaluation of annotator 2)

As can be observed, when the adjective *nice* was preceded by the adverb *so*, annotator 1 indicated both words as evaluative language (i.e. *so nice*), while annotator 2 indicated only *nice*. In contrast, when the adverb *always* occurred before *nice*, both annotators indicated both words as having evaluative function (i.e. *always nice*). Furthermore, the pronoun *I* was included in the string of words carrying the evaluation according to the judgment of both annotators (e.g. *I would love*, *I enjoyed*, *I would be happy*, *I'm so pleased*, and *I love*). These observations may not have any apparent significance at this point (especially since the mere number of examples impedes generalizations); however, upon analyzing the soap opera corpus for irony and sarcasm on a lexical level, the issue of whether a particular construction (i.e. pronouns appear in the expression, or an adjective is preceded by a certain adverb) lends itself more to an ironic/sarcastic interpretation may well be crucial to the proving of the hypothesis. In the process of assessing the outcome, a score of 2 was given where there was substantial disagreement (e.g. annotator 1 finding evaluation, whereas annotator 2 indicating that there is none). A score of 1 was given to each tweet where the annotators either fully agreed or there was overlap, such as in (46-47) and (48-49). Even with such leniency, the inter-rater agreement was only *fair* ($\kappa = .31$) warranting a second pilot study with some refinements.

4.3.4 Pilot study 2: remarks and results

Before sending out the second batch of tweets, the instructions were revisited and revised according to the first pilot study's results and the annotators' comments (see Appendix B, also for the tweets used in this study). Two categories were conflated: if the annotators did not find any evaluation in the tweet it was marked in the same way as when they were unsure whether there was evaluation, unlike in the first pilot study where these two were marked differently.

Also, it was emphasized that even if the evaluative language extends over a string of words instead of a single lexical item, the string should preferably not exceed four words. This restriction was necessary in order to simplify the adjudicator's job of comparing and contrasting the results and also to eschew too much specificity but at the same time allow the inclusion of, for instance, fixed expressions or tenses, if annotators deemed them evaluative. An example of unnecessary specificity from the first pilot study can be seen below:

(50)   Why yes **[[I would love to mow the yard]]** right after working all day #Not
        (Evaluation of annotator 1)

(51)   Why yes **[[I would love]]** to mow the yard right after working all day #Not
        (Evaluation of annotator 2)

Mow the yard is clearly not what conveys the evaluation here, thus it should preferably be excluded from the annotation. The restriction also entails that a higher amount of complete overlaps can be achieved. In the second pilot study, the number of tweets has been raised to 60. Expectations were that with the conflation of two categories, the task would be easier to carry out and agreement and disagreement would be more straightforward. The revising of the instructions accordingly (and possibly the annotators' familiarity with the task) resulted in an *almost perfect* kappa value ($\kappa = .91$) with the proviso that what was enclosed as the evaluative language in the tweets was handled leniently in a way that if there was an overlap between the keyword(s), it was accepted as agreement between the two annotators (i.e. a score of 1 was assigned) similarly to the first pilot study. An example of this sort can be seen in (52) and (53). The annotators' judgement of what is the evaluation is again enclosed in double brackets and is boldfaced:

(52)   Oh how I just **[[love not talking to my boyfriend]]** for 2 days.... #not 😵😵
        (Evaluation of annotator 1)

(53)   Oh how **[[I just love]]** not talking to my boyfriend for 2 days.... #not 😵😵
        (Evaluation of annotator 2)

It is not by accident that this tweet pair was chosen to demonstrate the abovementioned point as it is arguably an extreme example of an overlap between the evaluative parts. However, since *love* is considered the most common positive sentiment term in sarcastic tweets (Riloff et al., 2013), the overlaps were accepted simply on the basis of their both containing the keyword *love*. A further potentially questionable case is shown in (54) and (55):

(54)   The **[[clear answer]]** to all of these pitcher injuries is just to ban baseball. **[[Amazed]]** no one has thought of it. #sarcasm (Evaluation of annotator 1)

(55)   The clear answer to all of these pitcher injuries is just to ban baseball. **[[Amazed]]** no one has thought of it. #sarcasm (Evaluation of annotator 2)

The instructions, at first, were not clear on the point whether to handle all independent sentences within a tweet message separately. Either this oversight, or the fact that annotator 2 simply did not find any evaluation in the above tweet may have resulted in only partial agreement. Both of them annotating the second sentence identically made this pair of tweets still pass as agreement. The reason for this leniency is that in the light of the ultimate goal; namely collecting words and word strings in order to subject them to corpus study, it is not crucial that in a pair of tweets consisting of more than one sentence, the annotations completely overlap. In other words, the word *amazed* may be used for further analysis, whereas *clear answer* would be not.

Finally, the kappa value was also calculated by considering a much less lenient approach where cases like (52), (53), (54), and (55) did not pass for agreement of any sort but were considered disagreement and received a score of 2. Only instances, such as those in (56) and (57) have been accepted. It is fairly clear from the annotation that the annotators' judgment as to what carries the evaluative function in this tweet overlaps substantially. Therefore, such cases have been treated as there being complete agreement between them. What would be extracted from this example for further analysis would be *winners are always*. The kappa value, in this less lenient approach, was still high enough to be of significance; κ = .66 which falls into the interval of *substantial* agreement.

(56)   RT @Winkerbell_: The American National Spelling Bee, where **[[winners are always]]** Indians. #Irony #BrownSwag (Evaluation of annotator 1)

(57)   RT @Winkerbell_: The American National Spelling Bee, where **[[winners are always Indians]]**. #Irony #BrownSwag (Evaluation of annotator 2)

A closer inspection of the results of the second pilot study revealed, if not patterns, but some potentially interesting phenomena. The marking of adverbs, such as *really* and *just* in the tweets seem to cause uncertainty and the annotation is thus often inconsistent in the sense that these words do not always add to the evaluative language in the tweet but also consistent if we consider that annotator 1 invariably includes these adverbs in her annotation. As was mentioned

in section 4.3.2, there was an expectation that adjectives, verbs, and adverbs would intuitively be part of an evaluation more frequently than perhaps other parts of speech. Therefore, it is somewhat surprising that there is no consistency in this regard. It is worthwhile to note though when the expectation of certain parts of speech being more prone to evaluation is mentioned, it is not clarified if these parts of speech are evaluation-prone when standing alone or in (particular) word strings (*great* vs *really great*). A couple of examples have been extracted from the tweets:

(58)　　　Well that was **[[just a great way]]** to be woken up... #not (Evaluation of annotator 1)

(59)　　　Well that was just a **[[great way]]** to be woken up... #not (Evaluation of annotator 2)

(60)　　　@Derek91662871 @TateVeley_97 @CaidenCowger you tweeted me over 15 times. Your [sic] **[[really making me rethink]]** my ideas with blind arguments #not (Evaluation of annotator 1)

(61)　　　@Derek91662871 @TateVeley_97 @CaidenCowger you tweeted me over 15 times. Your [sic] really **[[making me rethink]]** my ideas with blind arguments #not (21) (Evaluation of annotator 2)

(62)　　　This roller coaster of emotions is **[[just SO awesome]]** today. #not (Evaluation of annotator 1)

(63)　　　This roller coaster of emotions is just **[[SO awesome]]** today. #not (Evaluation of annotator 2)

Grammatical negation (i.e. having a negation marker) is apparently an integral part of the evaluative phrase as it is invariably marked as such even if there is no complete overlap between the evaluative expressions. The negated parts have been underlined:

(64)　　　it's nights like these that **[[I wish I <u>didn't</u> have to]]** be in Burlington for work by 7:30 #letsgetcray #not (Evaluation of annotator 1)

(65)　　　it's nights like these that **[[I wish I <u>didn't</u>]]** have to be in Burlington for work by 7:30 #letsgetcray #not (Evaluation of annotator 2)

(66)　　　**[[I <u>can't</u> believe]]** I waited 20m for a bus only to have it be delayed by **[[too many busses]]** getting in each others [sic] way #Irony #MKTransport #Arriva (Evaluation of annotator 1)

(67)	**[[I <u>can't</u>[42] believe]]** I waited 20m for a bus only to have it be delayed by too many busses getting in each others [sic] way #Irony #MKTransport #Arriva (Evaluation of annotator 2)

The pronoun *I* is included in the evaluation even if there is no complete overlap. Interestingly enough, only *I* holds this privilege; other pronouns have not been annotated so consistently. The pronoun has been underlined:

(68)	**[[<u>I</u> love]]** the fact that no one in my family ever replies to my texts #not (Evaluation of annotator 1)

(69)	**[[<u>I</u> love the fact]]** that no one in my family ever replies to my texts #not (Evaluation of annotator 2)

(70)	@BleacherReport With the way he played this postseason, **[[<u>I</u> bet]]** every team would give the Pacers whatever they want in exchange 4 Hibbert #Not (Evaluation of annotator 1)

(71)	@BleacherReport With the way he played this postseason, **[[<u>I</u> bet every team would give the Pacers whatever they want]]** in exchange 4 Hibbert #Not (Evaluation of annotator 2)

Based on the two pilot studies, the conclusion can be drawn that with clear instructions and a higher number of tweets, the results can change remarkably in terms of inter-rater agreement. Consequently, the annotators were ready to start working on the "real" data.

4.3.5 Full-scale study: remarks and results

The "real" tweet dataset consisted of 781 tweets, which was a randomly selected sample (ca. 10%) out of the approximately 8000 that were available. Instructions have once again been revisited and revised accordingly (see Appendix C). The κ-value was in the *moderate* interval (κ= .51) indicating a slightly better result than chance. The sharp contrast between the kappa values in the second pilot study and the full scale study is likely due, on the one hand, to the perfunctory and mind-numbing nature of the annotation job. On the other hand, in an effort to bias the study as little as possible, the instructions may have been too generalized. None the less, the annotation did indeed produce usable data which when translated into numbers, looks as follows: There was total or overlapping agreement between the annotators in 65.8% of the time,

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[42] Strictly speaking *can't* in (67) and (68) is a negated form; however, its status as a fixed expression (e.g. its opposite does not exist) sets it apart from the other negated forms highlighted in the tweets.

which was considered acceptable for the present purposes. In terms of usable data, all annotations which did not have at least overlapping evaluation had to be necessarily excluded from further analysis. This applied to annotations where i) one annotator found evaluative language in the tweet while the other did not, ii) annotators found different evaluative items, iii) or neither of the annotators found evaluative language in the tweet (which latter case would count as total agreement indeed; however, without usable data being produced). In 19.4% of the cases (152 instances out of 781) only one of the annotators found evaluation in the tweets (see examples 72-73); in 11.1% of the cases (87 instances out of 781), annotators both indicated evaluative words in the tweets; however, different ones (see examples 74-75); and in 18% of the cases (141 instances out of 781) the agreement consisted in neither annotator finding evaluation in the tweets (see examples 76-77). Table 10 summarizes these numbers. The annotators' judgment of what is the evaluation is enclosed in double brackets and is boldfaced here again. No annotation means no evaluation has been detected.

Table 10 Overview of annotation agreement in the full-scale study

Annotators finding the same evaluation	232 (29.7%)
Annotators finding overlapping evaluation	169 (21.6%)
Annotators finding different evaluation	87 (11.1%)
Only one annotator finding evaluation	152 (19.4%)
Annotators finding no evaluation	141 (18%)
Total	**781 (100%)**

(72)   Tomorrow will be **[[exactly]]** like Sunday.. homework homework homework!! 😂😂😂 #sarcasm #whydoesmylifesuck (Evaluation of annotator 1)

(73)   Tomorrow will be exactly like Sunday.. homework homework homework!! 😂😂😂 #sarcasm #whydoesmylifesuck (Evaluation of annotator 2)

(74)   **[[That's okay]]**, I really wanted the first one to be the practice test! #not (Evaluation of annotator 1)

(75)   That's okay, **[[I really wanted]]** the first one to be the practice test! #not (Evaluation of annotator 2)

(76)   @benbfaulkner want a giant cookie? I can drop it in on my way to the gym #irony http://t.co/U9h6yjf90O (Evaluation of annotator 1)

(77)   @benbfaulkner want a giant cookie? I can drop it in on my way to the gym #irony
http://t.co/U9h6yjf90O (Evaluation of annotator 2)

Having discarded the above described examples left us with 401 tweets. Out of 401 tweets, 232 had full agreement and 169 had overlapping agreement. The course of action taken was the following: tweets were sorted based on total and partial agreement, recurring annotations were grouped together, and partial but substantially overlapping annotations were subjected to closer analysis to look for emerging patterns. The keyword list in Table 11 is the result of the extraction of single evaluative words from the annotations that consistently overlapped (either in examples of total agreement or partial agreement), were adjectives, verbs, or adverbs[43], and appeared at least three times. Compartmentalization of evaluative expressions was done in terms of token number (total agreement + overlapping agreement), parts of speech, semantic classification, and semantic prosody. As for the semantic classification, Quirk et al.'s (1985) *Comprehensive English Grammar* reference book was employed. Semantic prosody could either be determined directly via the lexical item or browsing the soap opera corpus for prevalence[44]. With this specific list of words, the task seemed pretty straightforward as these words have an inherent semantic prosody that is obvious without seeking further evidence. Having said that, *can't wait* was subjected to a corpus search to verify its overall semantic prosody; with examples like *can't wait to marry/to meet/to start* and so on it is safe to assume that this now figuratively used expression is employed in a positive sense. A brief summary of the patterns emerging at first sight in the annotations will be given next.

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[43] *Yay*, as an interjection, also appeared more than thrice; however, as a deliberate decision was excluded from further analysis as it was the only interjection annotated consistently in the tweet dataset. The evaluative nature of interjections and their presence in irony and sarcasm remains a promising future research focus.
[44] Bednarek (2008) licenses the individual analyst to determine whether a lexical item has negative or positive association; however, at the same time warns about the dangers of not being able to do this objectively. Apparently, there is no good solution to the problem.

Table 11 List of recurring evaluative words in the full-scale study and their features

List of evaluative words	Number of instances	Grammatical category	Semantic classification	Semantic prosody
love	66	verb	states of emotion or attitude	+
great[45]	27	adjective	dynamic	+
fun	15	noun (adjective)	dynamic	+
nice	8	adjective	dynamic	+
excited	7	adjective	dynamic	+
glad	6	adjective	dynamic	+
happy	6	adjective	dynamic	+
can't wait	5	verb	n/a	+
hope	5	verb	intellectual states	+
interesting	5	adjective	dynamic	+
amazing	4	adjective	dynamic	+
appreciate	4	verb	intellectual states	+
funny	4	adjective	dynamic	+
hate	4	verb	states of emotion and attitude	-
exciting	3	adjective	dynamic	+

4.3.5.1 Love

Love occurs 66 times in the annotations, 41 times in total agreement and 25 times in overlapping agreement. (78)-(79) and (80)-(81) serve as examples.

(78)   **[[I love]]** getting to know someone for months and months then all of a sudden stop talking completely... #Not (Evaluation of annotator 1)

(79)   **[[I love]]** getting to know someone for months and months then all of a sudden stop talking completely... #Not (Evaluation of annotator 2)

(80)   RT @Courts_smithxx: **[[Love spending nights]]** in with Lewis while he watches football and ignores me #topboyfriend #not (Evaluation of annotator 1)

(81)   RT @Courts_smithxx: **[[Love spending nights in]]** with Lewis while he watches football and ignores me #topboyfriend #not (Evaluation of annotator 2)

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[45] *Great* here is meant in the sense of being remarkable or outstanding in magnitude, degree, or extent, of outstanding significance or importance, or being superior in quality (The Free Dictionary, 2003).

Love has been dealt with in the literature before, and has at one point been designated as the most frequent word in irony and sarcasm (Riloff et al., 2013). Consequently, *love* as a single word already qualifies as an essential evaluative element. In the mirror of this, it is not surprising that it appears the most times in the annotations. With the exception of two instances, *love* occurs in its verb form oftentimes preceded by a pronoun and sometimes including an object. The objects, due to their flexible nature and lack of recurrence in the annotations, were not treated as essential elements associated with the evaluative nature of the expression as opposed to such recurring words as the first person singular pronoun. The first person singular *I* preceding *love* is immediately striking not only because it collocates frequently with *love* but also because it is exclusively this pronoun that behaves like this. This tendency sanctions the question what role the grammatical person, specifically the first person singular, plays in irony and sarcasm. A verisimilar assumption is that upon analyzing the word *love* in terms of irony and sarcasm in the soap opera corpus a similar tendency would be observed and an explanation for the profusion could be given.

4.3.5.2 Great

The adjective *great* appears 27 times altogether, 14 times in total agreement and 13 times in overlapping agreement. *Great* is an intensifying adjective within which it is referred to as an amplifier meaning that it scales upward from an assumed norm (Quirk et al., 1985). The phrase-initial position of the word seems to be dominating the examples often followed by the noun they modify. Examples (82) and (83) show the contrast between the positions *great* occupies in the annotations:

(82)   Now all of the sudden you care about me? what (sic) a **[[great dad]]** you are #not
          ☹ (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

(83)   Got woken up to a screaming child today. Staring (sic) the day off **[[great]]**. #not
          #letmegobacktosleep (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

Example (82) is the typical occurrence of the word in the annotations. This tendency warrants the question whether *great* exhibits irony/sarcasm in this combination (*great*+N) in the corpus as well. Additionally, *great* is one of the words, according to Claridge (2001) that native speakers intuitively point to as often being used ironically.

4.3.5.3 Fun

Fun appears 15 times altogether; 11 times in full agreement and 4 times in overlapping agreement. Even though it being a noun, it is included in the analysis as it exhibits adjective-like features in the annotations. In fact, Quirk et al. (1985) note that in informal usage "*fun* has been fully converted into an adjective (p. 412n). Tweets being a representative form of informal language, it is not surprising that *fun* does not appear even once in its original noun form. See example (84) which illustrates a somewhat ambiguous case, still it is not difficult to interpret *fun* as being an adjective in the sentence:

(84)   Haven't been to work in 9 days; today **[[should be fun]]**...#not (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

What is also conspicuous in the annotations is that *fun* mostly stands alone (i.e. it is not modified by other adjectives). The only exception is presented in (85):

(85)   well (sic) this is shaping up to be a (sic) **[[super fun]]** #ForeverAloneFriday #Not (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

In a few cases it is preceded by the intensifiers *so*, *so much*, and *such*. The question with regard to the function of *fun* in irony and sarcasm concerns whether the effect is strengthened if there is something modifying the word as well as if the adjective form prevails.

4.3.5.4 Nice

Out of the altogether 8 examples 7 are in total agreement, while 1 is in overlapping agreement. A recurring pre-modifier is the *intensifier* so. In other cases, *nice* serves as the modifier of nouns, such as in (86):

(86)   So ready to go to our **[[nice lovely school]]**. Where everyone likes me and we can all be ourselves #sarcasm (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

Nice is easily seen as an evaluative word; however, it being the generic and somewhat vacuous term it is, its function as an irony/sarcasm-prone word is not obvious. Thus, the assumption is that the corpus will not exhibit representative amounts of ironic/sarcastic *nice* standing on its own but it may being attached to other words.

4.3.5.5 Excited

6 examples are in total agreement and 1 example is in overlapping agreement in the case of *excited*. It is pre-modified by *so*, *more*, and *especially* (see 87-88). Implying high intensity in itself, it seems reasonable to assume that for an ironic/sarcastic effect, it needs an adverb preceding it. Thus, the assumption is that in an ironic/sarcastic setting, the adjective will not appear on it its own.

(87) **[[So excited]]** to do some more yard work on this lovely morning #not ☝
   (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

(88) creently (sic) making members of my family call and vote for @AudraLynn21. My brother is **[[especially excited]]** about that #sarcasm (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

4.3.5.6 Glad versus Happy

Both synonyms appear 6 times in the annotations. There is total agreement in the case of *glad* 3 times, in the case of *happy* twice; whereas, overlapping agreement in the case of *glad* 3 times, in the case of *happy* 4 times. The issue of synonyms may hold some promise for the irony/sarcasm analysis; the question whether something ironic/sarcastic would still be ironic/sarcastic if the keywords were exchanged for their synonyms can shed direct light on the legitimacy of word-level analysis. The question is indeed intriguing knowing that these adjectives show different collocational patterns in terms of pronouns. *Glad* (89) predominantly collocates with *I*, whereas *happy* (90) does not show any particular tendency. Furthermore, Quirk et al. (1985) list these adjectives as the ones most of the times followed by a *that*-clause. The question arises whether the default grammatical structure these adjectives occur in is satisfactory for the conveying of irony/sarcasm as well as if their collocational behavior with pronouns in irony/sarcasm can be supported by larger data.

(89) Episode 5 of season 2 of Greek shows so much on a part of my life now and **[[I'm glad]]** that that is in the past #IBelieveInAThingCalledLove #Not (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

(90) Ur bragging about the 5 men u slept with this week alone? Lol at **[[least ur** (sic) **happy]]** being a dick hungry slut. #beproud #not (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

4.3.5.7 Can't wait

Can't wait appears 5 times in the corpus always in total agreement. The literal sense of the expression does not necessarily mirror the evaluative nature; however, the figurative sense

implying a certain heightened excitement can be seen more straightforwardly as evaluative. The fact that both annotators consistently annotated the expression as evaluative poses the question whether it is used ironically/sarcastically too in the corpus as well as what parts of speech and specific words follow the expression that are susceptible to irony/sarcasm.

(91)   Mentally exhausted, **[[can't wait]]** for the 4 day "weekend" #not #homework (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

(92)   **[[Can't wait]]** to work my 9 hour shift tomorrow :) #not (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

4.3.5.8 Hope

Hope's 5 appearances in the annotations are 3 times in total agreement and twice in overlapping agreement. *Hope* is the only verb in Table 11 belonging to verbs of intellectual state. Its role as an ironic/sarcastic verb is not immediately striking; therefore, its context will be of crucial importance in order to set apart irony/sarcasm from non-irony/sarcasm. Due to its being related to intellectual states, the assumption is that it will not display sarcastic examples in the corpus but ironic ones, i.e. cases where there is no human victim, hence no stinging effect of the remark either. Examples from the tweets include (93) and (94):

(93)   and to the post woman who was rude to me when I asked to sign for it **[[I hope]]** your car breaks down, miserable cow. Service with a smile #not (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

(94)   **[[Hope]]** that Rutherford gets rid of Bylsma as the Penguins coach and Francis picks him up as the Hurricanes coach #irony (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

4.3.5.9 Interesting

2 instances are in total agreement and 3 are in overlapping agreement out of the 5 examples. *Interesting* is used predicatively in most cases (as opposed to pre-modifying a noun) exemplified in (95-96). The presumption is that in this position it would rarely be the case that the adjective refers to a human being, thus taking the premise according to which sarcasm always targets a person, *interesting* may not be used sarcastically.

(95)   Landscape and The City, my projects are **[[going to be interesting]]** this year #not (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)
(96)   RT @kdobash: **[[Interesting]]** how everyone went from saying "swerve" to "stay in your lane" #irony (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

4.3.5.10 Amazing

Amazing appears 4 times, on 3 occasions in total agreement and on 1 occasion in overlapping agreement. Its occurrence neither predicatively, nor as a pre-modifier (97-98) gives away any hints about its behavior in irony and sarcasm, thus, in this case, the corpus will have to reveal any patterns there might be. Having said that, based on (97) and (98) the assumption is that standing on its own as a reaction to a certain situation (or remark) may invite irony/sarcasm more directly than being embedded in a grammatical construction. Whether this assumption can be outstretched to the other adjectives in the list and if yes what determines which adjective has the "power" to be ironic or sarcastic standing on its own remains to be seen in the data.

(97)   Everyone knows whats (sic) right for me but myself. **[[Its amazing]]** to see how people conveniently do what they want and then become saints #Irony (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

(98)   Getting hit on my some drunk that wants free food - **[[amazing]]** #not #ribfestproblems #lifeofaribber (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

4.3.5.11 Appreciate

Appreciate appears 4 times, once in total agreement (99) and 3 times in overlapping agreement. It is verb carrying an inherently positive outlook lending itself to ironic and sarcastic usage. Since the 4 instances do not show any particular tendencies, the corpus-driven approach is favored here again.

(99)   **[[Appreciate the guy]]** telling me, in detail, about the horror film about being stuck in a lift, while we were stuck in a lift! #not (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

4.3.5.12 Funny

Funny appears 4 times, twice in total agreement (100-101) and twice in overlapping agreement. Even though *fun* has been established to show adjective-like tendencies, the two words are not synonymous. *Funny* brings irony and sarcasm closer to the area of humor. All 4 examples show *funny* in predicative position. There is an expectation to find more ironic and sarcastic examples in this position.

(100)   haha **[[it's funny]]** because GK escaped from prison and shot someone haha #sarcasm (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

(101)   @nick_tojza oh my god nick this is **[[so funny]]**! i am dying....#NOT (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

4.3.5.13 Hate

The 4 occurrences of *hate* are all in total agreement (102). What makes this word interesting for the present analysis is its being the antonym of *love*. The asymmetry in irony has been mentioned on various occasions before (see sections 2.1.4 and 4.1.2). It is to be seen if it holds for the soap opera corpus too. Similarly to *love*, *hate* is a verb of emotion; thus the expectation is to find sarcastic examples displaying *hate* where a human victim is present who can be affected by the stinging nature of the remark. If *love* turns out to be more frequent in the corpus it would entail that the asymmetry associated with irony is also present in sarcasm (which thought might seem a little like reinventing the wheel; however, it has not yet been clearly stated in the literature up to this point).

(102)   **[[I hate it]]** when people don't know when I'm being serious or if I'm being sarcastic #sarcasm (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

4.3.5.14 Exciting

The 3 occurrences of *exciting*, 2 in total agreement and 1 in partial agreement represent three disparate positions of the word: pre-modifier, post-modifier (103), and fronting (104). The question is whether these same positions occur in significant numbers in the corpus and whether they exhibit similar features when it comes to ironic/sarcastic behavior. Since *excited* also appears in the list, the question of which adjective form dominates the irony/sarcasm scene also becomes relevant.

(103)   @PayyPayyy21 come hang out in the dirty! It's **[[suuuuuuuuper exciting]]**. #not (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

(104)   **[[How exciting]]** hearing someone puke in the stall beside you while you are trying to pee.... Who pukes in a public toilet? #yum #not (Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

4.3.5.15 Final remarks on the utilization of data

It is important to stress that the above brief descriptions of the keywords are in no way generalizable primarily because of the insufficient number of instances. They apply to the tweet dataset exclusively and are awaiting verification as to their generalizability in terms of their behavior as irony and sarcasm-prone words in the soap opera corpus. Once again, the goal of the pilot study was to extract evaluative language from natural conversation (tweets) and subject them to irony and sarcasm examination in the soap opera corpus. It was noted above that the

expectation was to end up with the majority of keywords being adjectives, verbs, and adverbs, parts of speech having a natural tendency to be evaluative. Interestingly, adverbs did not recur often enough to be included in further analysis, thus, emphasis was given to verbs and adjectives only. In an effort to utilize the data as efficiently as possible, the examples have been reduced to a single word, the key evaluative element in their infinitive form (the form most often used in the examples). Co-text being the indispensable factor it is in any all-comprehensive irony/sarcasm study (see section 3.2.4), the utilization of words in vacuo warrants explanation. Consider example (105) where the evaluative expression is *It's so fun*.

(105) **[[It's so fun]]** (sic) being home alone all morning till I have work. #Not
(Evaluation of annotators 1 and 2)

There is no good reason why the phrase *It's so fun* should trigger more ironic/sarcastic examples in the soap opera corpus than the single evaluative word *fun*. Working with the bare minimum (i.e. single words) improves our chances in precision and recall. Having said that, the ironic/sarcastic examples will be compared to the original evaluations in the tweets. In other words, if *fun* conspicuously triggers ironic/sarcastic examples in the soap corpus when embedded in the structure *It's so fun*, a parallel will certainly be made between the ironic/sarcastic example and the original evaluative phrase in the tweet. Privilege was, furthermore, given to verbs and adjectives occurring more than three times; accordingly hapaxes were not utilized. The fact that only recurring words are applied makes the study narrow enough for thorough examination but at the same time constitutes its biggest limitation inasmuch as generalizability is concerned, something to be considered as a tradeoff. *Nota bene*, the keyword list of verbs (see Table 11) does not indicate anything about lemmas. During the process of extracting the keywords, normalization of verbs took place in the sense that tense markers and inflections, such as the 's' suffix for third person singular were removed. The underlying assumption was that searching for the "default words" would generate all the examples in the soap opera corpus. This was justified by the fact that the verbs in the tweet examples tended to be in the present tense as well as in their infinitive form, and they happened to be regular verbs, thus the "default search" would reveal them in any case. The normalization process affected three verbs: *love* and *hate*. Although *love* occurred in its canonical form most of the time, the two instances where it was spelt as *luv* where normalized. *Hate* appeared once in its past tense, i.e. *hated*, which if important in terms of irony and sarcasm will be revealed in the corpus analysis where searching for the default verb

will not conceal potential occurrences in the past tense. The fact that the other verbs in the list have not been annotated in any other form than the infinitive may be due to their not occurring in the tweet dataset in any other form (which upon having performed a simple search proved to be the case). Furthermore, this non-occurrence might be accidental or due to the progressive form of many of the listed verbs not being in common use (e.g. loving? or appreciating?). Quirk et al., (1985) note that stative verbs of emotion and attitude (see Table 11 for all examples) can indeed appear in the progressive, especially in combination with past tense (section 4.29). This carries the implication that the progressive forms do not occur because the past tense does not occur in the tweets. Since the tweets have been selected for the original task (Semeval task 11, 2015) based on their being ironic and sarcastic, the question arises whether irony and sarcasm works best in/with the present tense (which would intuitively sound very well plausible). There is no specific information from previous literature or presumption as regards the tense marking and third person singular 's' playing a crucial role in the conveyance of irony and sarcasm. We will have to rely on the results of the corpus analysis to see if any telling patterns emerge.

The next chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the examples extracted from the soap opera. The objectives are manifold: i) identifying ironic/sarcastic examples, ii) extracting recurring grammatical patterns in which irony and sarcasm manifest, iii) comparing these patterns to the non-ironic/sarcastic examples, and finally iv) identifying the difference between irony and sarcasm based on the data.

Chapter 5: Corpus data analysis

Let us recapitulate what the objectives of this chapter are based on the general hypothesis and research question. The overall hypothesis is concerned with the lexico- grammatical manifestations of irony and sarcasm, which then give rise to the following research question (first mentioned in section 1.2.1): Is there an ironic and sarcastic repertoire in the English language that is characterized by a distinctive vocabulary and grammatical patterns? Throughout the introduction of the theoretical background, the idea that irony and sarcasm may be distinguishable through lexis and certain patterns, at least to some degree, has been upheld. Apart from utilizing the notion of contrast to determine which examples may evoke the irony frame, in order to begin the irony and sarcasm distinguishing process, pragmatic-related differentiating features have also been invoked (see section 2.1.4.3), such as the presence (in sarcasm) or absence (in irony) of a specific human victim, the intention to insult and hurt (in sarcasm) or the lack of this intention (in irony), as well as the definitely negative attitude (in sarcasm) or either negative or positive attitude (in irony). Separating ironic examples from sarcastic ones will first be based on these criteria. The operational definition for sarcasm thus is as follows: an evaluation reversal where the ostensive and underlying evaluations both manifest on the surface via an insult[46] or harshly critical/ stinging/ snide remark directed towards a human victim whose identity is clearly stated in the remark (or deducible from the context). Sarcastic statements affect others (Rockwell, 2007, p. 361). Whereas, irony is: an evaluation reversal where only the ostensive evaluation is on the surface, while the context prompts us to search for an underlying evaluation. Harsh criticism, stinging, or snide remarks are *not* contributing factors in irony. Table 12 shows the keywords and their overall token number in the soap opera corpus.

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[46] According to the dictionary definition, an insult is "treating [someone] with gross insensitivity, insolence, or contemptuous rudeness" (The Free Dictionary, 2003).

Table 12 Keywords and total token numbers in the corpus

Keyword	Total token number	Frequency per million words
great (Adj)	76,245	564
happy (Adj)	70,370	521
nice (Adj)	50,078	370
glad (Adj)	37,617	278
love (V)	37,433	277
fun (N/Adj)	24,485	181
amazing (Adj)	15,955	118
funny (Adj)	15,395	114
hate (V)	10,159	75
can't wait (V)	8,057	59
interesting (Adj)	6,780	50
appreciate (V)	6,291	46
hope (V)	4,606	34
excited (Adj)	3,012	22
exciting (Adj)	2,715	20

Upon scanning through the examples a rather straightforward method presented itself, though not frequently mentioned in the literature. Excluding non-ironic/sarcastic examples seems to be a much more efficient first step than jumping right away into the examination of each instance to see if there is a reversal of evaluation in it. Indeed, the wider context can advise us if the evoking of the "irony frame" (see section 3.2.4) is justified (based on the pragmatic features mentioned above), which is extended over sarcasm (again based on the pragmatic features mentioned above). Irony and sarcasm are predicted to appear as responses to provoking questions, remarks, or situations where a certain conflict is tangible in the text. Camp (2012) proposes essentially the same only putting it differently by saying "the relationship between speaker and hearer is antagonistic" (p. 606). Irony studies are –rightly–preoccupied with searching for irony, instead of ruling out non-ironies. However, it is often very obvious if the "flow" of the conversation is disrupted. A smooth flow can be bolstered by the semantic prosody associated with the keyword not being upset. That is, if an inherently positive word is surrounded by other positive or even neutral words, chances are we are not dealing with irony or sarcasm. Filtering out such non-ironies does not immediately entail that anything else has to be ironic; however, it narrows down the options substantially. Tannen (1984) reminds us that irony makes for only 7% in conversational contexts, thus it is reasonable to assume that the majority of examples will not involve irony (or sarcasm). Five hundred random examples were drawn from the soap opera

corpus for each keyword and scanned through to i) filter out non-ironic/sarcastic cases, ii) filter out potential candidates (i.e. cases where the irony or sarcasm frame was evoked), and iii) double-check ambiguous cases in the broader co-text. Reading through the concordances had the added benefit of "visually getting accustomed" to the typical semantic prosody and preference of a keyword; thus, the upsetting of the norm was all the more conspicuous and suspicious. Potential candidates were examined in terms of grammar, including grammatical mood, grammatical person, grammatical construction, keyword position, and keyword function. Patterns[47] were fed into the concordancer again regardless of how frequently they evoked the irony/sarcasm frame[48] in the sample of 500. Thus, some patterns are recurring already in the initial sample, while others appear only once. The second search was meant to reveal all corpus examples with the specified pattern. Due to the relatively long keyword list (fifteen in number), with the only common denominator among the keywords being that they have been annotated as evaluative, diversification was expected. In other words, certain keywords generated more grammatical patterns than others. Details of the patterns are given in the subsequent parts of the chapter beginning with the verbs and following with the adjectives (see Table 12). The following disclaimer is due here: observations are made based on and are exclusively applicable to the individual keywords. If there emerges a tendency with regard to one keyword in a specific pattern, it does not automatically entail that the same pattern would emerge if a different keyword were used.

5.1 Love

It made sense to discuss certain words similarly, such as the antonyms *love* and *hate*. The annotation of these words in terms of irony and sarcasm was revealing if for no other reason than for the conspicuous paucity of relevant examples surfacing throughout the initial analysis of the sample. This was unexpected, especially since *love* has been one of the few words correlated with irony in previous studies (see Riloff et al., 2013). In the corpus (and generally speaking too), the semantic preference of *love* links it with people (e.g. *love him/her/you/each other/someone*). The keyword also carries an inherent positivity which together with its semantic preference

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[47] The denomination *pattern* is used in a general sense; it does not correspond to the designation *grammar pattern* devised by Hunston & Francis (2000).

[48] Note that an example evoking the irony/sarcasm frame requires further analysis before determining that it is a truly ironic or sarcastic example.

allows for easy recognition of cases where these are upset. (106) represents a literal case where the positive nature and semantic preference "remain intact." In example (107), on the other hand, the semantic preference shows unusualness, which may be the result of the contrast apparent in the conflict depicted. The examples illustrate the filtering process in that (106) would not be considered a potential example, while (107) would be considered sarcasm-prone due to the conflict, the presence of a distinct victim, and the negatively tuned remark. Both the keyword and the relevant item(s) in terms of semantic preference have been boldfaced:

(106)   *Greenlee:* Don't you get it, du Pres? I know you **love me** -- just me, not my millions. Think of the fun we could have squandering my fortune.

(107)   *Helena*: No, it would be the prudent thing to declare you an unfit mother. Yes, I would **love to see those big, sad eyes** when the authorities come to take your children away.

5.1.1 Pattern 1

Even though the number of potential cases with *love* was not particularly high, the examples did share some common properties, such as the hypothetical form preceding the keyword (107). The pattern can be described as:

[1][49]
$$\text{NP} \left\{ \frac{\text{would}}{\frac{\prime\text{d}}{\text{wouldn}\prime\text{t}}} \right\} \text{LOVE}$$

The curly brackets signify an option, while NP may stand for any proper noun or nominative pronoun, and LOVE is the keyword. See candidate examples below:

(108)   *Liza*: Yes, I --yes, I'm sure. You **would love** that, wouldn't you? Another chandler child to run around and create and continue your legacy of lies.

(109)   *Spike*: That's so beautiful. Maybe she **wouldn't love** you so much if she found out that you were here under false pretenses, now, would she, Chrissy boy?

(110)   I'm sorry that your car got totaled, but I had a perfectly good reason why I didn't tell you that she called. *Stephanie*: **I'd love** to hear it.

Examples befitting Pattern 1 were collected and analyzed for further common features. Additional corpus searches were performed during which the constructions found in the extracted examples and summarized in Table 13 were put in the search field. *Would* and *'d* were

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[49] This pattern depiction model is borrowed from Jucker, Schneider, Taavitsainen, & Breustedt (2008).

treated identically (on grounds of fulfilling the same function in the sentence) and *wouldn't* was included as a logical step on the basis of being the negated form of *would/'d*, thereby upholding the notion that irony (and sarcasm) may operate in both ways. The format of the tag questions were modified accordingly. Underneath the table a brief justification is given for the inclusion of each four category (indicated by the corresponding designation).

Table 13 Constructions befitting Pattern 1

Pattern variation	Search construction
Pattern 1a	*NP + would + LOVE + that + wouldn't…* *NP + 'd*[50] *+ LOVE + that + wouldn't…* *NP + wouldn't + LOVE + that + would*…*
Pattern 1b	*NP + would + LOVE (+ me/you/him/her/it/us/them)* *NP + 'd + LOVE (+ me/you/him/her/it/us/them)* *NP + wouldn't + LOVE (+ me/you/him/her/it/us*/them)*
Pattern 1c	*NP + would + LOVE + to + see* *NP + 'd + LOVE + to + see* *NP + wouldn't + LOVE + to + see*
Pattern 1d	*NP + would + LOVE + to + hear* *NP + 'd + LOVE + to + hear* *NP + wouldn't + LOVE + to + hear*

* these constructions resulted in no hits in the corpus

Pattern 1a: Tag questions, such as in (108) are believed to be fairly reliable irony and sarcasm cues by some (see Kreuz et al., 1999), if for no other reason than their being used in a rhetorical question format in many examples, which indeed plays an acknowledged part in some ironic and sarcastic remarks (see, e.g. Haverkate, 1990 & Roberts & Kreuz, 1994). The fact that (108) is a potential sarcastic example made a more systematic search with similar tag questions reasonable. The three options were subjected to a further corpus check eliminating the pronoun both from the beginning from the phrase as well as in the tag question in order to make the

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[50] *'d* represents the contracted form of *would*. The pronoun in front of the contraction is eliminated in order to allow the search to bring out all possibilities.

search more inclusive. The assumption was that the pronoun *you* would be more frequent in sarcasm, while no such assumption was made for irony.

Pattern 1b: Even though example (109) formally belongs to pattern 1a due to the tag question, it still prompted a corpus search focusing on the various pronouns that may come after the phrase. Once again, the assumption was that sarcasm, but not irony, would favor the pronoun *you*. A corpus search with all possibilities was performed to verify irony/sarcasm's pronoun preference.

Pattern 1c and 1d: both of these patterns were included due to the presence of the perception verbs, *see* and *hear*, recurring in the original 500 "love examples". The corpus is called upon to reveal if it is indeed the case that irony/sarcasm attract perception verbs, or their interaction is purely accidental. Here as well, the search was not biased in terms of pronouns instead all possibilities were considered. The detailed analysis will be given pattern by pattern below.

5.1.1.1 Pattern 1a

The pattern is illustrated as follows:

[2]
$$\text{NP} \left\{ \frac{\text{would}}{\frac{\text{'d}}{\text{wouldn't}}} \right\} \text{LOVE that} \left\{ \frac{\text{wouldn't}}{\text{would}} \right\}$$

Since the negated hypothetical form did not yield any hits, the analysis only concerns the identical affirmative constructions [n=74]. The following observations were made: the tag question format may intensify the sarcastic effect and the pronoun *you*, indeed, proved to be a more predominant choice than any other pronoun (91% of the pattern 1a examples features *you*). Often (but not exclusively), the tag question appeared in a separate sentence serving as a rhetorical question. It was frequently followed by some kind of explanatory remark, thus the whole sarcastic effect included an event/situation with a possible negative outcome, the speaker uttering the key phrase (rhetorical question), and an explanation of some sort the role of which seems to be to justify the sarcastic intent, such as in (111) and (112) where the relevant parts have been boldfaced and the meta-references bracketed:

(111)   But unless I forgive Mom, **she's going to walk around crushed under the weight of her own guilt** [event with a possible negative outcome]. *Sandy*: And **you would love that, wouldn't you** [key phrase embedded in a rhetorical question uttered by the speaker]**?** That's your thing. **You love watching people suffer**, like pulling wings off a butterfly [explanation].

(112)   *David*: So how are you going to **find out the truth if you don't lie to him** [event with a possible negative outcome]? *Kendall*: **You'd love that, wouldn't you** [key phrase

embedded in a rhetorical question uttered by the speaker]**? You would stand up and cheer if I really started to doubt the one man who loves me for me** [explanation].

Examples (111) and (112) are analyzed as sarcastic. Let us see what makes them thus. The evaluation reversal, according to Partington's (2007) twofold system based on the universal opposition of *good/bad*, cannot be readily detected as the pattern does not necessarily convey non-literality. Even so, there is a contrast perceivable between an ostensibly positive attitude via the hypothetical phrase (i.e. *you would/'d love that, wouldn't you*) towards an event/situation that promises an ostensibly negative outcome. Both the positive attitude and the negative outcome are clearly visible in the surface message which excludes the possibility of irony (where the underlying meaning is hidden from view by definition). The 2nd person singular puts the victim in the limelight where they would surely be affected by the embedded reproach/disapproval/harsh criticism in the remarks[51]. The sarcastic effect is further enhanced by the polarity working in unusual ways. Let us remember the original keyword, *love*, that we started out with, which even if embedded in a rhetorical question, as in these examples, is still expected to carry its inherent semantic positivity. Examples annotated as sarcastic include the following inherently negative references following the keyword: *continue a legacy of lies, be a threat, cut someone off from others, push someone out of one's life, get rid of someone, be charged with murder, give someone hell, send someone to their grave, end up with nothing and no one, going to jail, tear someone's place apart, and watching someone suffer*. These phrases are contrasted with the non-sarcastic examples that include the following inherently positive (or at least neutral) references following the keyword: *kiss someone on the lips, drop by and say hi, have a television, let someone play, get some ice cream, check out someone's playroom, and be at a wedding*. Compare (113) and (114):

(113)   *Nicole*: Forget Shawn, and save your own butt. Destroy all the evidence against you and disappear. *Jan*: **You would love that, wouldn't you**? You're dying to get rid of me because I have the proof that you killed Colin Murphy.

(114)   *Katie*: I feel like I should book a whole day right now. *Henry*: Yes, I can see you all covered in seaweed and mud -- *Katie*: Oh, **you would love that, wouldn't you**? Reminiscent of our days on the island –

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[51] The grammatical person, specifically the role of the 2nd person singular in sarcasm has been empirically documented by Wierzbicka (2002) too.

In terms of the pronoun choice, it would be convenient to claim that sarcasm favors *you* because the victim can thus be addressed directly, and insults and stings work best if injected in a direct manner. None the less, this would not explain the overall prevalence of *you* both in the sarcastic and non-sarcastic cases. In a more suitable explanation, the surrounding context is taken into account where in case of sarcasm *you* reappears in an adjacent clause, such as in (113). This implies that the sarcasm in pattern 1a type constructions is not contained in the phrase but in the interaction between the phrase and the surrounding text that informs us of the victim's part in the conflict by way of direct referencing (in the 2nd person singular). We cannot, however, claim that pattern 1a is a sure sign of sarcasm as the co-text (including semantic preference) is needed to determine that an example carries the ingredients (i.e. intention to insult) necessary for sarcasm. It has been noted above that the evaluation reversal does not correspond to the *good/bad* dichotomy proposed by Partington (2007), which needs to be accounted for in order to be able to consider pattern 1a examples as full-fledged sarcasm. If the rigidness of the *good/bad* dichotomy is somewhat flexed, it can fit these examples. The evaluation "reversal" could take place between the keyword's different senses or meanings that arise in the different contexts. Thus, for pattern 1a cases, it would manifest in the narratives below[52]:

> Dictum: 'You would genuinely enjoy something without ulterior motive'
>
> Implicatum: 'You would enjoy something because of an ulterior motive'

The sarcasm, thus, would be complete: there is an evaluation reversal (although not along a strict *good/bad* dichotomy), where the underlying meaning supplies us with the remaining necessary concomitants of sarcasm: harshness, disapproval, sting, and criticism rolled into a remark and its surrounding text. If we accept this solution, we would also accept that in the case of sarcasm it is not necessarily the keyword *per se* that is responsible for the evaluation reversal. The term of art *sarcastic prosody*[53] is proposed here to capture all that differentiates sarcasm (115) from non-sarcasm (116). To elucidate, sarcastic prosody comprises what the etymology of sarcasm suggests, namely "tearing someone's flesh", which, in general, manifests in a conflictual situation replete with criticism, harshness, disapproval, contempt, hostility, and sting deducible from either a specific word or the co-text; furthermore, a "virtual intonation" hinting at the

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[52] This depiction model is borrowed from Partington (2007), who employs it for irony.

[53] The term is a tribute to the notion of semantic prosody as used in corpus linguistics as well as the 'traditional' notion of prosody used to refer to vocal patterns in language. Cheang and Pell (2008) use the same denomination once in their article; however, not as terminology and in a different context.

manner in which the pattern would be vocalized. Let us support this tenet with additional examples where the pattern is boldfaced and what conveys the sarcastic prosody is underlined (where applicable):

> (115)   *Sonny*: So go ahead and go. *Carly*: Man, **you would love that, wouldn't you**? You would love me just to walk out of here <u>so you can lose your mind and you can lose your soul. It's not going to happen</u>.

> (116)   *Brad*: Hey, I have an idea. Let's go check out that kid's playroom. Diane, you wanna come with us? *Diane*: Kyle, **you'd love that, wouldn't you**? Adults are so boring. *Brad*: Let's go.

The literature is relatively flexible on what can contribute to sarcastic prosody, ranging from insulting lexis, condescending lexis, dismissal lexis, politeness items at the end of an interaction (which would undermine their polite nature) (Culpeper, 2011), anger-related lexis, inquisitive phrases (Bryant & Fox Tree, 2005), hyperbole, and intensified evaluative lexis (Kunneman et al., 2015) (*cf*. IFIDs proposed by Jucker et al., 2008). In light of this, let us survey what contributes to the sarcastic prosody in the sarcastic examples presented so far: *You love watching people suffer, like pulling wings off a butterfly* (111), *You would stand up and cheer if I really started to doubt the one man who loves me for me* (112), *You're dying to get rid of me because I have the proof that you killed Colin Murphy* (113), and *you can lose your mind and you can lose your soul. It's not going to happen* (115).

From a strictly lexical perspective, pattern 1a can be a good predictor of sarcasm in the soap opera corpus due to the consistency of examples; i.e. 88% of the cases display a situation in response to which the sarcasm conveyed through this pattern seems justified. In addition, the rhetorical question format which does not require an answer reinforces the sarcasm too due to its purpose being something else (than eliciting a response).

5.1.1.2 Pattern 1b

The pattern can be depicted in general as follows:

[3] $$NP \left\{ \frac{\text{would}}{\frac{\text{'d}}{\text{wouldn't}}} \right\} \text{LOVE Opro}$$

Opro stands for any object pronoun. The upshot in terms of irony and sarcasm was modest in this category which is intuitively attributed to the disparate function of *would* compared to pattern 1a cases. *Would* here is rarely used in the hypothetical sense but in various other functions

(expressing politeness, past tense, etc.). The majority of the cases are strictly limited to the relationship realm (e.g. *would love me forever, would love me for the rest of my life, would always love you*), exemplified by (117). The observation was made that non-hypothetical *would* is not sarcasm-prone.

(117)   *Amanda*: Do you remember when I was -- when I was little, you used to tell me that I would meet a wonderful man, that he **would love me** and I **would love him**, and that no matter what, I should follow my feelings?

In terms of semantic preference (and the upsetting of it), parallels can be drawn between pattern 1b type of examples emphasizing the positive word *love* and the referent situation with an inherent negativity, such as *being somewhere under false pretenses, rat someone out, break up, buy something (in the sense of buying into something), go down in flames, end up in a ditch, disappear, go to prison, kill someone, fall on one's head, watch the life drain away, back off, keep one's mouth shut, lose one's job, kill oneself, be guilty, leave, dump (in the sense of break up),* and *turn one's back on somebody*. The evaluation reversal for pattern 1b is also more straightforward than pattern 1a:

Dictum: 'One would enjoy something that is not beneficial to someone else'

Implicatum: 'One should not enjoy something that is not beneficial to someone else'

Not all sarcastic examples have such clear-cut negative referents, however. Consider (118) where the key phrase and the verb phrase have been boldfaced, while the disambiguating context has been underlined:

(118)   *Lily*: So, Cane said that dad was fine when he dropped him off at home. *Devon*: Well, I'm sure Neil **would love you reporting back** like he needs a babysitter[54]. *Lily*: Why are you being so rude to me today? Geez.

Example (118) is analyzed as sarcasm, which is supported by the underlined context expressing what we have termed sarcastic prosody (see section 5.1.1.1). However, there is also irony in it considering the pattern alone, which is easily analyzable along the *good/bad* dimension (i.e. the ostensive message *Neil would love it* corresponding to an underlying message *Neil would not love it*). The above example may be compared to some of the non-sarcastic ones where what is missing is a situation with a negative outcome. The greater number of instances depict stereotypically positive or neutral situations; in other words, the semantic preference of *love*

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[54] For a detailed account on 'sarcastic like', see Camp & Hawthorne (2008).

shows usual patterns. The key phrase has been boldfaced, while the positive or neutral situation underlined:

> (119)   *Ryan*: Probably, but, you know, <u>whenever we do the deed</u>, **I'd love** you <u>to be the best man</u>. *Leo*: Really? That's great.

Even though pattern 1b allows for the NP to be any proper noun or nominative pronoun, in order to keep the data within manageable limits, NP will be restricted to the 2^{nd} person singular *you* [n=161] from here on, which has already shown its sarcasm-prone tendencies. In this regard, the 3^{rd} person singular neuter *it* revealed interesting patterns [n=86]. A clear difference can be drawn between *it* functioning as an object pronoun and empty *it*. In the former case, we get non-sarcastic instances manifesting in the following pattern:

[4] $$\text{I} \left\{ \frac{\text{knew}}{\text{thought}} \right\} \text{(that) you} \left\{ \frac{\text{would}}{\text{'d}} \right\} \text{LOVE it} \quad [\text{n=25}]$$

The object pronoun *it* may refer to *place, house, horse farm, apartment, pool, spa day, master bathroom, foam party, chocolate, starry night, Paris, Europe,* and *Switzerland*. An example is shown below with the non-sarcastic pattern boldfaced and the reference of *it* underlined:

> (120)   *Sandy*: <u>This place</u> is awesome. I'm moving in. *Tammy*: **I knew you would love it**. *Sandy*: It's so perfect. A tree house in the middle of town.

Such examples are contrasted with the sarcasm-prone pattern illustrated as follows:

[5] $$\text{you} \left\{ \frac{\text{would}}{\text{'d}} \right\} \text{LOVE it if} \quad [\text{n=20}]$$

In this pattern, *it* does not fulfill the same objective pronoun function as in (120). What follows *if* includes, *turn my back on her, drank myself into a coma, Nicolas was guilty, I left, I killed myself, I lost my job, I fell on my head, I signed my husband over to you, we went down in flames,* and *we broke up*. An example is shown below with the sarcastic pattern boldfaced and the reference of *it* underlined:

> (121)   *Rose*: I'm not going to talk about Paul with you. *Dusty*: No? Why not? *Rose*: 'Cause **you would love it if** <u>we went down in flames</u>.

The above patterns also suggest a difference in referencing; namely non-sarcastic cases imply anaphoric reference (120), whereas sarcastic cases imply cataphoric reference (121). Thus, strictly speaking the previously mentioned empty *it* is not empty but refers forward. Examples (120) and (121) point towards the difference in tone, and once again a slight meaning alteration is observable between the keyword, depending on the pattern it is embedded in. While, in (120), *love* expresses sincere joy over something, in (121), *love* conveys an additional

meaning of blame (i.e. 'if you love what is happening, you are to blame'). The evaluation reversal for the sarcastic pattern in general may be depicted as follows:

Dictum: 'You would enjoy what is potentially harmful to others'

Implicatum: 'I blame you for enjoying what is potentially harmful to others'

The sarcastic prosody also comes to light upon comparing (120) and (121) and recognizing that (120) does not depict a conflict, nor is there an antagonistic relationship between speakers; whereas, (121) shows the opposite (the trigger being the part underlined).

It is worthwhile to mention that not all examples have such obvious "giveaway" reference after *if*; however, the wider context informs us that the sarcastic prosody may well be accompanying the situation. An example of this sort is shown below where the sarcastic pattern is boldfaced, the reference underlined, and what contributes to the sarcastic prosody dotted:

(122)   *Claudia*: **You would love it if** this was Ric's baby. Why? Because then you'd be free of all your obligations. You can just shake it off and go back to your life. No more inconvenient woman and inconvenient baby.

In addition, irony was detected on one occasion:

(123)   *Jack*: Okay, we can drop the pretense. What the hell do you think you're doing? *Gloria*: Just a harmless little photo shoot, Jack. It'll be lovely. *Jack*: How dare you bring the press into this? Gloria: **I knew you'd love it**. *Jack*: Don't enjoy this too much, Gloria.

Example (123) may beg the question where the demarcation line between irony and sarcasm is. The difference is seen in the straightforward evaluation reversal (123) exemplifies (i.e. along the *good/bad* dichotomy). The narratives can be depicted as follows:

Dictum: I knew you'd love it.

Implicatum: I knew you'd hate it.

5.1.1.3 Pattern 1c

The pattern can be depicted as follows:

[6] $$NP \left\{ \frac{\text{would}}{'d} \atop \overline{\text{wouldn't}} \right\} \text{LOVE to see} \; [n=687]$$

The assumption was that the presence of sarcasm would be revealed through what follows the pattern, thus a distinction was made between an object and object + verb following *see*. This is exemplified below where the pattern is boldfaced and the object (non-sarcastic) and object + verb (sarcastic) underlined, respectively:

(124)   *Maxie*: Yeah, but it's just the two of us. *Nathan*: Something I am very, very grateful for. Not that **I wouldn't love to see** <u>Georgie</u>.

(125)   *Adam*: And I'm going to have you drawn and quartered! *Krystal*: Oh, baby, **I'd love to see** <u>you try</u>.

The observation was made that having an object only, most frequently an object pronoun, after *see* makes for a non-sarcastic case. This, however, does not entail that whatever the verb after the object, it would be considered sarcastic. In order to have a consistently sarcastic pattern in the soap opera corpus, pattern 1c must be modified as follows:

[7] $$\text{I} \left\{ \frac{\text{would}}{\text{'d}} \right\} \text{LOVE to see you try} \ _{[n=16]}$$

In theory, the pattern could well work with any other object pronoun, however, apart from one exception (i.e. *I'd love to see them try*), it seems to be fixed in its format. This fixedness raises the question to what extent this collocation is conventionalized in that *I wouldn't love to see you try* would sound somewhat problematic (not to mention that it does not occur in the corpus at all). The reversal of evaluation in examples, similarly to (125), is again between the two senses of the key phrase, one that is apparent on the surface, and one that becomes apparent from the context. A further example is presented in (126) where the pattern is boldfaced:

(126)   *Courtney*: If I decide to throw a tantrum, Jax, I won't need a permission slip from you to do it. I'll just flip you flat on your back. *Jax*: Oh, **I'd love to see you try** that.

Expressions, such as *have you drawn and quartered* (125), *flip you flat on your back* (126), *wipe the floor with you, make me restrain you, shut it* (referring to one's mouth) *for me, escort you out, stop you, forbid her, come and get me, drag you out* (examples taken from the corpus) stem from the same root and effectively establish the ground for a sarcastic remark. The evaluation reversal can be described in the two narratives underneath:

> Dictum: 'I am genuinely interested in seeing you do something to me that involves physical or verbal attack'
>
> Implicatum: 'I am certain that you would not have the courage/strength to do anything to me that involves physical or verbal attack'

The strikingly specific nature of these verb phrases in the sense of their involving hostile behavior, aggression, attack, and violence begs the question whether we have a coincidence or a more consciously applied configuration at hand. What is for certain is that the phrase would not be mistaken for its literal sense; however, at the same time its conventionalized nature has not

yet been fully established. It is safe to say, though that in the corpus examples, the expression can be paraphrased as 'I do not think you will be able to stand up to me.' With verbs depicting physical or verbal harm, the figurative meaning of the pattern (i.e. 'you would not dare to') is reinforced through the assumption that no one would willingly undergo these "processes." The sarcastic prosody is contained in the interaction between the pattern and the individual verb phrases.

Lastly, let us conclude with an example of irony befitting pattern 1c:

(127)   *Eve*: I can't leave with you, Julian. Can't you see? I can't betray my family. I took vows in church to be a good and a devoted wife. *Liz*: Oh, right. I am sure T.C. **would love to see** what his good and devoted wife is doing, hiding out in a dirty alley with her lover, Julian Crane[55].

The evaluation reversal manifests on two levels: once between Eve's claiming to be an ideal wife and Liz's not so subtle reference to these supposedly ideal wives (Eve specifically) hiding out in dirty alleys with their lovers; secondly, between the fact that a husband would versus would not want to see the scene where his supposedly ideal wife is hiding out in dirty alleys with her lover. The corresponding narratives for irony can be depicted according to the *good/bad* dichotomy:

> Dictum: Eve is a good and devoted wife. / T.C. would want to see what his wife is doing.
>
> Implicatum: Eve is a bad and disloyal wife. / T.C. would hate to see what his wife is doing.

The irony thus occurs between the concept of what a good and devoted wife typically encompasses and what an assumedly good and devoted wife does in reality (in this scenario). The example arguably evokes a sarcastic frame too, which becomes clear once it is verified that there is a face-to-face interaction between Liz and Eve. This would imply that the 3rd person singular addressing actually serves as an intensification of the message. The sarcastic prosody is enclosed in the contrast between good and devoted wife versus hiding in dirty alleys with one's lover; a remark possibly laden with tacit criticism and disapproval. If we accept that irony and sarcastic prosody are not mutually exclusive phenomena, it would imply that the difference between irony and sarcasm is not the presence of sarcastic prosody in the latter but the form the evaluation reversal manifests in (i.e. whether it can fit the *good/bad* dimension or not). In either case, (127) is not seen as the rule, but as the exception to it.

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[55] This particular irony would well represent the echoic mention theory by Sperber and Wilson (1981).

5.1.1.4 Pattern 1d

The pattern can de depicted as follows:

[8] $\qquad$ NP $\left\{ \dfrac{\dfrac{\text{would}}{\text{'d}}}{\text{wouldn't}} \right\}$ LOVE to hear [n=370]

The semantic preference of the potential examples places them in the realm of dishonest conduct, including *making up a story, turning tricks, wrecking a boat, refusing to treat a patient as the doctor sees fit, leaving an innocent child at home,* and *aiding and abetting an escaped criminal* (a non-exhaustive list extracted from the corpus) which clashes with the majority of examples showing neutral cases (*hearing a story* and *hearing about you* being the most frequent collocations). This distinction aided the initial selection process. Compare (128) and (129) in terms of literality where (128) would be a literal example, while (129) a potentially sarcasm-prone example (notice the description of dishonest conduct in the latter):

(128)   *Chelsea*: Okay, well, if you need any help with, you know, redoing the décor, some design stuff, you let me know. *Dylan*: Yeah. **I'd love to hear** your ideas.

(129)   *Amanda*: I figured I had to at least hear him out. I'm not exactly a computer whiz. *Courtney*: Well, you know, I know a little bit about computers, and **I would love to hear** Evan explain away a transfer of over a million dollars into a bank account he probably set up.

How potentially sarcastic cases take advantage of the upsetting of the usual (i.e. neutral) polarity of pattern 1d is evident from the above.

Among the pattern 1d examples the phrases *I'm sure* (alternatively *I am sure*) and the similar *I bet* were recurrent ones. Thus, pattern 1d is modified accordingly (the negated form *wouldn't* did not yield any hits):

[9] $\qquad$ $\left\{ \dfrac{\text{I'm sure}}{\text{I bet}} \right\}$ NP $\left\{ \dfrac{\text{would}}{\text{'d}} \right\}$ LOVE to hear [n=52]

The difference between sarcastic and non-sarcastic cases resides in whether the phrase expresses sincere or false certainty, which by extension depends on what follows *hear*. Non-sarcasm was consistent in cases like (130) where the pattern is boldfaced and the cue for the non-sarcastic nature underlined:

(130)   *Keri*: He was so upset when Antonio left. *Nora*: Well, why don't you give him a call? **I'm sure he'd love to hear** <u>from you</u>.

Cases where *hear* was followed by the prepositional phrase *from you* [n=5] conveyed 'sincere certainty' on all occasions. In other words, they convey genuine interest without the prospect of one participant being disadvantaged by the information that passes. Sarcastic cases, on the other hand, depicted a situation that leave no doubt about the fact that the initial phrase is to convey false certainty. Consider (131) and (132) where the pattern is boldfaced and the situation presuming false certainty underlined:

(131)   Natalie: Oh, and my uncle is the police commissioner, so **I am sure he would love to hear** how you've been rifling through my medical files and how you've been blackmailing me.

(132)   *Chris*: Maybe you'd like to take that up with the board, Dr. Sherwood. **I'm sure they would love to hear** your reasons as to why you're refusing to let the chief of staff treat a patient the way he sees fit.

Verbs, such as *rifling through and blackmailing* (131)*, refusing* (132)*, lied, cheated,* and *explain* (examples taken from the corpus) are in natural opposition with pattern 1d and contribute to the sarcastic prosody in the examples. The negatively tuned remark (verging on threat) is palpable and the victim is also present. The evaluation reversal is contained in the contrast between a third party who would want to know about a misdemeanor and the person committing the misdemeanor not wanting anyone else to know about it. The narratives below are generalized for similar examples:

> Dictum: 'It is certain that there are people who would want to hear what I have to say about you'
>
> Implicatum: 'I am certain that you would not want me to tell people what I know about you'

An interesting observation concerns the reference in the examples with the above pattern; namely, whereas sarcastic examples make reference to a 3rd person (via a pronoun or proper noun) on all occasions, non-sarcastic examples are more varied. Quirk et al. (1985) classify *I'm sure/I bet* as comment type clauses which express certainty. However, nothing is said about the tendency of their references and whether the referencing can modify the degree of this certainty. The soap opera corpus shows non-sarcastic examples where the 1st person singular and 2nd person singular/plural are also used. (133) serves as an example:

(133)   *Chelsea*: Hey, Patrick. It's me – Chelsea. Listen, get over here right away, okay? I just found out some really interesting information about Bo and Hope that **I'm sure you'd love to hear**.

Since sarcastic examples as well as non-sarcastic ones make use of the 3^{rd} person referencing, this cannot be claimed as an exclusive sarcasm indicator. Yet, the 3^{rd} person singular/plural may be a better predictor of sarcasm than the 1^{st} and 2^{nd} person singular/plural.

Two examples with the same pattern were analyzed as ironic:

(134)   *Theresa*: Oh, come on, please. It's a cheap designer knock-off, okay? Anyone can tell. *Brady*: Theresa, who cares? *Theresa*: I do. *Brady*: It's just stuff. Who cares about it? *Theresa*: Oh, well, **I'm sure that the person who blew, what, ten grand on that watch would love to hear** you say that.

(135)   *Billy*: She was almost as much fun as catching a big old bass. *Josh*: Well, **I'm sure she'd love to hear** that. *Billy*: Well, seriously, Josh, I laid my line out, she picked up the bait, I figured it was going too easy.

What distinguishes (134) and (135) from the sarcastic cases beforehand is the lack of overt criticism that manifested in (131) and (132) through the pronouncing of one's misdeed. The evaluation reversal can be analyzed along the *good/bad* dimension in both cases. The narratives are as follows:

Dictum: The person would love to hear you say that.

Implicatum: A person would hate to hear you say that.

We can again argue for the sarcastic frame also being evoked in the wider context manifesting in a somewhat covert criticism targeted at the victim (Brady and Billy, respectively) for not caring or being too plain.

As a final remark, a possible way of conceiving of the difference between irony and sarcasm in the "love examples" would be to draw parallels with Giora et al.'s (2005) negation as mitigation theory. The foundation of the theory is that "negation need not reverse the meaning of a concept or a statement by shifting focus to an alternative, diametrically opposite concept" (p. 84). A similar idea may be extended over the current topic by saying that sarcasm need not manifest between diametrically opposite concepts, such as the binary opposition in ironic evaluation reversal, but can stray into other directions (see the sarcastic evaluation reversal narratives that do not happen along a binary dimension).

5.2 Hate

A corpus search similar to that of *love* was performed with *hate*. This was justified by the scanty number of potential examples extracted from the initial 500 hits, which indicated that *hate* does not accommodate irony and sarcasm in the soap opera corpus. This is not a novel thought if we consider the oft-mentioned asymmetry in irony (see section 2.1.4.3). However, this asymmetry in itself does not satisfactorily explain why this emotive and highly intense word is not exploited for sarcastic purposes. Before dealing with this question on a general level, let us see what patterns (Table 14) have been searched for.

5.2.1 Pattern 2

Similarly to *love*, the general pattern can be illustrated as follows:

[10]
$$\text{NP} \left\{ \frac{\text{would}}{\frac{\text{'d}}{\text{wouldn't}}} \right\} \text{HATE}$$

The table corresponds to Table 13 in its structure.

Table 14 Constructions befitting Pattern 2

Pattern variation	Search construction
Pattern 2a	*NP + would + hate + that + wouldn't…** *NP + 'd + hate + that + wouldn't…* *NP + wouldn't + hate + that + would…**
Pattern 2b	*NP + would + hate (+ me/you/him/her/it/us/them)* *NP + 'd + hate (+ me/you/him/her/it/us*/them*)* *NP + wouldn't + hate (+ me/you/him/her/it/us*/them*)*
Pattern 2c	*NP + would + hate + to + see* *NP + 'd + hate + to + see* *NP + wouldn't + hate + to + see**
Pattern 2d	*NP + would + hate + to + hear* *NP + 'd + hate + to + hear* *NP + wouldn't + hate + to + hear**

* these constructions resulted in no hits in the corpus

What is instantly striking is the total absence of quite a number of patterns in the corpus. The occurrences are also modest in number which only leaves room for cautious conclusions.

5.2.1.1 Pattern 2a

The pattern is depicted below:

[11] $$\text{NP} \left\{ \frac{\text{would}}{\frac{\text{'d}}{\text{wouldn't}}} \right\} \text{HATE that} \left\{ \frac{\text{wouldn't}}{\text{would}} \right\}$$

Only the contracted form *'d* yielded any examples [n=3], as can be seen from Table 14. Examples include (136) and (137) where the key phrase has been boldfaced:

(136)   *Victoria*: So... *Sharon*: So you've gotta know that everybody is watching you, from inside the company and out. I'm sure you wouldn't want to become the subject of gossip. You**'d hate that, wouldn't** you?

(137)   *Alexandra*: Oh, dear, I hope this isn't going to be a point of disagreement between you two. *Phillip*: Oh, yeah, you**'d hate that, wouldn't** you?

While (136) is considered a common literal example that would not pose any challenge to the current discussion, we might argue that (137) conveys sarcastic prosody (the difference being the person affected by the phrase); however, the lack of similar examples does not enable us to compare it with other cases.

5.2.1.2 Pattern 2b

The pattern looks like this:

[12] $$\text{NP} \left\{ \frac{\text{would}}{\frac{\text{'d}}{\text{wouldn't}}} \right\} \text{HATE Opro}$$

Opro stands for any object pronoun. What is interesting compared to *love* in these same patterns, is that the mood of *would* in the examples remains in the hypothetical. The referent in the negated form is restricted to the 2$^{\text{nd}}$ person singular, exemplified in (138) with both the pattern and the referent boldfaced:

(138)   *Tabitha*: I fixed it so you wouldn't go to prison! I fixed it so that **your kids wouldn't hate you** for the rest of their natural-born lives! Come back here!

With regard to the affirmative forms, a prevalence is seen for the 1st person singular *me* and 3rd person singular *it*, exemplified below:

(139)   *Silas*: It's an existence, Ava. That's the point. *Ava*: And my daughters? **They would hate me** for abandoning them.

(140)   *Carly*: And then after that happy event, we all settle in here like polygamists? Yeah. It'd probably work great for you. **Everyone else would hate it**, but, hell, there is no democracy in a harem, right? *Sonny*: Calm down.

In terms of *love* (see section 5.1.1.2) it was claimed that the non-hypothetical form of *would* was not sarcasm-prone. Taking into account the scarcity of *hate* examples, we may extend the observation to include the keyword too, meaning that depending on the keyword, the hypothetical mood may or may not be inviting sarcasm. Restricting the NP to the 2nd person singular *you* [n=62] with a similar rationale as in the *love* examples; namely that direct reference would trigger sarcasm more readily than other noun phrases, yield more common examples than potentially sarcastic/ironic ones. The one instance that comes closest to an ironic reading is shown below:

(141)   *Nicole*: A non-date. Well, what does that entail exactly? *E.J.*: Oh, **you'd hate it**. Goodness. Oh, it's romantic, pampering.

Assuming that the norm is to prefer dates that are personal and romantic, the key phrase might as well convey the underlying meaning of loving the idea, in which case we have an evaluation reversal of the following two narratives:

Dictum: You would hate it.

Implicatum: You would love it.

Regardless of the NP, the examples describe inherently negative situations, unlike in (141), which automatically calls for a literal interpretation. Examples include, *lying, taking money for sex, abandoning them, drag her through the mud, planning some kind of cry-fest, not to grow up with a mother, etc*.

5.2.1.3 Pattern 2c

The pattern can be depicted as follows:

[13] $\qquad$ NP $\left\{ \dfrac{\text{would}}{\underset{\text{wouldn't}}{\text{'d}}} \right\}$ HATE to see [n=396]

The negated form did not yield any examples. In the affirmative examples, certain patterns did emerge. The NP is the 1st person singular *I* in the majority of cases (98%), which raises the question how fixed the pattern is. Consistency is observed in the non-sarcastic cases as to what follows *see*: *happen* and *get hurt* are recurring phrases expressing either genuine worry, or threat on the part of the speaker. On the other hand, in sarcastic examples, the sarcasm manifests via the interaction between what precedes the pattern and the pattern itself. Let us see some illustrations where the pattern is boldfaced and the constituents making up the sarcasm underlined:

> (142)   *Kevin*: No, because if it wasn't for you, I'd be out of my mind by now. *Mariah*: Wait. <u>This is you sane</u>? Oh, my God. **I would hate to see** <u>you crazy</u>.

> (143)   *Babe*: You know I do. Look, I don't want you to go back there, J.R. That's – that's why I overreacted a little. *J.R.*: "<u>A little</u>"? **I'd hate to see** <u>a big one</u>.

Similar examples make use of such expressions as *moved on vs stuck in a rut*, *frustrated vs really lose it*, *disagreement vs full-blown fight*, *care about you vs dislike*, and *happy vs bummed out*. In examples like (142) and (143), pattern 2c (with *I* as the NP) is fixed in its form and seems to take on an additional subtle meaning of doubt. A hint for the speaker of having understated what they said is also conveyed. Upon endeavoring to depict the evaluation reversal, we are faced with a challenge as to what exactly the surface meaning conveys. The pattern's fixedness also entails a slight alteration in meaning (see section 5.3 for a similar example):

> Dictum: 'I would hate to see what you did if not having understated your action'
>
> Implicatum: 'You understated your action'

The implicatum may as well involve covert disapproval of the understated action. The sarcasm is conveyed by clear lexical choices here, such as *sane-crazy* and *little-big one*.

5.2.1.4 Pattern 2d

The pattern can be depicted as follows:

[14] $$\text{NP} \left\{ \frac{\text{would}}{\frac{\text{'d}}{\text{wouldn't}}} \right\} \text{HATE to hear} \ [n=5]$$

Only the affirmative patterns yielded some examples, two of which, (144) and (145), operate similarly to pattern 2c (with *I* as the NP) in (142) and (143):

(144)   *Kendall*: No, not at all. He's a friend of the family's. It's ok. *Man*: Ok, well, any problems, I'll be in my office. *Ryan*: Well, that was some goodbye. **I'd hate to hear** what you have to say at my funeral.

(145)   *Sonny*: You know? I just--Chad and I are friends, and we work together. And I just don't want to see you get hurt. That's all I'm saying. Just watch out. *Gabi*: Wow. If that's how you talk about your friends, **I'd hate to hear** how you talk about the people you don't like.

The fixedness of pattern 2c seems to be extendable to other perception verbs as well, such as *hear*. One difference with pattern 2d is that *hear* triggers synonymous words of expressing oneself in both of the above cases (i.e. *say* and *talk about*, respectively). The evaluation reversal again reflects on the fixed nature of the phrase conveying an additional sense on the surface:

Dictum: 'I would hate to hear what you would say if it were not an

understatement'

Implicatum: 'What you said was an understatement'

Once again, clear lexical choices point towards the presence of sarcasm as well as indicate some criticism toward the speaker. Having made these observations, the fact that the "hate patterns" produced much less data than the "love patterns" does not allow for further conclusions.

5.3 Can't wait

In terms of semantic preference, *can't wait* has a propensity for family or romantic relations, such as becoming a grandfather/mom/husband/wife/part of a family/etc. or to marry/to meet/to see him/her/you/to spend the rest of my life/etc. Its semantic preference is suggestive of its positive polarity as well. Thus, a negatively tuned sentence with the key phrase would stand out, such as in (146) and (147) where the relevant parts have been boldfaced:

(146)   I'm going to be around so much you're going to be sick of me. *Lizzie*: I **can't wait until we're driving each other crazy** again.

(147)   *R.J.*: You know, you're ridiculous. Usually you **can't wait to accuse me** of attacking some innocent. *Antonio*: Yeah, well, Shawna wasn't innocent.

The abovementioned negative tuning does not instantly imply sarcasm. In fact, the difference between (146) and (147) lies in the possibly humorous nature of the former, which is made apparent in the 1st person plural reference *we*. Compared to the 2nd person singular *you* in (147) that puts the blame on the victim exclusively, *we* involves both speakers thereby mitigating the

sarcastic overtone of the remark[56]. Example (146) raises the question whether sarcasm works to the same effect with one's own self being (one of) the target(s).

Can't wait, in general, easily makes for the odd-one-out among the keywords due to its use in both its figurative and literal senses. The statement that it is a phrase on its way of becoming conventionalized as a figurative expression is based on the 500 sample concordances examined, where it appears as the negated form of *can wait* (17%), however, much more frequently in its figurative sense of 'being eager to do something' (83%). Literal uses vary too, such as in (148-150) where (148), (149), and (150) are all negated forms of *can wait* (i.e. substituting *can't wait* with *can wait* would not render the sentences infelicitous). On the other hand, (151) displays the same phrase in its fixed figurative form that does not allow for opposition (i.e. *I really can wait to get to know your sister* would be infelicitous here) and is used in its common sense without suggesting the presence of irony or sarcasm:

> (148)   *Craig*: I need to speak to you and Mr. Laurence. *Dorian*: He's not in. *Craig*: I 'm afraid this **can't wait**.

> (149)   *Cristian*: Well, you're going to have to come back later, Marcie, because I need to talk to Jen. *Marcie*: It **can't wait**. It's an emergency.

> (150)   *Mallet*: Come on. I 'm sorry, babe, I **can't wait** any longer.

> (151)   *Al*: Look, I got to -- I 'm sorry, I 'm just a little impatient, you know. I really **can't wait** to get to know your sister.

Literal usage, in (148), (149), and (150), does not carry the tendency to be particularly irony or sarcasm-prone. Specific markers are found that indicate if it is the literal sense we are dealing with: the demonstrative pronoun (148) or empty *it* (149) preceding the key phrase, as well as temporal expressions following the key phrase (150), all of them underlined in the examples. Thus, it is exclusively the (151)-type of examples that entertain the possibility of irony and sarcasm. However, as will be shown below, the figurative nature of the key phrase does not, in fact, lend itself easily to evaluation reversal. Consider (152) where the irony is contained in a different word than the key phrase. Relevant parts have been boldfaced:

> (152)   *Marina*: You have someone following him? *Alexandra*: Oh, no, no, bright dear. But I have **a lot of wonderful friends who can't wait to remind me that my husband is only using me, and it's only a matter of time before he hurts me**.

---

[56] As to why *we* has the function of weakening the sarcastic prosody in this case, Gottlieb, Wiener & Mehrabian's (1967) psychologically-oriented article on immediacy may provide an elaborate answer.

The irony is seen in the reversal of evaluation illustrated in the two narratives below:

> Dictum: I have a lot of wonderful friends.

> Implicatum: I have a lot of awful friends.

Consider replacing *wonderful* with a negative term (e.g. *awful, lousy, bad, etc.*) in the hypothetical example:

> (152a)   *Marina*: You have someone following him? *Alexandra*: Oh, no, no, bright dear. But I have **a lot of <u>awful</u> friends who can't wait to remind me that my husband is only using me, and it's only a matter of time before he hurts me**.

It is now questionable whether the irony is retained despite the example obviously showing signs that distinguish it from (151). It has been claimed at the beginning of the chapter that irony may involve criticism too; however, with the ill intentions missing. The irony stems from the positive adjective *wonderful*. We might argue that the remark has a sarcastic ring to it; however, the keyword *per se* does not suggest evaluation reversal. Consider the following example:

> (153)   *Mallet*: Okay, okay, okay. Alan, **we'll be talking to you again really soon**. *Alan*: **I can't wait, Detective**. *Mallet*: **Easy, easy**.

Example (153) shows a case where the wider context needs to be invoked in order to determine if what is meant is ironic. The situation invokes the typical detective-suspect scenario which includes a usually not too sought-after interrogation to which prospect the reaction *I can't wait, Detective* meant ironically would be justified. The evaluation reversal can be depicted along the *good/bad* dimension:

> Dictum: I am eager to talk with you soon.

> Implicatum: I am uneager to talk with you soon.

The response *Easy, easy* assumes a certain tone with which the remark would be uttered, thus, we can argue for the presence of sarcastic prosody completing the ironic statement.

5.3.1 Pattern 3

The pattern in general can be depicted as follows:

[14]   (NP) CAN′T WAIT to hear [n=295]

The parenthesized element is optional; when present, it is the 1st person singular *I* in 96% of the cases[57]. A further corpus search was performed to verify the collocation's increased probability

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[57] When absent, it denotes ellipsis, in which case it is necessarily the 1st person singular that is missing.

of carrying sarcasm. Interesting patterns emerged with regard to demonstrative pronouns (*this, that*), the 3rd person singular neuter pronoun (*it*), wh-words (*what*), and certain lexemes (*explanation*).

5.3.1.1 Pattern 3a

A more specific form of pattern 3 is shown below:

[15]   (NP) CAN′T WAIT to hear $\left\{\frac{\text{this (one)}}{\text{it}}\right\}$. [n=43/35]

The full stop indicates that nothing follows the demonstrative pronoun or the object pronoun, respectively. The NP in this pattern, when present, is always the 1st person singular *I*; thus, whatever the difference may be among examples it has nothing to do with the subject. An interesting difference is observed between the demonstrative pronoun *this* and the 3rd person singular neuter *it* in the pattern. The function of *this* would normally require a clear referent; however, in the majority of examples (90%), *this* apparently indicates something vague and external to the conversation but which is given emphasis at the same time. In contrast, the referent of *it* is invariably present in the conversation. This difference in tendency is related to sarcasm and non-sarcasm, respectively. Biber et al. (1999) support these observations when stating that *this* and *it* can be exchangeable; however, *this*, in fact "carries greater communicative weight" (p. 98). What is not elaborated on is how this "greater communicative weight" and the fact that the referent is not mentioned in the context can point toward sarcastic use. Consider some examples with *this*:

> (154)   *Tea*: I'll be fair, I promise. *Todd*: Oh, yeah, with a knife in your hand. **Can't wait to hear this**.

> (155)   *Seth*: I also know why she thought I did. *Chad*: **I can't wait to hear this**.

The commonality among such examples is the unexpected/uninvited appearance of someone who is about to impart some unasked for information, to which the speaker gives a response that passes judgment on both the person as well as the information they intent to pass on. The pattern shows a certain degree of fixedness too. The evaluation reversal is depicted for the irony involved:

> Dictum: I am eager to listen to what you have to say.
> Implicatum: I am uneager to listen to what you have to say.

In addition, c*an't wait*, at least in this somewhat fixed pattern, is endowed with sarcastic prosody that is attributed to the demonstrative pronoun carrying the abovementioned emphasis and conveying covert hostility toward the person about to speak. This is exacerbated by the initial remark (*Oh, yeah, with a knife in your hand*) in (154) foreshadowing the sarcastic prosody by casting doubt on the hearer's being able to explain themselves. The fact that (155) does not have this kind of foreshadowing points towards the scalar nature of sarcasm (i.e. how not every sarcastic example is sarcastic to exactly the same degree). The added sense of *this (one)* becomes apparent once contrasted with "*it*-examples" like (156) and (157) where the pattern is boldfaced:

(156)   *J.T.*: Well, I still can't believe everything's that (sic) happened. *Shiloh*: Believe it, J.T. And this single is just the beginning. *J.T.*: **I can't wait to hear it**.

(157)   *Steffy*: We were working on our poem. *Phoebe*: For the wedding. *Felicia*: Oh, **I can't wait to hear it**.

With *it* being *this single* and *our poem*, respectively, these examples do not raise the "sarcastic red flag"; however, there is a discrepancy between (156)-(157) and (158)-(159):

(158)   *Serena*: Is that woman completely out of her mind? *Nicole*: Daniel, I-I can explain, if you-- *Daniel*: Oh, **I can't wait to hear it**.

(159)   *Sam*: You know, Theresa's done some pretty horrible things, but -- *Ethan*: No, no, she has a reason. She has a Theresa reason, but it's a reason. *Sam*: Well, **I can't wait to hear it**.

Apparently, the 3rd person singular neuter is not a guarantee for non-sarcasm, however the lack of emphasis may be a further contributor to the differing degree of sarcasm. In an alternative explanation, an immediate referent as opposed to an external, less distinct one may mitigate the sarcastic effect. Yet another way of analyzing (158) and (159) would be to look at the common denominator in them. In fact, there seems to be a recurring phenomenon among the '*it*-examples' that might as well convey sarcasm; namely that *it* refers to an explanation of some sort (e.g. *answer, reason, logical* or *reasonable explanation,* and *apology*). Consider some further cases:

(160)   *Emily*: I'm sure there's a perfectly <u>logical explanation</u> for why you two are here. I **can't wait to hear it**.

(161)   *Sam*: I'm going to treat that as a real question, and I'm going to give you an <u>answer</u>. *Alan*: Ah, good, I **can't wait to hear it**.

The sarcasm derives from the doubtful urgency conveyed by the pattern which is justified by a situation where some sort of explanation is due but this explanation does not readily present itself. Such cases prompted a further corpus check for examples featuring the lexemes *explanation* and *explain* (these two lexemes being the more frequent ones).

5.3.1.2 Pattern 3b

The pattern can be depicted as follows:

[16]   (NP) CAN'T WAIT to hear $* \left\{ \dfrac{\text{explanation}}{\text{explain}} \right\}$ [n=8]

The NP takes the form of *I*, here again. The asterisk denotes a variable element, which may be a pronoun or an article. Examples with pattern 3b reveal expectations that failed to be met, actions that were not justified, situations which do not make sense and need some sort of unraveling, etc. In other words, things happening according to some norm (i.e. positive things in the sense of having a positive outcome) are not in need of explanation/ or do not need to be explained. This would entail that what *explanation/explain* fulfill in a sentence is related to something negative in the sense of having a negative outcome, such as sticking someone in a mental hospital without their consent (162), the inability to act as a team player that badly influences one's work (163), or a wife sticking her tongue down her brother's throat (164). *Can't wait* conveys a certain doubt about someone's being able to give a reasonable justification for things that according to the norm are negative, so by extension, would be viewed as negative by most people, and thus are inexplicable. In all three examples, the speaker (i.e. the person uttering the sarcastic remark) provides the questionable explanation which then contrasts with the keyword (embedded in pattern 3b) expressing doubt in the hearer being able to justify their acts, which contributes to the underlying criticism and disapproval that results in the sarcastic reading. The idea that via sarcasm we express our criticism and condemnation of negative acts of a person ties in with the negative aspects emphasized by the words *explanation* and *explain*.

(162)   *Bo*: For sticking a woman in a mental hospital, holding her there against her will, keeping her away from her family? You know, **I can't wait to hear that explanation**.

(163)   *Anna*: See, your inability to be a team player is what's wrecking your most important cases. And personally, **I can't wait to hear you explain** this latest episode to the judge -- how your case was impeded by the chief of police.

(164)   *Aubrey*: Tess, that was not what it looked like. *Tess*: Really? Because it looked like Joey's wife sticking her tongue down her brother's throat, but **I can't wait to hear your explanation**.

The evaluation reversal for the above sarcastic cases can be broadly depicted as:

Dictum: 'I am eager to hear your justification'

Implicatum: 'I am doubtful that you can give a justification'

Last, but not least, consider (165) where irony and sarcasm have a combined effect:

(165)   *Reva*: Well, good work, Joshua. **I can't wait to hear you explain** this one to Billy.

The evaluation reversal for the sarcasm corresponds to the narratives given above. We have a victim who is being criticized and negatively commented upon. There is a contrast between complimenting someone on their doing their job and needing to explain themselves. The sarcastic reading is strengthened by the presence of the demonstrative pronoun *this* indicating not what would seem obvious (the *work*) but something more intangible. The irony, on the other hand, manifests relative to pattern 3b. We know that what is really meant is what is demonstrated in the following narratives:

Dictum: Doing good work.

Implicatum: Doing bad (unsatisfactory) work.

Finally, in the hypothetical version of (165) where the positive adjective *good* is replaced by the negative *bad*, the irony disappears, and instead of contributing to the sarcasm, the phrase *this one* now seems to indicate a periodic blunder:

(165a)   *Reva*: Well, <u>lousy</u> work, Joshua. **I can't wait to hear you explain** this one to Billy.

5.3.1.3 Pattern 3c

The pattern is shown below:

[17]   (NP) (∗) CAN′T WAIT to hear what [n=54]

The NP, when present, takes the form of the 1st person singular *I*, in 98% of the cases. The parenthesized asterisk denotes an optional adverb (*just* being the most common one in the corpus). The difference between a sarcastic and non-sarcastic example is illustrated in (166) and (167):

(166)   *Chelsea*: I have my new line. I have the fashion show coming up. I just want to focus on that. These are some of the best designs I've ever created, Jack. **I can't wait to hear what** Neil thinks about them.

(167)   *EJ*: You go ahead and be my guest. You're going to be embarrassed. *Rafe*: Oh, am I? Well then **I certainly can't wait to hear what** you have to say next.

While (166) does not foreshadow a conflict, (167) does, in the form of a provocation (*You're going to be embarrassed*) that establishes the ground for a sarcastic remark that conveys disapproval and criticism toward the assumption (and thereby the person saying it) that someone would want to hear something that has been predetermined to put the person in an uncomfortable or embarrassing position. Such provocative phrases in the data include, *found something that you missed, you disappoint me,* and *still lying*. The evaluation reversal is depicted as follows:

Dictum: 'I am eager to hear your thoughts'

Implicatum: 'There is no reason for me to hear your thoughts'

A further option for sarcasm is exemplified in (168):

(168)   *Michael*: You racked up $50,000 in debt to a guy who sent thugs to kick the crap out of you. **I can't wait to hear what** you have planned next.

Similar cases include phrases, such as *brilliant idea you have for getting rid of the late Mr. Curry, you did this time, pressing issue important enough to interrupt my investigation,* and *kind of spin he put on it*. In (168)-like examples, pattern 3c conveys disapproval and criticism just like in (167); however, the victim is more tangible and thus the sting hits the mark in a more straightforward manner. The evaluation reversal is shown below:

Dictum: 'I am eager to hear your thoughts'

Implicatum: 'It does not make a difference if I hear your thoughts'

Essentially though, both of these evaluation reversals convey the same idea.

As a final remark, the various patterns with *can't wait* are representative of different degrees of sarcasm with examples assuming a more fixed nature, such as pattern 3a (provided that it ends with *this*). A possible justification is given by McEwen & Greenberg (1970) in terms of message intensity. They claim that the intensity (translatable as the sarcastic degree in our examples) systematically varies based on the insertion of lexical items[58] of known intensive value (p. 340) (see section 5.1.1.1 for what can contribute to sarcastic prosody).

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[58] McEwen & Greenberg (1970) place primary emphasis on verbs and modifiers.

5.4 Hope

A quick overview of the 500 random samples tells us what *hope* collocates with most frequently, the semantic preference of which collocations evoke wishful thoughts (e.g. *hope for the best, hope it doesn't come to that, hope so, etc.*). *Hope* was mentioned to be a verb referring to an intellectual state (see section 4.3.5.8) not expressing any emphasis or extremity, which assumes some challenge in spotting its ironic and sarcastic uses. Having said that, certain recurrences potentially fitting the irony/sarcasm criteria were subjected to further analysis. The summary pattern can only depicted vaguely with the only common denominator being among the variations that the phrase precedes the keyword. What the asterisk may stand for is detailed in the subsections.

[17]   ∗ HOPE

5.4.1 Pattern 4a

[18]   Let′s HOPE [n=1441]

The abovementioned neutrality of *hope* manifests in the pattern and makes it questionable whether it is sarcasm that we have at hand despite certain features evoking the sarcastic frame in the examples. The phrase seems to be somewhat conventionalized often with the additional meaning of *we will see (if)* apart from its genuinely expressing hopefulness. (169) and (170) demonstrate this tendency:

(169)   *Jack*: Don't hold your breath. *Craig*: Lighten up, Jack. It's your wedding day. **Let's hope** this one lives up to your expectations.

(170)   *Abby*: Happens to be my career, thank you very much. I've just-- just kept my clothes on a little bit more than usual lately. *Ashley*: Yes. You have, haven't you? **Let's hope** that's a trend that continues.

Even if we substitute the phrase with *we will see (if)*, which would result in the conveyance of an underlying doubt, neither (169), nor (170) features the necessary evaluation reversal. Apparently, it does not seem to make a difference what follows the phrase; at most a mild doubt is what is expressed. Consequently, *let's hope* is dismissed as a potential carrier of irony or sarcasm.

5.4.2 Pattern 4b

[19]   I $\left\{\dfrac{\text{suppose}}{\text{guess}}\right\}$ it's too much to HOPE [n=11]

Cases, such as (171), (172) and (173), prompted a second search for the phrase *too much to hope*, treated as sarcasm-prone:

(171)   Luke: Hey. Skye: Well, I guess it's **too much to hope you'd be gone**. Luke: Oh, no, not yet. You and I have a date first. Skye: Not in this life.

(172)   *Sally*: I suppose it's **too much to hope that you have come over here to concede defeat**. *Stephanie*: Not on your life, Sally.

(173)   Claudia: I would love to have done that, but unfortunately, we were delayed by the storm and we had to make an emergency landing. Olivia: I suppose it's **too much to hope that you were hit by lightning**?

The above examples, however literally meant, carry a certain sarcastic prosody deducible from the context; more precisely the negative situation depicted (i.e. *you'd be gone, concede defeat,* and *hit by lightning*). It is the semantic preference of the phrase that helps distinguishing between what is definitely non-sarcasm and what may be sarcastic. In most of the examples the object of too much hoping had to do with positive things, such as dreams coming through, becoming friends, and being close again (84%), all of them meant sincerely. In those examples that involved stinging and insulting, on the other hand, the object was invariably linked with negative events, such as death and disappearance from someone's life (16%), like in (171) and (173). This unnecessary stinging of the victim (sometimes reinforced by the rhetorical question format) manifests via direct referencing (2nd person singular); however, as no evaluation reversal is taking place, what remains is a euphemistically expressed wishful thought. The pattern is not indicative of sarcasm.

5.4.3 Pattern 4c

[20]   you('d)(just) better (just) HOPE [n=29]

The parentheses denote an optional element that is the adverb *just* (either manifesting before *better*, or after). The phrase, often but not exclusively, preceded by the past participle marker *'d*, made for a potentially prolific search term as (174) illustrates:

(174)   *Natalie*: No, no, but he is on a tear and not just to find Adriana, but to prove that Dorian set him up. *Bruce*: **You better hope** your mother plays ball and doesn't call the cops.

There may be a conflictual situation; however, the negative criticism, insult, and sting are missing. What is present is a threat (often surfacing in the subsequent clause). The reason for considering pattern 4c examples as potentially sarcastic is their indirect referencing via the 2nd person singular *you*. The context suggests that addressing *you* serves as a decoy for *I* covering up one's own worry about some future event with a negative prospect and allows to place the blame on someone else. Representative examples are shown below where both the key phrase and what constitutes the threat are boldfaced:

(175)   *Amber*: I saved him. *Bill*: You saved him? He wouldn't have been anywhere near that trailer if it hadn't been for you. **You better hope** he comes out of this, so help me, **or you will wish you burned up with that damn trailer**.

(176)   *Lorenzo*: Once again, you're making a mistake. *Ric*: You know what? **You'd better hope** that my nephew is still alive **because if he's not, I'm going to see to it that you get the death penalty**.

The boundary, however, needs to be drawn between sarcasm and threat; in other words between a critical attitude, stinging, and insulting versus expressing an intention to inflict harm and pain through blaming. The prevalence of the 2nd person singular may be misleading, which is effective both when the intention is to insult and when it is to threaten[59]. (177) is an example of sarcasm, which at the same time proves that it is not pattern 4c that makes it thus:

(177)   *Josh*: You know, the way you busted my chops, I figured you for the hard-edged type who got their kicks knocking guys down. Guess you're not all edge. *Julia*: Well, I figured you for a shallow, arrogant intern with a major God complex. I guess I was right. With that ego, **you better just hope** you save a few lives -- you might actually be worth something.

(177) is abundant in criticism and insult compared to which the key phrase expresses a mild desire for the person to do some good deeds. Arguably, the sarcasm would remain without pattern 4c too. Overall, pattern 4c is not considered as a reliable sarcasm indicator either.

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[59] There is not much literature on the relationship between threats and sarcasm; however, upon googling threats vs sarcasm, a newspaper article comes up detailing the case of a high school student who made an incautious sarcastic remark that was mistaken for a threat; thus, a link is suggested between the two.

5.4.4 Pattern 4d

[21]   one $\left\{\frac{\text{can}}{\text{could}}\right\}$ $(*)$ hope [n=68]

The parenthesized element is optional and can be any adverb (in the corpus *only* is the most frequent one). Example (178) is extracted as a potential evoker of the sarcastic frame due to the speaker's perceived ill-will and the sting contained in the contrast between positive things that people 'should' normally hope for and negative things that people actually hope for in this example:

> (178)   *Nash*: Jessica who? Come one. We haven't seen anything of Jessica since they tried to integrate you guys. Hey, maybe she's so freaked out that she's gone forever. *Tess*: Well, **one can hope**.

One recurring phenomenon is the occurrence of *death* in one way or another in the examples. Pattern 4d is often a remark following phrases, such as *get yourself killed, she's dead, the woman is on her deathbed or close to it, you're killing me, I'm gonna die of pneumonia,* and *catch my death of cold*. As death is regarded as a universal taboo topic, due to its being less than a pleasant experience in any culture (Kövecses, 2000), expressing a desire for it to happen, and addressing someone else than one's own self may be a suitable footing for sarcasm. A further reinforcement for a possible sarcastic reading is the use of the gender-neutral pronoun *one*[60] that fulfills a double role: on the one hand, it refers to an unidentified third person (also possible in the plural); and, on the other hand, it refers to one's own self in an indirect and detached way. Either way, the indirectness conveyed via the pronoun paired with the upsetting of *hope*'s usual semantic preference (the corpus more often includes 'hoping for something favorable' than 'hoping for someone's affliction') may contribute to sarcastic prosody. This would fall in line with Gottlieb et al.'s (1967) idea of the effects of immediacy (see footnote 56). Nevertheless, the reason why pattern 4d cannot be considered a sarcasm-prone construction is the missing victim, criticism, and most importantly, the missing evaluation reversal in the examples.

As a final note, examples with *hope* beg the question what makes the patterns not particularly prone to sarcasm or irony. McEwen & Greenberg (1970) talk about varying intensity among verb forms, which might as well show some effect in the "hope examples" inasmuch as *hope* is less intense than *love*, *hate*, or *can't wait* (which may easily be the case on an intuitive basis too).

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[60] The literature is silent on the function the gender-neutral pronoun can fulfill in sarcasm; a topic which is well worth looking into.

5.5 Appreciate

In terms of *appreciate*, it seems we are dealing with a little irony and sarcasm-prone lexeme (similarly to *hope*) evinced by the scarcity of any recurring pattern that would show unusualness of some sort. The keyword has an inherently positive polarity and often occurs with support (i.e. appreciating someone's support or help). This is expressed either through the collocation *I appreciate it* or *I appreciate that*. These phrases often function as the phrase *thank you* (*indeed*, 10% of all occurrences of the keyword in the sample 500 occurs together with *thank you* as in *Thank you. I appreciate that*), and due to their being common, conventionalized, and mechanical they may not be the best candidates for irony and sarcasm. In other uses, the keyword is followed by a noun phrase of which the most frequent are: *opportunity, sentiment, thought, vote of confidence, effort, enthusiasm,* and *honesty*, again suggesting a favorable outlook. The examples below also reinforce its positive semantic preference, even if the keyword is used as a polite hedging for letting someone know that their assistance is valued but not necessary/required at the moment, as in (179) where the keyword is boldfaced and the object (referent) underlined :

(179)　　*Belle*: Look, I really **appreciate** that you care about me, but I just want to have dinner with my parents right now. *Philip*: I love you, Belle. You're the best. Shawn Brady is a fool.

This can take less convincing forms as well, such as in (180):

(180)　　*Jamie*: Stacey, listen, I was just turned down for lunch. I have nothing to do. I'm free as a bird. *Stacey*: I **appreciate** the offer, thank you very much, but I can take care of myself.

This hedged sense highlights the idiomatic use of the keyword that does not in itself give away any sign as to whether it expresses sincere (179) or mock politeness (180). Nevertheless, (179) conveys no evaluation reversal or any other "giveaway" ironic/sarcastic feature, while (180) is ambiguous due to the idiomatic use expressing regard and value for something in a gracious manner not necessarily being justified in the context. Consider, on the other hand, (181):

(181)　　*Molly*: Carly, honey, I am on your side. But once you go down this road -- *Carly*: No, I'm not going down any road. *Molly*: -- Of covering your tracks and dates and times, you start believing your own lies. *Carly*: I didn't come here to be put on the witness stand. Thanks. **Thank you for your support**[61]**,** cuz. **I really appreciate it**. *Molly*: Oh, come on.

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[61] Sarcastic "*thank you* phrases" make for an intriguing research topic as the evaluation reversal does not strictly speaking happen on the level of propositional negation.

Example (181) is sarcastic where the victim is Molly, whose behavior is not sympathetic towards Carly, and this is made evident in Carly's remark. The sarcastic prosody comes to light in the contrast between thanking for the support and not having had received any support. Knowing that there was no support at all, the additional *I really appreciate it* would seem redundant unless uttered with a particular purpose (i.e. to express disapproval and/or to sting). Furthermore, *I really appreciate it* being the final remark of the speaker is in favor of a sarcastic reading also because it coincides with what Culpeper (2011) claimed to be unlikely; namely, that an interaction would finish with a phrase that has originally been designed to achieve politeness, and that has been listed as one of the factors contributing to sarcastic prosody (see section 5.1.1.1). Accordingly, the evaluation reversal can be depicted as follows:

> Dictum: 'I am grateful for and appreciate your support'
>
> Implicatum: 'You provided no support to be grateful for, thus there is nothing to appreciate either'

However, note that the example does not allow a lexical reading of the sarcasm. In other words, without the context we would not know that we are dealing with sarcasm. Jung (1994) justifies this by saying that: "thank you expressions should be considered along with the responses to them, since they are 'chained actions' or units of discourse" (p. 2-3). In the light of this, when considering the key phrase and the subsequent remark, we realize the presence of non-literality due to the (insincere) gratitude not having been accepted by Molly. Compare (181) with (99) extracted from the tweets and copied here for convenience:

(99)   **[[Appreciate the guy]]** telling me, in detail, about the horror film about being stuck in a lift, while we were stuck in a lift! #not

Example (99) goes to show what is necessary for a remark featuring *appreciate* to be taken sarcastically. With regard to *thank you* phrases, Jung (1994) notes that "the benefactor's action benefitted the beneficiary, and the beneficiary strongly believes that the benefactor's action benefitted him/her" (p. 4). The context reveals that in (99) there is no true beneficiary. It was deemed worth checking the construction exemplified in (99); *appreciate NP telling* [n=57] to see if it yields similar non-literal instances. The majority of the examples (89%), featured the collocation *I appreciate you(r) telling me*, and all the cases expressed literality, such as in (182):

(182)   *Frankie*: So you, sir, no longer have to worry about Maya suddenly snatching Lucy. She's just a kid looking for a fresh start. *Jesse*: Listen, **I appreciate you telling** me what you could. I gotta get back to work.

On the other hand, one example was extracted where instead of an object pronoun, a noun was used and where, compared to the other examples, some kind of conflict existed:

(183)   *Jill*: And, Nikki, I think that you better take a careful look at why you're being so defensive. *Nikki*: Well, perhaps it's because **I don't appreciate people telling me** what's going on in my own mind.

An interesting observation is that in the soap opera corpus, it is the present tense affirmative that is used to express mostly literal politeness (182); however, (183) is a good example of the negated phrase expressing conflict (and perhaps sarcastic prosody to some extent). This brings us to the consequent corpus search conducted with the present tense negative form of *appreciate*.

5.5.1 Pattern 5

The pattern is shown below:

[22] $\text{NP} \left\{ \dfrac{\text{don't}}{\text{doesn't}} \right\} \text{APPRECIATE}$ [n=714/93]

The general observation is that the literal graciousness conveyed by the affirmative form is missing in the negated examples; instead negation with *don't* boosts the use of understatement, a figurative device often linked to ironic usage (see Colston, 1997a & Colston & O'Brien, 2000a). The understatement becomes obvious when the semantic preference is examined; *don't appreciate* being followed by noun phrases expressing some sort of mistreatment (e.g. *accusing, ambushing, harassing, attacking, insinuating, etc.*). Interestingly, *doesn't appreciate* is not used in understatement, for which explanation is sought in its not expressing enough directness via the 3rd person singular as a subject. While the phrase *don't appreciate* is most often preceded by the 1st person singular *I* (78%), *doesn't appreciate* is either followed by a proper noun or the 3rd person singular *he/she*. (184) serves as an example:

(184)   *Kay*: You're a lovely woman, and--and **he doesn't appreciate you**. He could care less about your feelings. *Annie*: That weasel! He shouldn't treat me like that!

In (185), the understatement is revealed in the context. Combining the keyword expressing high regard and the inherently negative verb *harassing* helps to perceive the understatement:

(185)   *Craig*: I'll take care of it, Brenda, thank you. **I don't appreciate you coming in here** and **harassing** my staff, so why don't you just kindly leave the premises and there'll be no trouble? *Man*: Can't I at least have a statement? *Craig*: What about "get out" did you not understand?

It is worth noting though that based on (185), understatement does not entertain the possibility of evaluation reversal in all cases. An understatement does not entail that the remark is not meant literally, only that it is meant to a higher degree (i.e. more intensely) than expressed. An alternative way of looking at it is saying that (185) does not lend itself to evaluation reversal because it is not strictly speaking the key phrase (*I don't appreciate*) that is understated but the whole clause (*I don't appreciate you coming in here*).

As a final remark, *appreciate* is interesting in the sense that intuition would tell us that it is indeed a verb of high intensity; however, apparently this intensity is ingrained in its restricted use in *thank you* phrases. A possible explanation is to say that its limited presence in ironic/sarcastic remarks has to do with its kin *thank you/thanks/thanks a lot* having filled the "ironic/sarcastic slot." In fact, it has been mentioned above that the word is a highly conventionalized one used routinely in thanking. Even though, appreciate might, in theory, express emotional dissatisfaction or discomfort, Jung (1994) remarks that it is most commonly used to express genuine appreciation for some benefit. Consequently, examples, such as (99) are isolated and uncommon cases of sarcasm.

5.6 Summary and discussion of key verbs

Five verbs have been scrutinized in the corpus, *love, hate, can't wait, hope,* and *appreciate*. The examples showed the keywords in their most typical as well as potentially irony/sarcasm-prone constructions. Based on the initial criteria provided for irony and sarcasm, a set of examples (varying in number) were filtered out from 500 random hits for each keyword. Sarcasm proved to be more predominant than irony which is interesting in the sense that the proportion of figurative occurrences compared to literal ones has only been determined for irony so far (see Tannen, 1984). Right at the beginning, *sarcastic prosody* was introduced as new terminology implying all features that make a remark sound sarcastic (i.e. the lexico-grammatical realizations of hostility, disapproval, insult, harsh criticism, sting, etc.). Also, the distinction between irony and sarcasm was established in the different manifestations of the evaluation reversal involved. Sarcasm has a clear victim and an evaluation reversal that cannot be readily depicted along the *good/bad* dichotomy, which, however, nicely accommodates ironic evaluation reversals. The verbs represented differing tendencies in terms of irony and sarcasm-proneness which was attributed to their being representative of varying degrees of intensity, which, by

extension, would affect their successful exploitation for ironic/sarcastic purposes. Based on the analysis of the verbs and their patterns, merely relying on lexico-grammatical features in the recognition of irony and sarcasm cannot be sanctioned. Having said that, particular patterns turned out to be of somewhat conventionalized nature (e.g. pattern 1c [7]) which can point toward sarcasm more reliably than other patterns. In addition, certain grammatical factors can also guide the detection with more confidence, such as the 2nd person singular addressing, the use of the hypothetical form, or the employment of tag questions. However, such factors cannot yet be generalized to all verbs, especially since the patterns were not uniform among the verbs. The scalar nature of sarcasm was also demonstrated inasmuch as some verbs in some patterns proved to be more content-laden and sarcasm-prone than others (e.g. the patterns with *can't wait*). The comparison between identical patterns with *love* and *hate* inform us about the latter's tendency to be less sarcasm-prone than the former. The asymmetry mentioned in irony studies, according to which referring to something positive to imply something negative is more common than the other way around is now extended to sarcasm as well. Spotting potential examples with *hope* proved to be more challenging than other verbs. Certain patterns did occur frequently but turned out to be "decoys", which at the same time indicated important phenomena relatable to sarcasm (e.g. threat). As the last verb, *appreciate* showed similar tendencies to *hope* with regard to meagerness, the question arises if resistance to irony and sarcasm has to do verbs expressing intellectual state. Returning to McEwen & Greenberg's (1970) idea about language intensity, it makes sense to assume that verbs related to states of emotion and attitude (e.g. *love* and *hate*) would be better candidates for the conveyance of admittedly intense forms of communication (i.e. sarcasm). The rest of the chapter is devoted to the analysis of the adjective keywords with section 5.16 reserved for the discussion of how adjectives fit into the picture drawn so far.

5.7 Amazing

The adjective is tricky; its earliest use as *confusing* is barely visible in today's speech. Its etymology shows that the original meaning *stupefactive* was replaced by *dreadful*, which latter is still in use along with *wonderful* (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2001). Knowing that *amazing* might be referring to diametrically opposite notions does not aid the irony/sarcasm detection process. Indeed, the assumption is that because of this dual sense manifesting on the surface, *amazing* does not lend itself to ironic usage (where one of the senses would need to be covert). The wider context is invoked to help us determine if one sense is more dominant in the example. As we will see, the context sometimes allows for both senses simultaneously. Consider (186), for example:

(186)   *Noah*: Check it out, your mother's here. *Ethan*: I don't care. It's **amazing** isn't it, that Halloween night is when I find out that my mother is actually a real live witch? Kind of puts a nice bow on the whole thing, doesn't it?

The ironic reading would only be possible by denying the previously mentioned dual sense of *amazing* embedded in the word itself (i.e. both *wonderful* and *dreadful*) and acknowledging only the positive sense. In terms of grammar, fronting (*that Halloween night is when*) may also serve as a cue for irony, which possibility is noted in Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad, & Finegan (1999) and researched by Leonetti & Escandell-Vidal (2014). Nevertheless, nothing seems to support the positive meaning to have precedence over the negative meaning; thus, by granting both readings to the keyword, the possibility of irony is discarded. Having said that, the examples are rather diverse. For instance, the inherent positivity of *amazing* comes to the foreground when it modifies a noun, often referring to a human being (*e.g. woman, kid, husband, prosecutor, parents, etc.*). Knowing this, examples, such as (187) stand out:

(187)   *Theresa*: You know what? I don't really care what happens to me. I just want Ethan to live. Do you understand that? That's what matters to me. *Alistair*: Oh, such an **amazing** self-sacrifice coming from the lips of the little vixen who tried to kill me not once, but twice.

Upon closer reading, it becomes evident that the sarcasm in (187) is not only contained in the keyword and the noun that it modifies but in the wider context. The sarcasm (and the sarcastic prosody) stems from three sources: firstly, from the description of the situational irony arising from a contrast between someone being repudiated for attempting to kill a person and this same person wanting someone else to live; secondly, the negative meaning of the keyword not making

any sense in the context (i.e. the evaluation reversal is not happening on the general level of *good/bad* or the specific level of *amazing/dreadful*), and thirdly, the lexical choice *little vixen* which corresponds to what Culpeper (2011) refers to insulting condescension (p. 174). The narratives can be depicted as follows:

> Dictum: 'It is a wonderful self-sacrifice to want to spare someone's life while trying to kill someone else'
>
> Implicatum: 'It is improbable that a 'bad' person wants to spare someone's life and at the same time tries to kill someone else'

5.7.1 Pattern 7

Significance is attributed to the phrase *coming from* (187) as it seems to be closely connected to and dependent on the adjective. The pattern presumed to be a good sarcasm predictor is shown below:

[23]   AMAZING absN coming from NP [n=2]

AMAZING is the keyword and the denomination absN indicates abstract nouns (the pattern can only work with inanimate nouns)[62]. Consider (188) and (189) (the only two examples in the corpus) where, based on the context, the pattern seems to be an elliptical phrase missing the words "even though it is." The key construction has been boldfaced and the missing phrase inserted:

(188)   *Stephanie*: I hate to say this... but it seems to me that these days you're a little more at peace with yourself when you're with Brooke. Why don't you go home and spend some time with her? *Ridge*: That is a pretty **amazing suggestion [even though it is] coming from you**. *Stephanie*: Look, I-- just want you to get through this difficult time in your life as easily as possible, and if Brooke is going to help you with that, I'm all for it.

(189)   *Robin*: You know, it just really threw me off the way he was able to act like something mutually life-altering didn't just happen. *Jason*: All right, first of all, Patrick couldn't get over you in a matter of minutes. That would be impossible. You're not that easy to forget. *Robin*: That's an **amazing compliment [even though it is] coming from you**.

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[62] One example presented itself that showed similar effect with the keyword being in predicative position:
Abigail: No, he didn't lie-- *Chad*: Yes, he did, it's what he does. *Abigail*: Oh, really? That is **amazing coming from you**, Chad. *Chad*: Okay, so he's been completely honest with you all along?

Eliminating *coming from you* from these remarks would result in a literal compliment. However, adding *coming from you* conveys emphasis in a way that under normal circumstances the interaction between the two speakers would make it redundant to add the phrase if it did not convey some additive meaning. The number of hits does not allow for extensive analysis; nevertheless a difference is noticed between (187) versus (188) and (189) in terms of the NP following the phrase *coming from*. Whereas, (188) and (189) are not analyzed as sarcastic (both the suggestion and the compliment may be meant as sincerely being wonderful even if implying some surprise), (187) is sarcastic. The only difference between them is the NP which seems to foster the sarcastic reading when it is not a pronoun. This would mean that pattern 7 may indeed be a sarcasm-prone construction due to the joint effect of the adjective plus abstract noun as well as the noun phrase being more content-laden than a simple pronoun (i.e. *little vixen who tried to kill me* vs *you*). We are reminded of the concept of *affective meaning* which is explicitly conveyed through the connotative content of the words used (Leech, 1981, p. 15); which, by extension, entails that the affective meaning of (187) is more intense than either (188), or (189).

5.7.2 Pattern 8

The pattern is shown below:

[24] $\left\{ \dfrac{\text{It is/It}\prime\text{s}}{\text{That}\prime\text{s}} \right\} (*) \text{ AMAZING}$

The parenthesized element denotes an optional adverb. The examples are varied, thus several of them are provided:

(190) *Theresa*: Yeah, I did. Not that I would expect you to understand the meaning of that word. *Julian*: Yes, and that's all it is, is an empty, meaningless word. It counts for nothing in the real world. *Theresa*: I don't believe that, and I never will. *Julian*: **That's amazing**, considering your track record with Ethan. I mean, you've been trying to woo him back to you all these years and failed miserably.

(191) *Gwen:* You know, after everything she's done to try and break us up, she still manages to appall me. *Ethan*: Yeah, **it's pretty amazing**. I can't believe she used Chad to come here and make a pitch to me.

(192) *Eve*: God, you know, **it's amazing** -- the way this parasite just destroys every bit of tissue in its path. It's the perfect predator. *Ian*: Not quite perfect –

The above examples all feature an inimical relationship between speakers; however, upon a closer look, the keyword might as well be meant literally even if the situation fosters a certain intonation (reminiscent of sarcastic prosody). The reason for discarding such instances as sarcastic is due to the pattern itself, which does not directly address a specific victim. Even though disapproval may be permeating these examples, the evaluation reversal is missing. The dual sense of *amazing* always manifests on the surface; however, the two senses are not always opposites (*dreadful vs wonderful*). Consider (190) in this respect, where the surface meaning of *amazing* hides a more probable interpretation of *hard to believe*. None the less, the latter meaning seems to be embedded in the word itself present on the surface rather than implied. The dual sense of *amazing* in (191) manifests, on the one hand, in acknowledging the fact of the woman's ability to reach new levels of appalling Gwen, and, on the other hand, in Gwen and Ethan's disapproval of the woman's ability to appall them. Even though, the collocation *pretty amazing* tilts the remark to the positive on the grounds of it referring to only positive things, it is not sufficient to disambiguate the remark. Upon checking the soap opera corpus, *pretty amazing* refers to such situations as *working together, the tumor having stabilized, sales spiking,* and *forgiving someone*. This throws new light on (191) in which the phrase clashes with the inherently negative statement *I can't believe she used Chad to come here and make a pitch to me*[63], which implies that *amazing* is to mean something negative. In (192) the dual sense of *amazing* manifests a little differently: in one reading *amazing* is acknowledging the ability of the subject (i.e. the way this parasite destroys everything where the parasite in fact refers to a person as the broader context advises us), in another sense, *amazing* is referring to how dreadful the situation is (i.e. the fact that this parasite destroys every bit of tissue in its path).

Pattern 8 was worth the corpus check if for no other reason than to confirm the fact that certain patterns may withstand irony and sarcasm.

5.7.3 Pattern 9

Examples, like (193) suggested the examination of yet another pattern, depicted as follows:

[25] $$(NP \begin{Bmatrix} 's \\ is \end{Bmatrix}) \text{ AMAZING isn't NP}$$ [n=232]

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[63] The inherent negativity of the phrase is based on a corpus search of *I can't believe* during which examples surfaced, such as *I forgot, you think I'm lying about this, what a huge disappointment you are, you have slipped out, and busting on one's haircut, etc.*

The parenthesized element means that it is optional; (when absent it implies ellipsis).

(193) *Miguel*: You know, sometimes it's hard to believe that you and Kay are sisters. *Jessica*: Yeah, **Kay's amazing, isn't she**? Wow, I mean, she helped Ivy destroy our family, which led to my mom being killed.

Regardless of the pattern, *amazing* again seems to convey more than one meaning here. Having said that, the example may tilt towards an ironic interpretation due to the tag question combined with the description that follows. We assume, namely that destroying a family which leads to someone's death is not considered positively amazing. The potential irony is noticeable especially when contrasted with examples where the positive sense of *amazing* (as in *wonderful*) overrides the negative one based on the context giving away an overall positive ambiance. This positive ambiance is exemplified in (194) which proves to be more typical in the corpus:

(194) *Massimo*: All right. **Bridget is amazing, isn't she**? *Jackie*: Yes, she is and she shouldn't feel that any of us have forgotten about her and her child.

Lastly, (195) is also an example which could conveniently be analyzed as sarcastic if the dual sense of the keyword were not present on the surface (something like *wonderful/unbelievable*). Nevertheless, once again a certain "virtual intonation" accompanies the remark conveying disapproval which, however, is not considered a sufficient ingredient for sarcasm. The irony is ruled out due to the *good/bad* dichotomy not being able to account for the evaluation reversal (i.e. the dual sense of the keyword does not concern the opposing adjectives *wonderful/dreadful*).

(195) *Cass*: How come you're in such a good mood today? *Nicole*: **Amazing, isn't it**? Considering the fact that you never came home last night. *Cass*: There's an explanation for that.

On a final note, the above demonstrated double sense of *amazing* differs from the two meanings found in irony (i.e. what we *say* versus what we *mean*) in a way that both meanings are on the surface (what we *say* and *mean1* versus what we *say* and *mean2*). In order to examine a remark as ironic the less probable[64] sense of the keyword needs to be cancelled out, so that there is only one ostensible sense. Frequently the context can advise us as to which interpretation to dismiss; but often it allows for both. Whitsitt's (2005) view of the role of connotation may come in handy when thinking about the dual senses of a word; according to this, connotation locates meaning within a word (which is contrasted with semantic prosody that would locate meaning across several words) (p. 285).

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[64] The wider context can advise us about the less probable sense, like in (193).

5.8 Happy and glad

Being synonymous, *happy* and *glad* were examined with an emphasis on the common patterns they exhibited. Upon a closer look at the extracted examples, it turned out that in fact they did not share much. With regard to their semantic preference in the whole corpus, *happy* (in a pre-modifier position) is reserved for celebratory events, such as *birthday, anniversary, Halloween, Thanksgiving, New Year, Valentine's Day, Homecoming, endings, occasions* as well as 'people collectives', such as *couple, family, marriage, wedding, newlyweds, people*, and *together*. In a non-pre-modifier position, *happy* most frequently collocates with[65] *to accept, to accommodate, to announce, to answer, to assist, to be able to, to be alive, to be back, to be here, to be home, to be with someone, to buy, to call, to cooperate, to discuss, to do anything, to give, to have someone, to hear, to help, to know*, and *to oblige*. *Glad*, on the other hand, can only be examined in its non-pre-modifier function as it does not exist as a pre-modifier. It collocates with *to be home, to meet, to see, to clear the air, to talk, to be alive, to be awake, to feel better, to be here, to be okay, to agree, to approve, to bring something up, to call, to come, to stop by, to take one's advice*, and *to be with someone*. *Happy* often occurred in understatement, with the common denominator among the examples being that it was also negated. The understatement in (196), (197), and (198) has been boldfaced:

(196)   *Erica*: Well, you know what? When you say such terrible things to me, I have to fight back. *Jack*: **Not a very happy situation, is it**? *Erica*: No, it's not.

(197)   *Man*: Your father will explain everything when he gets here. *Noah*: Look, I can guarantee you that my father **is not going to be happy about you spying on us with a gun**, all right?

(198)   This is about Adam Newman. *Spencer*: I'm listening. *Diane*: The D.A.'s office **can't be too happy about Adam's long list of unprosecuted crimes**.

An understatement may be regarded as ironic if the context assumes an evaluation reversal along the two-way system of *good/bad*. The literality of the above examples, due to the negation in them, prevents these cases to be seen as ironic. Indeed, if the negation were changed into the affirmative, we could have a case for irony. Recall, Giora et al.'s (2005) negation as mitigation

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[65] Overlaps between *glad* and *happy* have been underlined.

theory which is originally designed to explain overstatements[66]. In terms of understatements, the idea seems to hold in an inverse way inasmuch as the understatement in the above examples serves as a covert hedge implying the end of the polarity scale (the diametrical opposite of the affirmative). Even so, *happy* is not considered a particularly irony or sarcasm-prone adjective. This is exemplified by (199) (there was no similar example with *glad*), where the keyword could be substituted by any other adjective essentially:

(199)   *Tom*: That's very mature. *Emily*: Well, you know what? I guess mature people file law briefs while the rest of us are just **happy** with getting even.

As for *glad*, certain potentially suggestive patterns stuck out, where the phrase *I'm glad* seemed to function as a conventionalized expression when combined with particular verbs. This prompted a corpus check with *happy* in the same pattern.

5.8.1 Pattern 10

[26] $$\text{I'm} \left\{ \frac{\text{GLAD}}{\text{HAPPY}} \right\} \text{NP} \left\{ \frac{\text{find}}{\frac{\text{see}}{\text{think}}} \right\}$$

The results indicate that the conventionalized phrase only seems to work with *glad* but not *happy*. Merely the number of hits shows *happy*'s disadvantaged status. Each variation yielded only one result, whereas the same pattern with *glad* produced 100+ hits. Even though the NP could take any form, all examples appear with the second person singular *you* without exception, which may be contributing to the conventionalized status. Depending on the verb following the pronoun, certain tendencies arose. These will be addressed in turn.

5.8.1.1 Pattern 10a

With *find* being the verb [n=39], a curious phenomenon occurred inasmuch as the post-modifier position was taken up by either the adjective *amusing*, or *funny* (in 89% of the cases). The pattern is depicted below:

[27] $$\text{I'm GLAD you find Pro } (*) \left\{ \frac{\text{amusing}}{\text{funny}} \right\}$$

---

[66] The idea is that negation of an overstatement does not shift the focus to the diametrically opposite meaning (i.e. not exceptionally bright ≠ stupid). In other words, it is no more than a hedge (Giora et al., 2005, p. 95).

Pro stands for any pronoun, be it an object pronoun or a demonstrative pronoun. The parenthesized element is optional and is reserved for the adverb *so*. Pattern 10a incidentally carries sarcasm. Compare the following two examples where in (200) the phrase *I'm glad* does not bear the exact same meaning as in (201):

(200)   *Phyllis*: You're—you're—you're-- what is that word I'm thinking of? You're--I don't know. Peaceful? I----I feel... peaceful. Here, it's very, very, uh... serene here. *Damon*: Thank you. **I'm glad you find it soothing**.

(201)   *Bonnie*: Worse. He kissed me on the dance floor. *Jessica*: Maybe I should have the man arrested. *Bonnie*: Well, **I'm glad you find it amusing**, mom, because I didn't.

That the phrase *I'm glad* is out of place in pattern 10a becomes clear from the context that informs us of a situation which would require serious conversation, which is not realized. The phrase seems to have begun to carry an additional meaning that of 'you should not find something amusing or funny' which seems to be fixed in this pattern. A few more examples are to illustrate this observation:

(202)   *Dinah*: There's no signals happening. It's dead. Deadsville. *Edmund*: **I'm glad you find this so amusing**, Dinah. Here we are in the middle of nowhere, hanging out in a broken-down van with no idea how far the nearest town is.

(203)   *John*: Carrie, Mike, Brandon, Austin, not to mention Lucas. Ha ha ha. *Marlena*: **I'm glad you find this so amusing**. *John*: Oh, come on, we've got to keep our sense of humor about this.

Example (203) demonstrates how the (defensive) reaction to the pattern may suggest the sarcastic nature of it. Such reactions include *I'm not laughing. I'm coughing; Oh, please. I don't find financial peril funny at all; I don't; I just don't see what the big deal is; I find you a lot of things, Nicole. Amusing isn't one of them;* and *Well, it was an innocent question* (a non-exhaustive list taken from the corpus). The fixedness of pattern 10a in its carrying the additional meaning of disapproval, is analyzed as an inherently sarcastic pattern with the sarcastic prosody being embedded in the phrase *I'm glad*. The fixedness also derives from the pronoun used with the phrase (i.e. *I*) and the object pronoun being *you*. It is proposed that besides conventionalized irony (Kapogianni, 2010), there is something like conventionalized sarcasm as well, the difference being that the evaluation reversal involves a meaning change (i.e. does not strictly happen according to the *good/bad* dimension) and the "virtual intonation" is still tangible in the examples. This suggests that all examples with pattern 10a would be sarcastic regardless of the

context, the pattern itself being sarcasm-prone. Hence, the evaluation reversal for pattern 10a is depicted in the following narratives:

> Dictum: 'I feel joy at your finding something amusing or funny'
>
> Implicatum: 'I disapprove of your finding something amusing or funny'

The above claims also entail that the words *funny* and *amusing* are not frequently used to describe positive situations; however, this assumption is not sufficiently substantiated at this point. As for the same pattern but with *happy* in place of *glad*, 1 hit is shown where the context does not disambiguate the potential underlying meaning.

5.8.1.2 Pattern 10b

With *see* being the verb [n=62], the following pattern proved to be recurrent (64% of all cases):

[28]   I'm GLAD you see it Pro way

Pro designates any pronoun, be it an object pronoun, or a demonstrative pronoun. However recurrent the pattern, it did not display the same sarcasm-proneness as pattern 10a, which implies that the phrase *I'm glad per se* is not what makes for sarcasm as well as the importance of the specific verb following the 2nd person singular pronoun. (204) illustrates pattern 10b where *I'm glad* corresponds to its literal sense of "being pleased":

(204)   *Victor*: I want you to be protected. I want you to be cared for, okay? The sooner, the better. *Sharon*: My reasons for wanting to marry you are not going to change, so why wait? *Victor*: **I'm glad you see it that way**.

Happy in this pattern did not yield any hits.

5.8.1.3 Pattern 10c

With *think* being the verb [n=159], recurring constructions manifest promoting both pattern 10a and pattern 10b. The two most dominant patterns are depicted below where [29] represents non-sarcastic cases (68%), while [30] represents sarcastic ones (11%):

[29]   I'm GLAD you think so.

[30]   I'm GLAD you think $\left\{\frac{\text{this is}}{\text{it's}}\right\} (*) \left\{\frac{\text{amusing}}{\text{funny}}\right\}$

Pattern [29] consistently expresses a sincere joy over someone's mindset. The non-sarcastic nature is guaranteed by the full stop (indicating sentence ending) and *so* functioning as a so-called pro-clause substituting a that-clause as a direct object. (205) is a typical example:

(205)   *E.J.*: So that excuses everything, does it? *Nicole*: E.J., this whiff of conscience that you have -- it separates you from your father. You are a better man than he is. You really are. *E.J.*: **I'm glad you think so**.

In pattern [30], the parenthesized element is optional and is reserved for the adverb *so*. Interestingly, the same adjectives (i.e. *funny* and *amusing*) as in pattern 10a work with pattern [30] too making the verb the most flexible element. The following examples serve as illustration:

(206)   *Zander*: So let me get this straight. The woman you love loved Sonny, and I remind you of that, so you have to get rid of me? Do you realize how stupid that is? *Alcazar*: **I'm glad you think this is funny**. Maybe it's the drugs you're on.

(207)   *Iris*: I don't believe it. Rachel has you tracking yourself down? Oh, that's wonderful. *Evan*: Well, **I'm glad you think this is so amusing**. *Iris*: Well, don't you? I mean, darling, where's your sense of humor?

Once again, the reaction following the pattern can serve as a giveaway sign of sarcasm. These include: *No, I don't think it's funny; Well, it's not funny ha-ha, but it's funny like, "Oh, boy, here we go again."; Don't be so sensitive; You don't see me laughing, do you?;* and *You know what the real joke is?* (a non-exhaustive list taken from the corpus). The evaluation reversal corresponds to that in pattern 10a:

Dictum: 'I feel joy at your finding something amusing or funny'

Implicatum: 'I disapprove of your finding something amusing or funny'

The pattern with the lexicalized phrase *I'm glad* seems to be as follows: the verbs *think* and *find* collocate with pleasure-related words; pleasure-related words paired with the verbs *think* and *find* in the construction *I'm glad you think/find* seem to invite a sarcastic reading (enhanced by the 2nd person singular *you*) more frequently than the same construction without pleasure-related words. The verb choice is suspected to have something to do with whether the interpretation tilts towards sarcasm or non-sarcasm. We can further argue that *find* and *think* essentially convey the same meaning, which prompted a corpus search to see what synonyms of the verbs collocated with *I'm glad you*. The search was extended to *reckon* (no hit), *judge* (no hit), *consider* (1 hit), and *regard* (no hit). There seems to be a deliberateness in terms of grammar rules about verbs

expressing cognitive functions being the most suitable candidates in the pattern. The only hit with a synonymous term is presented in (208):

(208)   *Zander*: Come on, Carly, get real, get real! Okay? You are lying to me and you're lying to yourself! *Luke*: **I'm glad you consider this so amusing**.

5.9 Fun

It was pointed out before (see section 4.3.5.3) that *fun*, though strictly speaking a noun, has turned into an adjective in spoken English. Thus, what will be given more emphasis here is its adjective-like qualities. This entails that such borderline cases as (209), will not be considered:

(209)   *Brooke*: I should thank you because you had just enough shame to come back? *Leo*: You don't even know where I was. But trust me, it was a lot more **fun** than this. *Brooke*: Oh, good.

The rather scanty results for the keyword do not allow for far-reaching generalizations; however, the upsetting of 'normal' semantic preference is a recurring phenomenon indeed. Under 'literal' circumstances, *fun* shows certain characteristics in the corpus. For instance, as a pre-modifier adjective, it often modifies *trip/ facts/ time/ night/ evening/ guy/ stuff*. In an 'it-construction', *fun* frequently refers to events and happenings that promise or proved to be entertaining. The word is inherently positive. Consider the following examples, on the other hand, where **fun** is not used in its usual surroundings (the relevant parts have been boldfaced):

(210)   *Trey*: They always said I was nothing but trouble. I'd never amount to anything. I was nothing but a loser. And now, well, when they see my face on the news -- *Kendall*: Ooh, **a pity party**. **What fun**.

(211)   *Liza*: She is in school. She is in a private, secure school. She can only be signed out by you or me. *Mia*: Oh, **maximum-security preschool**. **What fun** for the kiddies.

The irony in (210) and (211) stems from a similar source, namely the noun phrase preceding the expression *what fun*. It cannot be claimed that this latter expression is what triggers the ironic reading, instead it is the interaction of the noun phrase and the expression. Such examples have one thing in common: there is a clash between the noun phrase (more specifically the modifier) and *what fun*. A quick search with *maximum-security* shows what it collocates with most frequently, which is *prison* and *psychiatric facility*. It not only implies that it is safe to stay in these facilities but that escaping them is made nearly impossible by, for instance, barbed wire and armed guards. The adjective *maximum-security* projects this image onto preschools resulting

in a clash. *Pity* is an even more straightforward case where the inherent negativity is present regardless of the noun that it modifies. Corpus examples include *pity card, pity face, pity action, pity aria, etc.* (with *pity party* being by far the most common collocation). It is improbable that anything involving some kind of pity would also involve fun. Other types of examples with *what fun* need to be handled individually as what precedes the expression shows wide variety. In cases like (212), for example, we can still make assumptions about the ironic reading based on what the norm is (i.e. having lunch in the basement does not normally have a positive connotation), but we cannot be entirely certain without turning to the wider context that what was said was meant ironically.

> (212)   *Amber*: Yeah. You know, maybe I could, uh, stop by the office and buy you lunch sometime. *Thorne*: Ooh, **lunch in the basement**. **What fun**. *Amber*: You gotta be kidding me.

Once the irony is confirmed, the evaluation reversal offers itself:

> Dictum: What is proposed is fun.

> Implicatum: What is proposed is disagreeable.

A further recurring phrase was *fun times* [n=34], which behaves similarly to *what fun* [n=151]. It is also not a particularly irony-prone pattern; however, the ironic examples share some commonalities. (213) serves as a representative example of the clash arising between the remark (with special focus on the verb) preceding the expression and the expression itself:

> (213)   *Bobbie*: Come on in. I am thrilled that you could come by. As a matter of fact, I haven't seen you since... *Brad*: **I was arguing with Felix over who could bandage your son**. *Bobbie*: That's right. *Lucas*: **Fun times**.

As *arguing over who could bandage your son* (213), *plowing through my psychology textbook*, *searching the whole building*, and *grabbing him by the ankles and hanging him* are neither stereotypical manifestations of having fun, thus an ironic interpretation is what seems most probable. The evaluation reversal is as follows:

> Dictum: What one is reminded of was fun.

> Implicatum: What one is reminded of was disagreeable.

Last but not least, distinction needs to be made between examples truly ironic and literal examples, which latter are salient in their describing negative (as in harmful and hazardous) events while referring to them with *fun*:

(214)   *Fluke*: Just think of all the wonderful people that are gonna be there -- all the people that we know and love. All there on the haunted star for a worthy cause. **It's gonna be oodles of fun**! Especially when the boat explodes, along with the flesh and blood of our flesh and blood.

The ambiance of the example suggests a literal reading here, which poses a challenge. Namely, there is an unspoken agreement what counts as good under normal circumstances and what counts as bad. The context informing us of the speaker's malicious plan to explode a boat full of people, makes the concepts of good and bad reversed, which then makes the example a non-ironic one.

5.9.1 Pattern 11

The following pattern proved to be recurrent as well as ironic:

[31]   that's gonna be (*) FUN

The irony-proneness of the pattern is somewhat surprising due to its specificity in the choice of the demonstrative pronoun, for example (the same pattern with *it* is non-ironic). The asterisk denotes an optional noun modifier, which can either be *great*, or *real*. To double-check whether such specificity is necessary to point toward irony, the pattern was searched for in several variations. These are summarized in table 15:

Table 15 Pattern variations with the keyword *fun*

Pattern variation	Irony-prone	Not irony-prone
That's gonna be fun [n=6]	✓	
That's gonna be * fun [n=3]	✓	
That's going to be fun [n=4]		✓
That's going to be * fun [n=0]	n/a	n/a
That is going to be fun [n=0]	n/a	n/a
That is going to be * fun [n=0]	n/a	n/a
That'll be fun [n=50]		✓
That'll be * fun [n=5]		✓
That will be fun [n=7]		✓
That will be * fun [n=0]	n/a	n/a

From the table we can deduce that the specificity is indeed called for as even slight changes can influence the ironic tendency in the soap opera corpus. The designation irony-prone here means that the corpus search yielded more ironic cases with the variation than non-ironic ones;

whereas, not irony-prone means that more non-ironic examples were produced[67]. Where no hits were produced, the n/a designation is used. To be able to determine what distinguishes the not irony-prone patterns, we would need to look at the individual examples; however, that falls beyond our scope. What is of more interest is the specific nature of pattern 11. Each example below is representative of a pattern variation:

> (215)   *Brady*: You don't know what the hell you're doing, *Sami*. You're marrying into a family of liars and killers. **That's gonna be fun**, huh? You're gonna have a great time. Happy as a clam in that.

> (216)   *Phyllis*: I don't have time to take it easy on myself. I need to, uh... prepare for my day. I have to prepare to go in front of the grand jury, and then I have to plan my husband's memorial service with Nikki. **That's gonna be great fun**-- collaborating with a woman who wants me locked up.

> (217)   *Victor*: We're going to Mexico, a beautiful city, very, very beautiful city. *Nicholas*: **That's going to be fun**. *Victor*: Yep.

> (218)   *Sister Nina*: We have a new slide in the playroom, Hope. *Starr*: **That'll be fun**. Here. Why don't you go? Take off your coat, okay, honey? Have fun.

> (219)   *Nick*: Uh, Faith's class is gonna go to Milwaukee and watch a children's opera. *Sage*: Wow! That's exciting. I love the opera. **That'll be really fun**. *Nick*: Yeah. Faith loves all things with lyrics and words.

> (220)   *Maddie*: Going somewhere? *Casey*: No, my parents are going to Chicago. *Maddie*: Chicago. Well, **that will be fun**. *Tom*: Yeah, we hope so.

(215) and (216) stand out with regard to the referent, i.e. *marrying into a family of liars and killers* and *collaborating with a woman who wants me locked up*, respectively. Because of these referents, the irony of pattern 11 is tangible. It can be depicted as follows:

Dictum: The prospect of something will bring joy.

Implicatum: The prospect of something will bring misery.

In contrast, *going to Mexico* (217)*, having a new slide in the playroom* (218)*, watching a children's opera* (219)*,* and *going to Chicago* (220) are not inherently negative prospects; consequently, referring to them as fun events does not readily evoke irony.

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[67] This does not imply that this pattern variation cannot produce irony, but that irony was not typical.

5.9.2 Pattern 12

A further corpus query was performed with the following pattern, focusing on examples where it formed part of a simile[68] [n=13]:

[32] $\qquad\qquad\qquad * \text{ as much FUN as} \begin{Bmatrix} \text{VP} \\ \text{NP} \end{Bmatrix}$

The asterisk denotes an adverb that can either be *almost*, *half,* or *about*[69]. The curly brackets indicate that the comparison is made with either a verb phrase, or a noun phrase. As a simile, one would expect the phrase to be used in drawing a parallel between the keyword and prototypically fun activities, such as *the bachelor and bachelorette party last night, being on the road with a rock band, getting you pregnant, shopping with you, catching a big old bass,* and *your perfume project* (examples taken from the corpus). When compared with examples, like *tightrope walk across a pool of sharks, the Grinch, a tornado, a belly flop, smashing my thumb with a hammer, painting walls, sweeping floors, pounding nails, a root canal, a wet noodle, swamp gas, making sure you don't go into labor, life with my parents, falling on the sword,* and *lent* the irony-proneness of these latter expressions combined with pattern 12 becomes obvious. (221) and (222) are to show this contrast in context (the whole simile being underlined):

(221)   *Kevin*: Look, maybe it won't be as bad as you think. *Mariah*: It'll definitely be as bad as I think. And it won't be half **as much fun as the bachelor and bachelorette party last night**.

(222)   *Brittany*: You had fun, admit it. *J.T.*: Right. **About as much fun as smashing my thumb with a hammer**. Can you believe those sales clerks actually thought we were gettin' married?

The incongruity between *fun* vs *smashing one's thumb with a hammer* is more striking than *fun* vs *bachelor and bachelorette parties*. The irony derives from the fact that pattern 12 essentially carries the underlying sense of 'something being not fun' in those examples where the usual semantic preference is upset. Hence, the evaluation reversal is as follows:

Dictum: A prospect holds much fun.

Implicatum: A prospect hold much misery.

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[68] This restriction excludes examples, such as the following: *Ryan*: So I was just thinking that maybe today wasn't **as much fun as** you thought it was going to be.

[69] Veale & Hao (2010) confirm the status of *about* as an important heuristic in the recognition of ironic similes.

When pattern 12 is followed by a noun phrase, an ironic clash tends to occur in the corpus. Otherwise, it is the inherent positivity or negativity of a phrase that informs us of the probability of an ironic reading.

On a final note, certain phrases take it one step further in the sense that since their inherent negativity could not be denied by anyone, by negating the example the irony is intensified. This can easily point to the scalar nature of irony inasmuch as not all ironic examples share the same degree of irony-ness (see section 2.1.4.2). (223) is to exemplify this point:

(223)   *Nick*: Good. So I'm gonna tell you what I'm feeling. It's **not as much fun as, uh, a belly flop**, but you need to hear it, okay? There's something I wanna talk to you about. You might have some questions, so I just wanna get it out of the way, okay?

The ironic tendency of unique similes, such as the ones extracted from the corpus, has been noted by Veale & Hao (2010) too, who claim that 76% of their web-harvested and manually annotated similes were ironic (p. 767). This is not surprising considering that the uniqueness comes from a sharp contrast of atypical elements[70] (their example being *about as tough as a marshmallow cardigan*, inter alia). The default formula for comparison, according to Veale & Hao, is a positive sentiment (in our case the adjective *fun*) contrasted with a negative sentiment[71]. The ironic interpretation may also be fostered by the above examples all being hapaxes in the corpus. Moon (2008) offers some formulaic similes that are typically used as ironic, such as *clear as mud* and *pure as the driven snow* (p. 8), which may have paved the way for the recognition of less common contrasts.

5.9.3 "Pattern 13"

The quotation marks are due as, strictly speaking, we are not dealing with a pattern here, the keyword contributes very little to the sarcasm; however, as (224) is indeed a sarcastic example, it is worth citing here.

(224)   *Ryan*: Greenlee, Greenlee, don't storm off. *Greenlee*: Oh, it'd be great **fun** to stick around and hear what Your Highness has to say about who she wants to leave, but I missed my scheduled lobotomy. *Ryan*: We're not finished.

The sarcasm is contained in an elaborate insult towards the victim. *Your Highness* is a euphemism which, if it is not the case that an actual royal member is being addressed in person,

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[70] Their designation for such similes is *description-internal irony* (p. 766).
[71] *Sentiment* might not be the most accurate denomination for the corpus examples.

can be used as a stylistic device to mock someone for passing themselves off as very important people whose life takes priority over others. In a way, euphemisms are indicative of the upsetting of the semantic preference, especially when it comes to everyday conversational settings. The insult is driven home by referring to the controversial medical practice, lobotomy, whereby the person would not have the intellectual capacity to participate in conversations. All these ingredients combined aid the sarcastic prosody radiating from the example. The evaluation reversal carries much more than just a *good/bad* distinction, and thus is described as follows:

> Dictum: 'It would be enjoyable to listen to your self-importance'
>
> Implicatum: 'Listening to your self-importance would leave me braindead'

5.10 Funny

Funny is an adjective that is used in a variety of senses. The etymology of the word reveals that not only does it mean being *humorous* but also *odd* or *strange*. To this, we can now add the novel observation that based on the corpus examples, *funny* is often used as a synonym for *ironic*, which is, naturally, a most straightforward cue for irony. Possibly due to its wide range of use, *funny* produced several patterns, which will be elaborated on in turn.

5.10.1. Funny versus ironic

No grammatical pattern can be depicted here; the fact that *funny* implies *ironic* comes to light in examples where a situational irony is described. Lucariello (1994) cites Muecke (1969) when defining the concept: "situational irony is stated to be a condition of events opposite to what was, or might naturally be expected, or a contradictory outcome of events as if in mockery of the promise and fitness of things" (p. 129). She deploys such examples as a soldier who returns home safely from war only to be killed days later in a car accident, a pickpocket whose own pocket is picked, or a barefoot shoemaker[72] (p. 129). Two corpus examples are shown here where both the keyword and the relevant parts of the situational irony are boldfaced:

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[72] In the mirror of these examples, we may add the supplement that the situational irony is only realized if the subject of the expected and contradictory outcomes are identical. This explains why examples, such as the one following are excluded:
Claudia: The nurse thinks you're going to be okay. **You know what's funny** about that? I was really maybe even a little bit glad that you're going to live. It doesn't make any sense, because you've never been anything but hateful to me --.
This is not situational irony because it is Claudia who is glad but the addressee who is hateful.

(225)   *Krystal:* Oh. Well, it's **funny** how **a dead guy breathed new life into it**. A dead guy that your son hated.

(226)   *Cane*: I love my job, but **I love my wife** and family even more. You know what's **funny** about this, though? Lily would laugh if she heard me saying this, because **I used a business excuse to postpone her birthday celebration**.

Consider the versions where *funny* is substituted with *ironic* without the overall interpretation being hindered:

(225a)   *Krystal:* Oh. Well, it's <u>**ironic**</u> how **a dead guy breathed new life into it**. A dead guy that your son hated.

(226a)   *Cane*: I love my job, but **I love my wife** and family even more. You know what's <u>**ironic**</u> about this, though? Lily would laugh if she heard me saying this, because **I used a business excuse to postpone her birthday celebration**.

Putting *ironic* in the place of *funny* would be a case of explicit irony (discussed in section 4.2). As explicit irony originates in the word itself, accordingly less context is required to understand it. In order to avoid explicitness, a synonym is used with the potential underlying purpose of reinstating the implicitness. The question, now, to be asked is why implicitness is preferable in these examples? Consider (227) and (228):

(227)   *Carly*: You know, it's -- a **funny** thing about the program. **To be strong, you first have to admit that you're powerless** over alcohol.

(228)   *Mimi*: You know, it's **funny**. **You don't want to go back to college, and your mom's upset. I am desperate to get the money together so I can re-enroll and get my degree, and my mom could care less**.

Now, let us substitute the keyword with *ironic* in the hypothetical examples:

(227a)   *Carly*: You know, it's -- an <u>**ironic**</u> thing about the program. **To be strong, you first have to admit that you're powerless** over alcohol.

(228a)   *Mimi*: You know, it's <u>**ironic**</u>. **You don't want to go back to college, and your mom's upset. I am desperate to get the money together so I can re-enroll and get my degree, and my mom could care less**.

The above examples will aid the explanation as to why *funny* is preferred over *ironic*. Taking a grammatical point of view, *funny* may be chosen due to its being a better fit in a given structure. For instance, in (227), even though replacing *funny* with *ironic* would not alter the overall meaning, *ironic* does not fit into the sentence syntactically (i.e. *You know, it's an ironic thing*

about the program would not sound natural). From a semantic perspective, the inherently positive *funny* might play the role of mitigating the effect. As the operational definition of irony allows criticism to be conveyed (even if it is less typical than in the case of sarcasm), using *funny* instead strips the remark of this critical aspect. What is more, a quick glance over the examples tells us that criticism is not the main message in them, thus, the use of a word that essentially conveys the same meaning without involving criticism may be justified.

5.10.1.1 Pattern 14

Certain recurrences are visible in the abovementioned examples that necessitated a further corpus check. Confirmation was sought for the assumption that the following pattern indicates the possibility of keyword change (*funny* to *ironic*):

[33] $$\text{you know} \left\{ \frac{\text{it's}}{\text{what's}} \right\} (*) \text{ FUNNY (NP)}$$

The asterisk denotes an optional element that manifests as an article in case the keyword functions as a pre-modifier, which also implies that the NP is present (227). The variations of the pattern yielded 500+ hits altogether; however, only in the minority of cases was the pattern an indicator for the keyword change suggesting that the situational irony is not triggered by the pattern. The four examples below illustrate when situational irony was indeed present:

(229)   *Brad*: **You know what's really funny**? Is the last time I messed up and Leo got hurt, I was totally to blame and I almost got away with it. And this time, I'm totally innocent, and it looks like they're going nail me to the wall.

(230)   *Molly*: Out of control? Yes, you're right. I was. And **you know what's funny** about that? I used to be so uncomfortable around people that seemed to drink heavily. And then, before you knew it, without even realizing, I was becoming one of those people myself.

(231)   *Dillon*: **You know, it's a funny thing**. The more I cooperate, the more I get framed.

(232)   *Johnny*: **You know, it's funny** how my sister all of a sudden, now that she's dead, is more use than when she was alive.

By replacing the keyword, the meaning remains:

(229a)   *Brad*: **You know what's really <u>ironic</u>**? Is the last time I messed up and Leo got hurt, I was totally to blame and I almost got away with it. And this time, I'm totally innocent, and it looks like they're going nail me to the wall.

(230a)   *Molly*: Out of control? Yes, you're right. I was. And **you know what's <u>ironic</u>** about that? I used to be so uncomfortable around people that seemed to drink heavily. And then, before you knew it, without even realizing, I was becoming one of those people myself.

(231a)   *Dillon*: **You know, it's a funny <u>ironic</u>**. The more I cooperate, the more I get framed.

(232a)   *Johnny*: **You know, it's <u>ironic</u>** how my sister all of a sudden, now that she's dead, is more use than when she was alive.

5.10.2 Pattern 15

The phrase *very funny* [n=877] is mentioned as an ironic statement in Hay (2001). The analysis is limited to the following pattern:

[34]   (∗) very FUNNY.

The parenthesized element is optional and may stand for *that's/that is*, while the full stop indicates that nothing follows the phrase, thus it reflects on what was said right before. Consider (233), (234), and (235) where the pattern is boldfaced and the referent underlined:

(233)   *Maddie*: <u>You know, I think that Lyon Hunter is a very charming name, especially if you work in the circus</u>. *Hunter*: **Very funny**. Uh-oh.

(234)   *Abby*: I thought we weren't supposed to be at the bar. *Bonnie*: <u>Well, if a cop walks in, tell him you're waiting for your warm milk</u>. *Chelsea*: **Very funny**. *Abby*: Oh, no, Billie's drinking her cranberry juice.

(235)   *Anita*: <u>You're also trying to protect Palmer because you're still in love with him</u>. *Opal*: Oh, right, right! **That is very funny**. That is out-and-out hogwash.

In its fixed ironic form, *very funny* usually occurs on its own; sometimes with a demonstrative pronoun. Its conventionalized nature seems to be consistent throughout the examples, which is illustrated in the evaluation reversal:

Dictum: What you are saying is genuinely funny.

Implicatum: What you are saying is unfunny.

Hay (2001) notes that pattern 15 withholds any explicit indication of appreciation (p.70). For this reason, the pattern requires some modification when the goal is to express sincere appreciation. Literal examples are distinguished in the corpus in their putting more emphasis on the humorous aspect of a situation, such as (236):

(236)   *Nicole*: Hey, don't laugh at me. *Austin*: Hey, I'm not laughing at you. It's funny.
This whole thing is very funny. Okay, chill out.

5.10.3 Pattern 16

[35]   FUNNY NP (of)

Pattern 16 is mentioned as it seems to trigger a further sense of the keyword apart from
humorous. (237) illustrates the pattern in its typical use in the corpus:

(237)   *Nick*: I appreciate everything Victoria's done. *Brad*: Well, you have a **funny way
of** showing it. All you can do is complain and accuse. You're making things pretty
unpleasant around here, and I'm sick of it.

The Online Etymology Dictionary (2001) notes that the retort question "funny ha-ha or funny
peculiar" is commonly asked to determine the dominant sense if it is not obvious. By asking this
question, common sense would tell us that it is most probably the peculiar sense that is being
exploited in (237). The pattern can be made even more specific by saying that in all corpus
examples with this pattern the keyword is to be interpreted as *peculiar* or *strange*:

[36]   Pro $\left\{\frac{\text{('ve) got}}{\text{have}}\right\}$ a FUNNY way of showing it [n=79]

In the majority of cases (78%), the pronoun is the second person singular *you* which enables the
possibility for conventionalized sarcasm to be taken into consideration. As (237) demonstrates,
the pattern has the underlying meaning of disapproval and criticism, perhaps insult too (although
we can argue that the more conventionalized a phrase, the less sting it conveys). Two more
examples are provided of the same sort:

(238)   Victoria: Keep your comments to yourself. Sharon: I can't do that. I still care very
much what happens in this family. Victoria: **You have a funny way of showing it**.

(239)   *Dusty*: Relax, I'm not trying to replace you. I'm trying to hold onto you. *Jennifer*:
You've got a funny way of showing it. *Dusty*: Would you rather have Carly in here,
taking care of your troubles?

The evaluation reversal for the sarcasm in the above examples manifests as follows:

Dictum: 'You are showing it [whatever that is] in a peculiar fashion'

Implicatum: 'You should show it [whatever that is] in a more straightforward and

honest fashion'

Pattern 16 raises a different question too; namely, what the function and meaning of *funny* in a pre-modifier position is. The most frequent collocations where *funny* is interpretable as peculiar, include *business* and *feeling*[73]. A further observation is that this interpretation does not lend itself so readily to irony. Let us examine the examples below:

(240)   *Gus*: I resent it. I am putting my life on the line. *Babe*: Okay. I want a legit case, you got that? No **funny business**. And if I hear that this is some sort of personal vendetta...

(241)   *Roman*: This isn't a social call, E.J. *E.J.*: No, I had a **funny feeling** that it wasn't, judging by the look coming out of Kayla's eyes.

A possible explanation is that the 'peculiar sense' of the keyword already contains a certain degree of inherent negativity, which, according to the asymmetry dominating in irony, does not make the keyword in this sense a self-evident candidate for irony.

5.11 Great

The most prototypical usage of the keyword is in idiomatic expressions, such as *Great to see you*. A query with this phrase yields mostly literal examples being used as a greeting or as part of saying goodbye. Other than the idiomatic use, the keyword exhibits a variety of different functions ranging from pre-modifier to sentence initial exclamation that portends irony. Certain recurring patterns were subjected to further corpus analysis which will be expounded on in turn.

5.11.1 Pattern 17

[37]   Interj GREAT

Interj is short for interjection, of which the most frequent type turned out to be *oh*. Out of the 3000+ hits only those were considered which constituted a separate sentence (i.e. ending in a full stop) [n=2345]. Examples, like (242) and (243) were annotated as ironic in the initial sample:

(242)   Look, one word from you, I could have the whole shebang. I could have a real family, and I got a real husband. *Natalie*: **Oh, great**! More people you could destroy.

(243)   *J.T.*: Adam? *Victoria*: No, not Adam. Brad. *J.T.*: **Oh, great**. I'm working for a couple of idiots. I might as well resign.

---

[73] These are contrasted with a *funny bone/girl/guy/joke* where *funny* is more readily interpreted as being humorous.

The examples illustrate the fact that pattern 17 *per se* is not sufficient to detect the irony. However, at the same time, the pattern is indeed a reliable ironic cue in interplay with the subsequent remark, which reveals the clash between the inherently positive keyword and an inherently negative situation. The contrast between *more people you could destroy,* and *I'm working for a couple of idiots* are in diametrical opposition with the surface meaning of the pattern. Similar inherently negative situations following pattern 17 include *an alcoholic going to a bar, another person that lied to me, everything's going wrong, get the police involved in this so that they can screw this up the way they have screwed every other case that they've put their incompetent hands on, a demented security guard for a playmate, more deception,* and *a bleeding-heart brainiac with an overblown conscience* (a non-exhaustive list taken from the corpus). Once again, the clash in such examples is comparable with cases where the pattern is used in a literal sense:

(244)   *Bo*: Honey, you know that I love you, and I want us to be together. I don't want anything to ever change that. Right? *Gabrielle*: Bo, I feel exactly the same way. *Bo*: **Oh, great**. God, I'm glad to hear that because it makes everything a whole lot easier.

The evaluation reversal is quite straightforward along the lines of the *good/bad* dichotomy:

Dictum: The prospect of something is genuinely great.

Implicatum: The prospect of something is awful.

5.11.1.1 Pattern 17a

[38]   (Interj) that′s just GREAT [n=349]

Pattern 17a shows similar use to pattern 17 in (245) and (246) for which further verification was sought in the corpus. The parenthesized element is optional; when present it adds even more emphasis to the remark.

(245)   *Susan*: She said that Barbara wouldn't have the nerve to come to her. *Emily*: That's just great. **That's just great**. Another dead end.

(246)   *Emily*: I don't know. I'm hoping. I mean, I'm certainly keeping my fingers crossed. *Alison*: Well, **that's just great**. I burn down a barn and have to go to jail for a year.

Similarly, to pattern 17, the clash here happens between an inherently positive phrase used to comment upon an inherently negative situation. Examples include, *we've got this dangerous, insane woman wandering the streets of Salem doing whatever the hell she wants; we're in a*

blizzard, the temperature's dropping, no idea where our car is but we got a big tree; you just made a bad situation worse; smear the reputation of a man, a soldier, who served for this country; after everything, he still doesn't believe me; and *Molly's gonna kill me* (a non-exhaustive list taken from the corpus).

Accordingly, the evaluation reversal for pattern 17a corresponds to that of pattern 17:

> Dictum: The prospect of something is genuinely great.
>
> Implicatum: The prospect of something is awful.

5.11.2 Pattern 18

[39]   some GREAT propN you are [n=2]

Lastly, pattern 18 was anticipated to yield potentially ironic examples if only for its fronting structure, which has been mentioned before to carry the potential for irony (see section 5.7). PropN refers to any proper noun. Consider (247):

> (247)   *Maria*: I didn't do anything to him last night. I was asleep. *Kendall*: Oh, great. **Some great guard you are**. You snooze while he ends up being God knows where.

The only other example in the corpus further proved the ironic potentiality of the pattern:

> (248)   *Brooke*: **Some great matriarch you are**. Some wife, Mother. *Stephanie*: Oh? What do you know about being a good wife and mother? *Brooke*: At least I didn't get pregnant and then lie to my husband that it was his child.

The scarcity of examples leaves some doubt as to the consistent irony-proneness of the pattern; however, if fronting indeed is a reliable irony cue, pattern 18 is in further support of this. This, by extension, would mean that it is the pattern itself that carries the ironic reading regardless of what the proper noun is. The evaluation reversal can thus be depicted as follows:

> Dictum: You are a genuinely great [propN].
>
> Implicatum: You are an awful [propN].

5.12 Nice

Even though clearly an evaluative adjective, *nice* has become a rather generic term lacking precision and intensity, probably due to overuse. This entails that its role in irony and sarcasm may not be as patent as that of other adjectives with a more definite scope, and due to this very neutrality, its use is highly context-dependent. In terms of its prototypical occurrence in the soap

opera corpus, it prevails in the collocations *nice to meet you* and *nice to see you*. Having said that, the very same collocations may be exploited for sarcasm if they do not befit the context.

5.12.1 Pattern 19

[40] $\text{NICE} \left\{ \dfrac{\text{to meet you}}{\text{to see you}} \right\} \text{too}$

An interesting phenomenon arises with pattern 19; namely, the phrase *nice to meet you too* [n=206] is meant in its literal sense in most of the cases (95%); whereas the phrase *nice to see you too* [n=304] is used in an uncommon way in most of the cases (68%). This latter use foreshadows the possibility of sarcasm in cases where a question or a reproach, sounding rather in medias res in the situation, prompts the pattern. Pattern 19 with *meet* (i.e. it is truly nice to meet someone as well) is expected to follow the routine greeting *nice/good/pleasure to see you* or any of its variations, referred to as conventionalized politeness greetings (Culpeper, 2011). (249) is to exemplify this literality where the pattern is boldfaced and the initial greeting underlined:

(249)   *Inez*: I'm so pleased to meet you. *Nora*: Oh, it's **nice to meet you, too**. My husband has been going on and on. Can't say enough nice things about his brand-new assistant.

In contrast, a common occurrence of pattern 19 with *see* is exemplified in (250) where the pattern is boldfaced and the trigger underlined:

(250)   *Reuben*: What do you want, Matt? *Matt*: **Nice to see you, too**. *Reuben*: I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Pattern 19 with *see* may be considered another case of conventionalized sarcasm where the pattern would invariably express sarcastic prosody (disapproval and criticism toward the person saying something rude underscored by the non-conventional triggering remark). The sarcastic prosody additionally comes from the upsetting of the norm, according to which upon meeting someone the polite way would be to greet and express one's pleasure of meeting the person before introducing other topics. To reinforce the sarcastic effect, consider (251) and its hypothetical alternative (251a):

(251)   *Adam*: What are you doing here? *Sage*: Oh, **nice to see you, too**. Look, I just got a call from our old pal Tipton and he wants to know when we're moving back into our apartment.

(251a)   *Adam*: <u>What are you doing here</u>? *Sage*: **I came by to tell you that** I just got a call from our old pal Tipton and he wants to know when we're moving back into our apartment.

The underlined parts in these examples all represent conventionalized impoliteness formulae (Culpeper, 2011). Grice (1978) would probably also have something to say about (251) in terms of cooperation (see section 2.1.2). Sage's response visibly does not fit in the context which supposes a different discourse goal than in literal cases. A foolproof way (in this corpus at least) to detect fixed sarcastic uses is to consider the preceding question or comment, the most common of which are *what (the hell) are you doing here?, what do you want?, oh, it's you, you're late, etc.* These questions and comments (corresponding to inquisitive remarks and provocative statements established as contributors to sarcastic prosody in section 5.1.1.1) are recurring in the corpus, or to put it differently the phrase *nice to see you, too* often assumes the presence of a question or comment like these. The fixed sarcastic nature of pattern 19 with *see* is different from pattern 10a, for instance, in that the sarcasm becomes apparent only in the mirror of the preceding remark (trigger). However, the clear distinction between a sarcasm trigger and a routine greeting makes the identification quite straightforward.

Culpeper (2011) cites an example featuring a similar greeting and adds that a mismatch occurs between the context and the greeting. This mismatch can manifest in lexico-grammatical features as well. He links sarcastic prosody to the "undermining of politeness or impoliteness expressed verbally" (p. 169). Certain structures in our data seem to prompt a sarcastic prosody. In Culpeper's words, "in this context, using a conventionalized politeness formula provides a reference point, a desired politeness context, against which we can perceive the extreme distance by which the message flowing from the context falls short" (p. 179).

5.12.2 Pattern 20

[41]   NICE N

The N in the pattern denotes a noun; the specificity and type of which is to be determined through the corpus. Possibly due to its lack of intensity and definiteness, the keyword tends to be attached to a wide range of lexemes in a pre-modifier position (e.g. *nice track record/Christmas gift/euphemism/change/going/performance/work/discretion/bedside manner/etc.*). Since there is nothing in these word combinations that would indicate literality or irony or sarcasm,

respectively, a further corpus search was conducted to see under what circumstances a noun could influence the underlying meaning. *Try* is one of these nouns, arguably for its conventionalized use in the collocation *nice try*. The pattern, thus, can be modified:

[42]   NICE try [n=940]

Nice try has not yet made into the dictionaries as a phrase having lost its original meaning related to genuine praise; however, corpus evidence shows that it is used less and less in this original praising sense. The sarcastic prosody is perceivable when, in context, the phrase takes on the connotation of 'I can see through you.' In what follows the pattern, often it is revealed that there is some kind of trick, lie, or deceit taking place which was found out. Due to its transitional status, it cannot be claimed with all certainty that it has lost all of its literality and is only used nonliterally. Having said that, the majority of the examples in the soap opera corpus is more representative of nonliteral usage. Compare the rare case of (252) and the more common case of (253):

(252)   *Elwood*: Oh, Gwen. Is that short for Gwendolyn or Guinevere? *Gwen*: Neither, but **nice try**. *Elwood*: Cool. Well, I'm named after my uncle.

(253)   *Janet*: Ah! So, since when do you get upset about business? *Dusty*: I'm allergic to morons. *Janet*: Yeah. **Nice try**. I'm not buying it. What's going on?

The pattern is analyzed as sarcasm due to the fact that the evaluation reversal along the *good/bad* dimension cannot hold water (i.e. it is not the case that the try is not a nice one). The difference between (252) and (253) is apparent when trying to substitute the underlying meaning in the context. While, (252a) would not make sense that way (indicated by the question mark), (253a) would:

(252a)   *Elwood*: Oh, Gwen. Is that short for Gwendolyn or Guinevere? *Gwen*: Neither, but **I can see through you(?)**. *Elwood*: Cool. Well, I'm named after my uncle.

(253a)   *Janet*: Ah! So, since when do you get upset about business? *Dusty*: I'm allergic to morons. *Janet*: Yeah. **I can see through you**. I'm not buying it. What's going on?

The sarcastic nature of *nice try* can be related to Jung's (1994) idea of the beneficiary not having benefited from the benefactor's actions (see section 5.5). This is translatable in these cases as the ostensive positive message actually reflecting the fact that a given act would not benefit the speaker which is made clear by the speaker (usually following the phrase) nullifying the ostensive positive message. The sarcastic prosody is embedded in the phrase *nice try* in a

way that once the context verifies the sarcastic intention, the phrase conveys an underlying

criticism and disapproval, reproaching the person for their dishonest action. Here are some

examples with the pattern boldfaced and the part responsible for the nullification underlined:

(254)　　*James*: Oh, no, she'd never trust you with that information. She's much too smart. *Paul*: That's a **nice try**. <u>You can't trick me</u> into telling you what I don't know.

(255)　　*Oliver*: Well, okay, I'm--I'm a little surprised your dad and--and Brooke would do it while chaperoning a graduation party, but I guess that means the stories about them are true. *Steffy*: **Nice try**, but <u>I'm not buying</u>. You are a lousy liar, Ollie Jones.

The sarcastic prosody manifests more visibly upon comparing (254) and (255) with (252).

Consider at last (256) that is in support of pattern 20 [41] being a fixed sarcastic pattern:

(256)　　*Mac*: I guess people really were interested in Victor. Congratulations. *Billy*: Yes, thank you. Very **nice try**, but I-I appreciate the effort. *Mac*: No, I'm-- I'm happy for you.

If the phrase were to carry its ostensible message, the but-clause would be rendered meaningless.

In contrast, if we assume that the phrase has a fixed underlying meaning of *I see through you/*

you cannot trick me, the but-clause[74] will make sense.

Having established *try*'s role in the pattern, a further corpus check was performed to identify

phrases where the noun itself could imply or be related to dishonest conduct (with the

assumption that it would point toward sarcasm more frequently than other types of nouns). Table

16 lists the nouns that were scrutinized as potential carriers of sarcasm. A definition is provided

in the second column to justify the presence of these particular nouns (extracted from 10,000+

nice + N collocations in the corpus), and a typical corpus example is given in the third column.

Table 16 Sarcasm-proneness of nouns pre-modified by *nice* expressing dishonest conduct

Noun	Definition[75]	Example	Sarcasm-prone	Non-sarcasm-prone
act/acting [n=13]	counterfeit, pretense	(257) *Pilar*: Could that be -- no, I must be mistaken. This house can't stand any more trouble tonight. *Gwen*: **Nice act**, Theresa. You're not fooling anyone.	✓	
bluff [n=14]	misleading, deceit	(258) *Gus*: That's interesting. And you would know that how? *Ben*:	✓	

---

[74] Incidentally, the but-clause has also been established as a cue for sarcastic prosody in section 5.1.1.1 based on Culpeper (2005, p. 174), of which (256) is an especially representative example.
[75] The definitions are borrowed from the Free Online Dictionary (2003).

		Because if there were notes and they did point to me, you'd have me in handcuffs right now. **Nice bluff**, Aitoro. Keep practicing.		
catch [n=21]	tricky condition, drawback	(259) *Michael*: Here you go. *Marcie*: Hold it up -- *Michael*: Oh, **nice catch**, buddy!		✓
cover [n=7]	false identity	(260) *Simone*: But you can sweet-talk us into an A. *Josh*: Hmm, **nice cover**, ladies. I'm not buying. Try again?	✓	
euphemism [n=7]	indirect or vague term	(261) *Johnny*: Are they all as outgoing as you are? *Olivia*: Outgoing? That's a **nice euphemism**. Yeah, it's pretty much wall-to-wall type A personalities. You would have a blast.		✓
lie [n=4]	falsehood	(262) *Faith*: I'll be right there. *Parker*: Sweet. And **nice lie**. *Faith*: Thanks. What are you doing?		✓
play [n=9]	often crafty maneuver	(263) *Viki*: Tiny was his I.Q.! *Tess*: **Nice play**, Victoria. There was no Tiny. Who do you think you're dealing with here?	✓	
scam [n=3]	fraudulent business scheme, swindle	(264) *Lulu*: That's because I didn't take the money. Ethan stole it, and he's trying to put it on me. *Ethan*: **Nice scam**, Lulu-girl. Get me to believe that I'm cleaning you out in poker, and all the while you're looting heaps from the till.	✓	
setup [n=15]	deceptive scheme, fraud or hoax	(265) *Administrator*: Here we are. Pediatrics. *Mallet*: Wow. That is a **nice setup**. *Marina*: Yeah, the kids must love it. *Administrator*: Brand new. It was just donated.		✓
story [n=36]	lie	(266) *Antonio*: She said to hold it close when I prayed and that my prayers would be answered. *Keri*: Were they? *Antonio*: I got the bike. *Keri*: It's a **nice story**.		✓
trick [n=20]	act involving deceit or fraudulence	(267) *Craig*: How are you gonna make this disappear? *Rosanna*: Watch me. *Craig*: **Nice trick**. How?		✓
twist [n=3]	distorted meaning	(268) *Abigail*: I just -- I remembered that another woman was in that room. *Brandy*: Oh, **nice twist**. A new suspect. So original, too. *Abigail*: Look, Nick used me, and he used you.	✓	

The examples are representative of the more frequent usage of the phrase. Sarcasm-prone patterns include *nice act/acting, nice bluff, nice cover, nice play, nice scam,* and *nice twist* as opposed to non-sarcasm-prone patterns, such as *nice catch, nice euphemism, nice lie, nice setup, nice story,* and *nice trick*. The distribution seems somewhat random apart from the observation that the tendency to be more sarcasm-prone may depend to some extent on the sense (primary, secondary, etc.) of the noun that is used. In the non-sarcasm-prone columns, all nouns are used in their primary senses (provided that there is more than one sense): *catch* as in game of throwing, *setup* as in arrangement, or *story* as in account or recital of events. Note though that conclusions are drawn carefully due to the dearth of sufficient data.

The evaluation reversal for pattern 20 where the noun is either *try*, or any of the sarcasm-prone nouns from table 16 can be depicted in a similar fashion:

> Dictum: 'It [whatever it may be] is genuinely appreciated'
>
> Implicatum: 'It [whatever it may be] is dishonest and transparent'

5.13 Interesting

At first sight, interesting belongs with *funny* (discussed in section 5.10) inasmuch as its meaning shows variegation depending on the context it occurs in. This is noteworthy as the dictionary definition of *interesting* does not point toward the possibility of several senses. According to the Free Online Dictionary (2003) interesting means "arousing or holding the attention; absorbing." Upon searching for further definitions, the Cambridge Dictionary turned out to be the only source mentioning the humorous potential of *interesting* in implying "strange or different" (2016). Certain patterns were checked in the corpus, including pattern 21 where the assumption arose that the keyword is consistently endowed with an additional sense apart from its main dictionary definition. Even though *interesting* is supposed to appear in its primary sense of 'attention arousing', certain patterns suggest a certain "virtual intonation" that questions this primary sense of the word. The examination was restricted to the most often recurring noun collocations in the initial sample of 500. Examples (269) and (270) are to illustrate the most traditional (as in dictionary) sense of the keyword to offer a contrast to all other examples discussed under the specific patterns:

(269)   *Robin*: I wish I listened to my mom. Maybe I would have been involved in the world of es-- what is it? Espi-- spying! Spying. You know? Where I could meet **interesting**, hot **guys**. But no, I had to choose medicine. Hmm. Medicine.

(270)   *Taylor*: I think **Jake is interesting**. *Amanda*: So do you like him? *Taylor*: I respect him. You know, Doctors Without Borders, that's pretty impressive.

5.13.1 Pattern 21

[43]   INTERESTING N

Under scrutiny were the following nouns (based on their frequency): *way, choice, coincidence, place, question, theory,* and *word*. The noun choice apparently has a crucial role in determining whether the remark has a potentially ironic or sarcastic touch to it. The nouns themselves do not give away any inherent polarity; however, attached to the keyword some of them take on an either negative of positive sense in the context. These will be discussed in turn.

5.13.1.1 Pattern 21a

[44]   Pro $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{have} \\ \hline \text{has} \\ \hline \text{got} \end{array} \right\}$ article (∗) INTERESTING way of showing it [n=9]

Pro designates any subject pronoun and the asterisk is an optional adverb, often *real*, *really*, or *very*. There is one common denominator; namely that pattern 21a does not readily invite the primary positive sense of *interesting*. Consider (271) and (272):

(271)   *Martin*: Of course I am. We both love each other very much. *Alistair*: Oh. **She has an interesting way of showing it**. *Martin*: You know, just shut up.

(272)   *Shawn*: I've felt this way for a while now. *Carly*: **You have a really interesting way of showing it**. *Shawn*: It didn't feel right for us to get involved when I'm being paid to protect you.

The context, and the specific pattern, endow the keyword with a meaning that may be argued not to be the typical case. The meaning of the keyword besides that of 'attention arousing', now seems to carry the meaning of 'questionable' with the inherent positivity being lost, which is reinforced by both the pattern and the subsequent remarks. This phenomenon is consistent in all examples. (273) would be a typical example with *interesting* interpretable as 'attention arousing' and being inherently positive:

(273)   *Melanie*: As usual, Maggie has an **interesting way** of looking at things that I would never think of in a million years. And then once she says them, they kind of make sense. *Philip*: And she said?

[45]   INTERESTING choice of words [n=55]

As pattern 21b was a noticeably recurrent construction among *interesting choice* [n=106] examples (51% of all cases), emphasis is given to this collocation. As opposed to pattern 21a, the keyword here can be interpreted in its primary 'attention arousing' sense; however, the inherent positivity is lost again. Consider (274) and (275):

(274)   *John*: Yeah, a hell of a job, Tek -- brainwashing Hope into believing my wife could be a killer. *Tek*: Brainwash, John? That's a very **interesting choice of words**. *John*: What the hell is that supposed to mean?

(275)   *Nikolas*: Okay, I realize that you're still furious with me, but like I said before, what's done is done. *Lulu*: That's an **interesting choice of words** there. *Nikolas*: I'm just trying to do the right thing here.

In both examples, it is the subsequent remark that indicates the missing positivity of the phrase. In other words, if interesting were positive in these cases, *John*'s and *Nikolas*' replies, respectively would not make sense. The pattern is again consistent throughout the corpus. For comparison, consider (276) with the inherent positivity remaining intact:

(276)   *Carly*: That's a pretty dress. *Katie*: Thank you. *Carly*: And the fita's (sic) an **interesting choice**. *Katie*: Oh, you know about fitas? *Carly*: And making a wish? And waiting for the string to rot? *Katie*: Jack bought it for me.

5.13.1.3 Pattern 21c

[46]   INTERESTING coincidence [n=14]

Depending on the context, pattern 21c is more varied than pattern 21a and 21b in its interpretation. Consider (277) versus (278):

(277)   *Faith*: Let's leave my grandmother out of this. *Sonny*: Pretty **interesting coincidence**, isn't it? They both took a last drink before they died? *Faith*: Have you got a point?

(278)   *Belle*: Shawn, this could be the breakthrough that we have been looking for. Think about it. They crashed in Salem right along with the Gemini meteors. *Shawn-d*: Okay, it's an **interesting coincidence**.

While both (277) and (278) can be argued to carry an additional meaning of 'suspicious' embedded in the keyword, only (278) retains the inherent positivity.

5.13.1.4 Pattern 21d

[47]   INTERESTING place [n=34]

Compare (279) and (280):

(279)   *Nikki*: I haven't noticed the walls falling down here. So what if he goes to Silicon Valley for a couple days. It sounds like an **interesting place**. *Sean*: It's a Mecca to anyone who's into high tech.

(280)   *Antonio*: Yeah, well, I went uptown to get the real stuff. **Interesting place**. *John*: I've stayed in worse. Not much worse.

Interesting has different connotations in both examples. (279) highlights its inherent positivity, whereas (280) highlights a very clear negativity with the additive meaning of 'undesirable.'

5.13.1.5 Pattern 21e

[48]   that′s a(n)(∗)INTERESTING question [n=33]

The parenthesized element is an optional adverb; most frequently *very*. In the majority of the cases (61%), pattern 21e was the dominant construction. (281) and (282) are comparable along the lines of inherent polarity again:

(281)   *Victor*: You learn early on that money is power. And the more you have of it, the less people can touch you. *Sabrina*: But how much is enough? *Victor*: Mmm. **That's an interesting question**. It's a very good question.

(282)   *Marshall*: Is Bonnie all right? *Jessica*: Well, now **that's an interesting question**. And you don't even seem surprised that I was at the emergency room.

The difference may be less tangible in these examples; nevertheless, (281) is arguably more positive than (282).

5.13.1.6 Pattern 21f

[49] $(\left\{\frac{It's}{That's}\right\}$ article (very)) INTERESTING theory [n=81]

The parenthesized adverb is an optional element which may or may not be present with the demonstrative pronouns and the article, which are also optional leaving the noun phrase to be the only mandatory element in the sentence. Consistency in the occurrence of an additive meaning is observable in these examples again. (283), (284), and (285) illustrate prototypical cases in the corpus:

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(283)   *Ric*: There's no reason to lie, all right? You wanted me to go after Sonny so you wouldn't get your hands dirty and possibly alienate your daughter. *John*: Well, **that's an interesting theory**. Of course, I still haven't seen anything in the way of proof.

(284)   *Robin*: Does he have reasons for being so rude and obnoxious to everyone, I mean, for purposely upsetting people? *Noah*: Well, that would be me. My son is what I made him. *Patrick*: **Interesting theory**. Too bad it's a load of bull.

(285)   *Derek*: Because you know who the killer is. That's who you've been protecting all along. *Jack*: Well, **that's a very interesting theory**, Derek. Must have kept you up all night. Do you have anything to back it up?

The above cases are comparable with such infrequent cases as (286):

(286)   *Spinelli*: Precisely. I'm going to go share our suspicions with Stone Cold. *Lucky*: Okay. Thanks for the update. **That's an interesting theory**. It's not bad. I mean, if Jerry and Aleksander are a DNA match, then this could all be over.

Pattern 21f is the first variation where a certain tendency is noticeable in all instances where the inherent positivity of *interesting* is negated. Namely, the negative ambiance comes from a recurring theme which is the unprovability of something or the not giving any credit. Apart from *I still haven't seen anything in the way of proof* (283), *it's a load of bull* (284), *do you have anything to back it up?* (285), content-wise similar examples, such as *it's not true, you just can't prove anything, it's completely unprovable, completely lacking any proof, do you have anything resembling proof?* (a non-exhaustive list taken from the corpus) are common. In the mirror of this, *interesting* can also be interpreted as 'unconvincing', which would then enhance its negative polarity.

5.13.1.7 Pattern 21g

[50] $\left\{\dfrac{\text{It's}}{\text{That's}}\right\}$ an INTERESTING word [n=10]

A typical example of the pattern is shown in (287), where the keyword is once again taking on a negative sense along the lines of 'unthruthful' contrasted with the original connotation of inherent positivity in (288):

(287)   *Adam*: And when I give you that company, I want Chandler to be its strongest. And I trust you can continue that legacy. *J.R.*: "Trust"? **That's an interesting word** for this family. With trust comes honesty.

(288)   *Melanie*: All right. Uh, bad news, though, little man-- it's time for you to go to bed. So how about-- *Parker*: Sparkles! *Melanie*: Wh--okay. Wow. **That's an interesting word**. Did Serena teach you that? *Serena*: No. No, he came up with that all by himself.

In terms of all variations of pattern 21, the question to be asked is if these patterns predict sarcasm. Irony can be ruled out on the basis of there not being an evaluation reversal along the *good/bad* dichotomy (i.e. it is not the case that something is not interesting). The question of evaluation reversal is tricky in itself considering that *interesting* is never deprived of its primary (and often only) sense of 'arousing and holding attention.' It resembles *amazing* in its carrying a dual sense in many instances, which dual sense comes from the context. The question whether pattern 21 can be analyzed as sarcastic is suspended for the time being to invoke some further patterns that may display more clear-cut cases. Motivated by the search for pattern 7 with *amazing* (see section 5.7.1), a similar search is conducted with *interesting*.

5.13.2 Pattern 22

[51]   INTERESTING (absN) coming from NP [n=33]

The parenthesized element indicates optional abstract nouns (the pattern can only work with inanimate nouns). As opposed to *amazing*, *interesting* taking the predicative position was relatively frequent. With regard to pattern 7, it has been noted that the adjective seems to have an influence on the pattern with *coming from* (see section 5.7.1). This has further proved to be correct with *interesting*. The phrase *coming from* provides some degree of non-literality; however, what the pattern as a whole implies depends on the very adjective featured in the pattern. This can be demonstrated by the fact that the elliptical phrase *even though it is* has no place in examples with *interesting*. (188) is copied here for convenience's sake:

(188)   *Stephanie*: I hate to say this... but it seems to me that these days you're a little more at peace with yourself when you're with Brooke. Why don't you go home and spend some time with her? *Ridge*: That is a pretty **amazing suggestion [even though it is] coming from you**. *Stephanie*: Look, I-- I just want you to get through this difficult time in your life as easily as possible, and if Brooke is going to help you with that, I'm all for it.

It has been claimed that the keyword may as well carry a positive sense in (188) implying genuinely *wonderful*. Examples with interesting do not leave a possibility for such interpretation. Consider (289):

(289)   *Jerry*: I mean, is it me, or is the man as dull as dirt? Although, I suppose that lack of inner life -- it makes him a very efficient killer. *Sam*: Wow! That is an **interesting observation coming from someone like you**. *Jerry*: Don't judge me, Sam.

The elliptical phrase would be nonsensical in (289). Moreover, it is a clear-cut case of *interesting* having a negative polarity, which is made obvious by Jerry's remark (*don't judge me*). A difference was also noted between a pattern ending with a pronoun or a full clause, arguing that a simple pronoun did not convey enough information for the surface meaning of the keyword to be undermined. (188) was contrasted with (187) in this respect. (187) is copied here for convenience's sake:

(187)   *Theresa*: You know what? I don't really care what happens to me. I just want Ethan to live. Do you understand that? That's what matters to me. *Alistair*: Oh, such an **amazing** self-sacrifice coming from the lips of the little vixen who tried to kill me not once, but twice.

The observation is made that interesting is less ambiguous in pattern 22 regardless of the noun phrase, which is supported by such examples as (290), (291), and (292):

(290)   *Quinn*: No, I didn't have to. It seems that all your money and scary DiMera connections weren't as persuasive as the possibility of being charged with soliciting a prostitute. *Kate*: What an **interesting judgment coming from a pimp**.

(291)   *Sandy*: If you say so. Just trying to keep the family together. *Reva*: You know, that's **interesting coming from you**. You know, so interested in family values and all, but yet you never say one word about the family you were born into.

(292)   *Whitney*: Well, that's what you need to get over. Move on with your life. Find someone new to love, honey. *Theresa*: Well, this is **interesting coming from you** -- the girl who ran off to join a convent instead of facing up to her own feelings.

Upon a closer examination it becomes evident what makes *interesting* a more content-laden keyword in these examples. We are reminded of cases with *funny* where it could be substituted with *ironic* without any change in meaning (see section 5.10.1). Let us see how this substitution affects the above examples:

(290a)   *Quinn*: No, I didn't have to. It seems that all your money and scary DiMera connections weren't as persuasive as the possibility of being charged with soliciting a prostitute. *Kate*: What an **ironic judgment coming from a pimp**.
(291a)   *Sandy*: If you say so. Just trying to keep the family together. *Reva*: You know, that's **ironic coming from you**. You know, so interested in family values and all, but yet you never say one word about the family you were born into.

(292a)   *Whitney*: Well, that's what you need to get over. Move on with your life. Find someone new to love, honey. *Theresa*: Well, this is **ironic coming from you** -- the girl who ran off to join a convent instead of facing up to her own feelings.

While the overall sense of the dialogues would not be hindered by *ironic*, again we notice that it does not always fit naturally into the pattern (290a). A further reason for not using *ironic* may be sought in what the whole concept is grounded in; namely, the idea of only implying the underlying meaning without actually saying it. Pattern 22 has already brought us closer to the "mystery" whether *interesting* is an irony- and/or sarcasm-prone word. In this pattern, *interesting*, just like *funny*, inescapably triggers an ironic reading.

5.13.3 Pattern 23

[52]   this is all $\left\{ \begin{matrix} \text{very} \\ \text{really} \end{matrix} \right\}$ INTERESTING [n=12]

Pattern 23 has been found to be used idiomatically where *interesting* is to mean 'relevant.' In fact, the pattern functions as fixed irony, which is deducible from the context that implies that under no circumstances is the pattern to mean something truly attention arousing. The evaluation reversal comes to light when the surrounding context is considered which equates the pattern with "not relevant at all." This is reinforced by the pattern mostly being followed by the contrasting conjunctions *but* or *however*. Interestingly, the omission of the pattern would not affect the overall meaning to be conveyed in the examples, which further points to it expressing nothing more than something being irrelevant. Consider some telling examples:

(293)   *Matt*: You know, **this is all really interesting**, but if you had anything conclusive, you'd be making arrests right now instead of playing clue. *Mac*: If you hadn't told--where have you been the last few days, all right? You haven't answered that question.

(294)   *Edward*: **This is all very interesting**, but I can tell a bluff when I see one. No judge on earth would have me committed. I am more competent than the lot of you. What we do have here, folks, is blackmail, and I demand to be released immediately.

(295)   *Paul*: I have half a mind to beat Kevin Buchanan to a pulp. I'm practically his brother-in-law, and he still treats me like something he scraped off the bottom of his shoe. *Rex*: **This is all very interesting**, but what's it got to do with me?

The evaluation reversal for the irony manifests in the following narratives:

Dictum: What you are saying is relevant.

Implicatum: What you are saying is irrelevant.

On a final note, it appears that despite of the varied senses of *interesting* manifest on the surface, it can still trigger irony is certain patterns. This would entail that in these fixed patterns, the connotation of the keyword has become fixed as well.

5.14 Excited

The examples drawn from the 500 random results for *excited* displayed some interesting tendencies.

5.14.1 Pattern 24

[53] $$\left\{\frac{I\prime m}{I\,am}\right\} * \text{EXCITED to} \ \ [n=135]$$

Despite *so* being the most frequent one [n=62], the asterisk may stand for any adverb (*really very, pretty, etc.*). Even though the initial sample showed one sarcastic example with this pattern, upon checking the corpus only one other example was found (around 1% of all examples). The majority was representative of literal cases like (296):

(296)   *Marlena*: We're so proud of you. So proud of the man that you've become. *Nick*: Look, I love Gabi like crazy. **I'm so excited to** be her husband, to be a father. It's like my whole life has meaning again.

The difference between (296) and similar examples versus (297) and (298) is seen in the semantic preference. Although we cannot be entirely certain, we would like to assume that going back to prison and dating someone's homicidal brother are not prospects normally accompanied by excitement in the literal sense. As the common occurrence is to be excited about matrimony, being at home, and meeting someone, (297) and (298) cannot escape the ironic overtone:

(297)   *Avery*: Hi, Sweetie. I was worried about you. *Summer*: It's nice to know that someone was. *Phyllis*: Um, she's-- she's fine. We're doing fine. *Avery*: Good. That's good news. *Summer*: Yeah, **I'm so excited to** go back to prison.

(298)   *Inez*: If Clint comes after me with a six-shooter, I shouldn't even give it a second thought, because it's just bluster. That's great. I can't--**I'm so excited to** date your homicidal brother.

The evaluation reversal for the irony in these cases is straightforward:

Dictum: I am genuinely excited at the prospect of something.

Implicatum: I am unexcited at the prospect of something.

A further difference can be spotted between (297) and (298), however subtle. The former one is easily interpretable as carrying sarcastic prosody manifesting in the clash between Phyllis' positive sentiment (*she's fine*) and Summer's snide remark with the potential underlying purpose of criticizing the person who would say that someone is fine who is about to go back to prison. The same sarcastic prosody is not palpable in (298).

5.14.2 Pattern 25

[54]   don′t V ∗ EXCITED [n=230]

V stands for any verb; none the less, the search yielded a limited variety only of which the recurrent ones are further considered. These are: *act* [n=3]*, be* [n=6]*, get* [n=153]*, look* [n=13]*, seem* [n=24]*,* and *sound* [n=26]. The asterisk may stand for any of the following adverbs: *too, so, all,* and *very* depending on the verb. The verb choice was noticed to have a crucial influence on how the pattern would be interpreted, which was enhanced by the mood of the sentence (whether it is in the imperative or declarative mood). Moreover, the verb choice and the mood apparently have a mutual effect on each other. An interesting insight came from the fact that while *act, be,* and *get* serve as disambiguators of the sentence in terms of mood, *look, seem,* and *sound* do not. The ambiguity derives from the fact that the latter verbs may be used in elliptical sentences (i.e. missing the subject), whereas the former verbs do not seem to accommodate ellipsis. Let us see how this may affect their ironic/sarcastic tendencies. It was observed that the subject was invariably spelled out in the examples with declarative mood. Further on, the declarative mood with pattern 25 did not prove to carry either irony, or sarcasm (apart from some rare cases with only some of the verbs). (299) exemplifies typical literal usage where both the subject and the pattern are boldfaced:

(299)   *Sam*: Kay, are you paying attention? *Kay*: What? Oh, right, your -- your wedding. I'm sure it'll be great. *Sam*: Well, **you don't seem too excited** about it. *Kay*: What do you want me to do, start throwing rice?

In terms of the imperative mood, whether the pattern yielded sarcasm depended on the verb used. Consider (300), (301), and (302):

(300)   *Gwen*: Just a sec. Oh, it's you. *Will*: Yeah, **don't act so excited**. *Gwen*: I'm sorry, I thought it was -- *Will*: Yeah, the lawyer, I figured. Look at this place.

(301)   *Emily*: You can get us out of here? You would do that? That's fantastic. I will pay you back everything. *Susan*: **Don't get all excited**. They haven't set your bail yet.

(302)   *Danny*: Turns out he's a made guy from Detroit who owed Carmen a favor. *Gus*: Yeah. *Danny*: Well, **don't look too excited**, Aitoro. *Gus*: No. Uh... I'm sorry. I just had something else on my mind.

(301) is the odd-one-out as it is a literal example. Both (300) and (302) are analyzed as sarcastic with the evaluation reversal broadly depicted as follows:

Dictum: 'I do not want you to show excitement'

Implicatum: 'I disapprove of your not showing any excitement at all'

We can argue for the presence of sarcastic prosody too manifesting in the overstated imperative form that is understood and acknowledged by the hearer. Moreover, attempting to apply Giora et al.'s (2005) negation as mitigation theory to accommodate examples in the imperative mood[76] is suggestive of how the theory may work the other way around as well. Therefore, the imperative sentences *don't act so excited* (300) and *don't look too excited* (302) would operate as negated overstatements (as opposed to affirmative overstatements the authors start out with), the sarcastic interpretation of which would render them affirmative non-overstatements (as opposed to negated overstatements the authors arrive at) (p. 86). A schematic representation is shown below (Fig. 3):

Figure 3 negation as mitigation transferred to imperative sentences

don't act so excited ⟹ *do act excited*

don't look too excited ⟹ *do look excited*

negated overstatement   affirmative non-overstatement
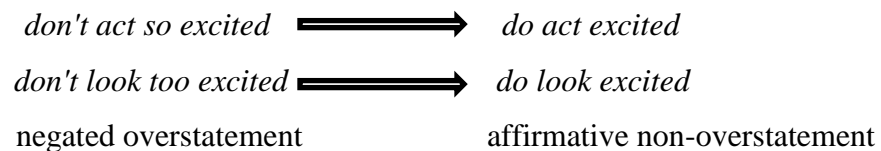
5.15 Exciting

Exciting is one of the few words that is mentioned in the literature as being prone to sarcasm (Ling & Klinger, 2016). Whether this holds for the soap opera examples too will be seen below.

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[76] Pattern 25 is suggestive of a crucial void in the irony literature with regard to the treatment of imperative sentences conveying irony. In addition, the concept of negation as mitigation has been tested for irony but not sarcasm.

5.15.1 Pattern 26

One of the recurring patterns is reminiscent of pattern 12 (see section 5.9.2). Similarly, examples are privileged that form part of a simile here as well. The pattern is depicted as follows:

[55] $(*)$ as EXCITING as $\left\{ \begin{matrix} VP \\ NP \end{matrix} \right\}$ [n=35]

The parenthesized element stands for an optional adverb; most often *about*, *near(ly)*, or *almost*. The curly brackets indicate that the comparison is made with either a verb phrase, or a noun phrase. As a simile, one would expect the phrase to be used in drawing a parallel between the keyword and what can be considered exciting activities under normal circumstances, such as *going for a ride with Aaron on his motorcycle, a talking computer, starting up fashion, a man winging his way all the way across the Atlantic just to see you, the fashion industry,* and *the wedding* (examples taken from the corpus). When compared with examples, like *watching storage techniques on the food channel, going to the dentist, watching paint dry,* and *a box of rocks* the irony-proneness of these latter expressions combined with pattern 25 becomes obvious. Examples (303) and (304) are to show this contrast in context (the whole simile being underlined):

(303)   *Erica*: Look, could we just change the subject? *Opal*: Well, it isn't **near as exciting as a man winging his way all the way across the Atlantic just to see you**, but David Hayward's getting hitched.

(304)   *Dorian*: Yes, yes. How about you change that adorable outfit and come with me to the mayor's press conference. *Blair*: That sounds **about as exciting as watching paint dry**. *Dorian*: Where's your civic pride?

The incongruity between *exciting* vs *watching paint dry* is more striking than *exciting* vs *a man winging his way all the way across the Atlantic just to see you*. The irony derives from the fact that pattern 26, similarly to pattern 12, essentially carries the underlying sense of 'something being not exciting' in those examples where the usual semantic preference is upset. Hence, the evaluation reversal is as follows:

Dictum: A prospect holds much excitement.

Implicatum: A prospect holds much displeasure.

The ironic tendency of the phrase *watching paint dry* is verified by Moon (2008) as well whose corpus analysis reveals 5 occurrences in the Bank of English corpus with the adjective *exciting* (p. 14). The inherent dullness in the phrase ensures that the interpretation always be

ironic regardless of the inherently positive adjective exploited in the simile (*interesting, fun, etc.*). The usual semantic preference for the keyword lets us assume that what follows would be something inherently positive; however, when this does not happen and a clash occurs between something inherently positive (i.e. exciting) and something inherently negative (i.e. unexciting), irony is what manifests. This clash between positive and negative is a prerequisite to detect irony, which then contradicts Moon's (2008) hasty claim that all similes befitting the *(about) as ADJECTIVE as VERBAL/NOUN PHRASE* frame are ironic (p. 14). (305) is a further example reinforcing the irony. Note, how the pre-modifier *stupid* already primes the pattern to compare the trip to something possibly negative:

(305)   *Dillon*: Believe me, the whole stupid trip with my niece and, you know, just -- it was about **as exciting as going to the dentist**. I'm just glad to be back here with you.

Pattern 26 calls to mind Veale & Hao's (2010) study on creative comparisons (see section 5.9.2).

5.15.2 Pattern 27

[56]   how EXCITING [n=83]

The recurrence of the exclamation deserves mention. The expectation was that, similarly to pattern 25, the upsetting of the common semantic preference would point toward irony. This expectation was indeed met, even if in the majority of cases the pattern turned out to be used literally. (306) exemplifies a typical case:

(306)   *Pilar*: Oh, my, Whitney, a new baby for you. **How exciting**. There's so much planning to do.

Contrary to (306), ironic cases are much rarer in the corpus. (307) and (308) serve as examples:

(307)   *Brian*: I think she just needed to get some rest. So we decided to stay upstairs in our bedroom. *Luke*: **How exciting** for you. *Brian*: I didn't mind.

(308)   *Austin*: I mean, yeah, we can stay here and watch something like a family adventure. *Sami*: **How exciting**. *Austin*: You don't like the idea. *Sami*: It's not that. I just thought that we were going to go out -- you and me, on a date.

Pattern 27 is not considered as a particularly irony-prone construction; in the few cases where it actually proved to convey irony the wider context needed to be invoked. The responses to the exclamation are suggestive (*I didn't mind* and *It's not that*, respectively) inasmuch as the acknowledgment of irony is clear. Accordingly, the evaluation reversal would look as follows:

Dictum: The prospect of something is genuinely exciting.

Implicatum: The prospect of something is unexciting.

As a final remark, the section started out with the statement that *exciting* is considered a sarcasm-prone word. Moreover, the same authors also delineate the standard formula for sarcasm; namely, [Statement about something negative] [Positive Word] [#sarcasm][77] (Ling & Klinger, 2016, p. 209). Examples like (307) and (308) somewhat undermine this formula as the fact that a statement has an associated negative meaning only becomes apparent from the responses that follow the positive word (i.e. *How exciting* in our case). Not to mention that *exciting* in patterns 26 and 27 is evidently more irony-prone than sarcasm-prone.

5.16 Summary and discussion of key adjectives

Ten adjectives have been scrutinized in the corpus, *amazing, happy, glad, fun, funny, great, nice, interesting, excited,* and *exciting*. The examples showed the adjectives in their most typical as well as potentially irony/sarcasm-prone constructions. Based on the initial criteria provided for irony and sarcasm, a set of examples (varying in number) were filtered out from 500 random hits for each keyword. Both sarcasm and irony were represented among the examples, with perhaps somewhat more ironic than sarcastic patterns. What was stated as constituting the difference between irony and sarcasm in terms of evaluation reversal holds for adjectives too. The same goes for the term of art *sarcastic prosody*. What was introduced as a new concept is conventionalized sarcasm (e.g. pattern 10a, pattern 10c [30], pattern 16 [36], and pattern 19 with *see*) implying that the pattern itself is what carries a consistently sarcastic reading regardless of the context; in other words, such patterns are context-spanning to borrow Culpeper's (2011) term. Despite the concept of conventionalized irony being an established one (see, e.g. Kapogianni, 2010), certain new patterns have been added to the 'inventory' as being fixed in their ironic nature (e.g. pattern 15 and pattern 18). The difference between conventionalized irony and sarcasm has to do with sarcastic prosody having been conventionalized along with the latter patterns (see Chapter 6 for an elaboration).

Similarly to the verbs, the adjectives represented differing tendencies in terms of irony and sarcasm-proneness, which is possibly partly attributable to the differing degree to which the

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[77] It is important to note that the formula is not claimed to be applicable to data other than the tweet dataset the authors are working on; which is knowingly "annotated" by the individual users according to their folk knowledge of what they think constitutes sarcasm.

adjectives are emotive, expressive, and content-laden (e.g. *nice* being less expressive than *exciting*) (see section 5.6 for McEwen & Greenberg's (1970) idea about language intensity). Colston & O'Brien's (2000b) study is to back this up as well who differentiated between strong and weak verbal irony depending on the specific lexical item in an ironically meant remark (see section 3.2.4).

Comparison can be made between the analysis of verbs and adjectives with regard to the factors that guide the irony/sarcasm recognition. Whereas, grammatical features were predominant in aiding the irony and sarcasm in the verb patterns, the tendency with adjectives was their unique semantic feature of carrying more than one sense, often recognizable simultaneously. This heterogeneity of senses (see, e.g. *amazing, funny,* and *interesting*) is something that has not hitherto been taken into account in irony studies. The presence of these dual senses serves as further proof why Sperber and Wilson's (1981) echoic mention theory cannot explain all ironies, for instance. They argued, namely, against the idea of either semantic, or pragmatic substitution mechanism being involved in irony (see section 2.1.2); however, taking their definition as a basis, this is exactly what happens in those ironic cases where the adjective possesses more than one sense. This ties in with Sinclair's (2004) idea of semantic reversal at the same time (see section 2.2.3), which was meant to point out the advantage of corpora over traditional data observation methods in general, and which is now seen in full operation (e.g. which sense of *amazing* is intended in a given context is not deducible from the lexical item *per se*).

The ironic tendency of the imperative mood (see section 5.14.2) offers a fresh perspective as well on what kind of sentences lend themselves to ironic/sarcastic reading. The data analysis was meant to show what the difference between irony and sarcasm is; however, what it was *not* meant to show is if individual keywords have a tendency to be more irony-prone or sarcasm-prone in the soap opera corpus. Having said that, based on the limited number of recurrent patterns under analysis, a prevalence of sarcasm was observed with verb patterns and a prevalence of irony for adjective patterns.

Chapter 6: General discussion and conclusion

6.1. Revisiting some concepts

This first section of the chapter is dedicated to the revisiting of some newly introduced concepts, such as sarcastic prosody, virtual intonation, and conventionalized sarcasm in order to be able to put them in their proper places in the mirror of the theoretical background. A further goal is to recast such notions as evaluation reversal and see how in the light of the data it can account for the difference between irony and sarcasm. Finally, the operational definitions of irony and sarcasm will be reevaluated, accordingly.

6.1.1 Sarcastic prosody and virtual intonation

Sarcastic prosody was proposed as a phenomenon recognizable in lexical cues of fault-finding, disapproval, condemnation, insulting, reproach, and hostility. It also presumes an antagonistic relationship between the speakers. In addition, it was linked to what was called a "virtual intonation" which permeates written sarcastic (and sometimes ironic) patterns. This entails some questions, one of which would be if it is indeed possible to read some kind of intonation pattern into written language even if it is a transcription of speech. A useful analogy here is Erekson's (2010) saying that it is common to use prosody to emphasize the difference between a statement and a question even though the word order is suggestive enough of the difference (p. 84). In a similar vein, a conventionalized sarcastic or ironic pattern may be sufficient to convey the 'true' meaning, but once they are vocalized a certain intonation would accompany them for emphasis. Note that this is not to claim that sarcasm or irony come with a specific, unified intonation pattern, for which the literature does not have robust evidence, but that, in Bryant & Fox Tree's (2005) formulation "people generally produce sarcastic utterances that are both textually and prosodically unambiguous" (p. 260). As their data consists of written sarcastic utterances that were produced verbally at first (drawn from talk radio), this claim can be transferred to the soap opera corpus as well. There is no reason to assume that the prosodic cue disappears once the utterance is presented in writing. Bryant and Fox Tree refer to this notion as "perceptually salient prosodic characteristics" (p. 264). The idea of a certain tone of voice having been conventionalized along with a pattern has support in the pragmatic literature too. For

instance, Culpeper (2011) cites an excerpt of spoken discourse (of course in a written format) and claims that the context can advise the reader of the prosody the offensive remark has been uttered with (p. 144). His data consists of weblogs where utterances are sometimes perceived as impolite because of the particular "tone of voice", which does not imply prosodic features but register issues (p. 64). On the grounds of this, it is presumed that certain patterns discussed in the data analysis are endowed with prosodic features that guarantee their recognition as being ironic or sarcastic regardless of the communicative form they appear in (i.e. written or oral) as a result of common usage and conventionalization in particular contexts. Hence, studies preoccupied with the "tone of irony" (e.g. Bryant & Fox Tree, 2002 & Bryant & Fox Tree, 2005) will not find consistency in terms of prosodic features as it is not irony or sarcasm as such that comes with a certain tone of voice but it is specific words in specific constructions that turn out to be consistently ironic/sarcastic (supported by the soap opera corpus alone so far).

6.1.2 Conventionalized sarcasm

The notion of conventionalized sarcasm (i.e. fixed in its form) was first introduced with regard to pattern 10a (see section 5.8.1.1). The difference between the widely acknowledged concept of conventionalized irony (see, e.g. Barbe, 1995; Alba Juez, 1998; Kotthoff, 2003; Kapogianni, 2010; & Attardo, 2013) and conventionalized sarcasm is the latter's association with the abovementioned sarcastic prosody. Referring to speech acts, Archer, Culpeper, & Davis (2008) state that "some lexical and grammatical forms are conventionally associated with particular pragmatic meanings" (p. 615). The conventionalized ironic and sarcastic patterns found in the data are seen as conducive to this idea. When discussing conventionalization in terms of sarcasm, I would like to make a distinction between fixed sarcastic patterns shown to be thus in the soap opera corpus, such as *Pro('ve) got/have a funny way of showing it* (see section 5.10.3) and what Haiman (1998) calls *enantiosemantic* phrases, such as *that's really RICH* (p. 39), which are routinely used sarcastic expressions with distinct intonation patterns.

6.1.3 Reversal of evaluation

The soap opera data aided the differentiation process in that sarcasm does not mask the intended meaning in the sense that irony does. Sarcasm (admittedly due to the concomitant sarcastic prosody) is more unambiguously on the surface than irony which indeed hides in an

underlying meaning. To be able to conceive of the difference a simplistic schematic figure would represent this as follows (Fig. 4):

Figure 4 schematic representation of the evaluation reversal in irony and sarcasm

Irony   Sarcasm

surface meaning   ⟷

surface meaning1   surface meaning2

underlying meaning
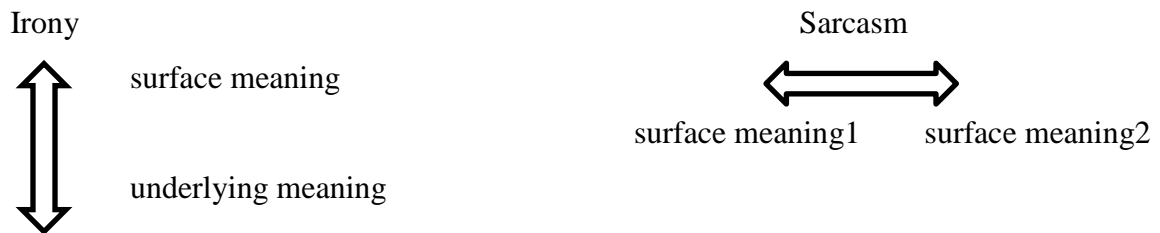
Wierzbicka (2002) adopts the same idea when claiming that the intended message in irony is meant to be intelligible but not obvious, while in the case of sarcasm, the intended message is indeed meant to be obvious (p. 1201).

As the difference between irony and sarcasm is seen in the nature of the evaluation reversal, Partington's claims are first reviewed (see section 3.2.1): According to the reversal of evaluation the example *John is a genius* is understood as *John is an idiot*. This exploitation of the two extremes of a scale has accommodated the ironic examples in our data as well. Nevertheless, it could not hold water in this form when it came to justifying sarcastic examples. In order for the evaluation reversal to work with sarcasm, the binary choice between the universal concepts of *good* and *bad* needed to be relaxed. There was no need to modify the designation as the evaluative nature in sarcastic examples is just as much a given as in ironic examples (due to the presence of keywords having previously been annotated as evaluative), and as for *reversal*, it is meant in its sense of 'change of state' (The Free Online Dictionary, 2003) now. Accordingly, what irony is based on is an evaluation reversal between *good* and *bad* in general and between more specific concepts in particular without passing overt judgment. On the other hand, sarcasm is based on a non-binary, therefore more fuzzy, evaluation reversal due to the sarcastic prosody expressing some additive meaning. An example is copied here for convenience (see section 5.10.3 for the evaluation reversal for pattern 16 [36]):

> Dictum: 'You are showing it [whatever that is] in a peculiar fashion'
> Implicatum: 'You should show it [whatever that is] in a more straightforward and honest fashion'

Finally, the adversarial nature of the dialogues in sarcastic evaluation reversal readily assumes a clear victim who serves as the target for the negativity.

6.1.4 Revision of operational definitions

As it turns out the operational definitions put forward at the beginning of Chapter 5 are in need of only minor modifications in the mirror of the corpus findings. Sarcasm was defined as an evaluation reversal where the ostensive and underlying evaluations both manifest on the surface via a harshly critical/ stinging/ snide remark directed towards a human victim whose identity is clearly stated in the remark (or deducible from the context). In a slightly upgraded definition, sarcasm would be defined as a nonbinary evaluation reversal where the ostensive and intended evaluations both manifest on the surface due to the necessary sarcastic prosody present which leaves no doubt of the identity of the human victim targeted.

The operational definition for irony was: an evaluation reversal where only the ostensive evaluation is on the surface, while the underlying evaluation can be deduced based on the context (and co-text). Harsh criticism, stinging, or snide remarks are *not* contributing factors in irony. The upgraded version is the same in essence: a binary evaluation reversal where only the ostensive evaluation is on the surface, while the underlying evaluation can be deduced based on the context (and co-text). Sarcastic prosody is *not* a contributing factor in irony. The observant reader would have to raise the question at this point why some of the irony-prone patterns were claimed to carry sarcastic prosody too if sarcastic prosody is not conducive to irony. Certain key phrases (e.g. *can't wait* in section 5.3) were analyzed on an individual basis because they did not show specific and recurring patterns. Even though the individual instances were representative of binary evaluation reversal, the co-text forced a certain "virtual intonation" on them (i.e. the remark containing the keyword) partly due to the mentioning of a supposed victim (without directly addressing them). It was, however, noted that this is more an exception than a rule, and it does not happen with recurring patterns that are decidedly either sarcasm-prone (accompanied by sarcastic prosody) or irony-prone (not accompanied by sarcastic prosody). An ironic example is copied here for demonstration purposes, where the keyword is boldfaced, the victim is underlined, and the contributor to the sarcastic prosody dotted:

(153)   Mallet: Okay, okay, okay. Alan, we'll be talking to you again really soon. Alan: I **can't wait**, Detective. Mallet: Easy, easy.

On a final note, a practical distinction is proposed between ironic and sarcastic patterns versus irony and sarcasm-prone patterns inasmuch as the former are best reserved for conventionalized cases of irony and sarcasm, such as *some great propN you are* (see section 5.11.2), *nice to see you too* (see section 5.12.1), or *this is all very/really interesting* (see section 5.13.3); whereas, the latter designate those patterns that yielded more ironic/sarcastic examples than nonironic/sarcastic ones, such as *(NP) can't wait to hear this (one)* (see section 5.3.1.1) or *interesting (absN) coming from NP* (see section 5.13.2).

6.2 Recapitulation

By this time, the thesis may seem as an amalgam of irony, sarcasm, evaluation, grammar, lexis, corpus linguistics, semantic prosody, semantic preference, sarcastic prosody, conventionalization, pragmatics, semantics, and so forth. In fact, all of these notions have made an appearance at some point, some of them remaining in the limelight, while others entering the discussion at particular points. The research started out with the question to what extent irony and sarcasm have footprints in spoken discourse once it has been transcribed without the indication of prosodic cues. Focus was placed on a much neglected, however promising, area; namely, lexico-grammatical features (i.e. individual words and grammatical structures) in the identification of irony and sarcasm in a soap opera corpus. Several aspects of the approach are unparalleled, such as i) employing a soap opera corpus to examine the differences between irony and sarcasm, ii) focusing primarily on lexico-grammatical cues, iii) extracting search phrases from a tweet dataset based on their evaluative nature, iv) and delineating both irony and sarcasm-prone patterns that have not yet been documented.

The idea that irony and sarcasm are *not* synonymous and do not represent the same phenomenon was upheld throughout the thesis, probing existing literature which mostly treats them under the same heading. At a preliminary phase, the interposing of an intermediary step and taking evaluative expressions as a starting point was deemed beneficial. Thus, a tweet dataset consisting of ironic and sarcastic posts was further annotated by external annotators for evaluative language. Based on the annotations, 15 keywords (both verbs and adjectives) were extracted and subjected to corpus analysis. The method was as follows: once the hits for all keywords were retrieved, a sample of 500 random tokens were manually examined for each keyword to separate examples that evoked the irony or sarcasm frame (see section 3.2.4) from

those that did not. Manual examination is something that cannot be forgone due to the elusive nature of the highly pragmatic notions under consideration (i.e. irony and sarcasm). Current computational methods are not yet sophisticated enough to allow for automatization (even though attempts are constantly made, see in the literature review).

The filtering process confirmed the previously held fact about the smaller proportion of figurative language present in everyday discourse in general compared to literal language (Tannen, 1984). Even though evaluation was shown to be a necessary concomitant to irony and sarcasm, it is not sufficient in itself to separate potential examples from non-potential ones. For this reason, the irony literature was consulted extensively in search for criteria that i) allowed for sarcasm to be accommodated and ii) that could smoothly incorporate the lexico-grammatical focus. The notion of contrast (as understood by Colston, 1997b; Colston & Keller, 1998; Colston & O'Brien, 2000a; & Colston & O'Brien, 2000b) was applied in the filtering process as the general criterion which was observable via the upsetting of 'normal' semantic preference and prosody (as understood by Louw, 1993; Whitsitt, 2005; Hunston, 2007; & Bednarek, 2008, inter alia) in the examples. Once the potential examples were set aside, Partington's (2007) brainchild, evaluation reversal, was utilized as a further criterion in teasing apart ironic and sarcastic examples. Evaluation is evidently closely knit with evaluation reversal, which made it a most appropriate criterion for the present purposes. After collecting all potentially ironic and sarcastic examples for all keywords, the recurring lexico-grammatical patterns with the different keywords were searched for in the soap opera corpus to verify what constitutes the irony/sarcasm: i) is it the keyword, ii) is it the lexico-grammatical pattern, or iii) something else (e.g. a contrast between the keyword/patterns and the co-text).

The mainly qualitative analysis showed that the keyword *per se* is not a sufficient cue to detect irony/sarcasm. On the other hand, certain lexico-grammatical patterns indeed proved to be suggestive (these were referred to as conventionalized ironic and sarcastic patterns), while in the majority of cases the irony/sarcasm became apparent through the interplay of the pattern and the co-text (these were referred to as irony and sarcasm-prone patterns). In addition, some patterns turned out to be decoys in the sense that some aspect typical of sarcasm was perceivable in them but the necessary evaluation reversal was missing upon closer analysis (e.g. some patterns with *hope*). This points to a potentially rewarding research possibility; namely, the comparison of sarcasm to literal insults and impolite language (which may turn out to have more in common

with sarcasm in some respects than sarcasm and irony). The reason for decoys making it into the list of potential examples is their featuring some aspect that is primarily linked with sarcasm. These aspects may be lexical realizations of hostility, disapproval, harsh criticism, sting, etc. (concepts reflecting on the etymology of the word, see section 2.1.3). However, to pass for sarcasm, an utterance not only needs to bear these aspects, it also needs to refer to a clear-cut human victim, and needs to be describable through evaluation reversal. As for the difference between sarcasm and irony, it is the specific kind of evaluation reversal (either binary, or nonbinary) that sets them apart.

Moreover, the term of art *sarcastic prosody* was introduced as a tribute to semantic prosody as used in corpus linguistics (see section 3.2.2) as well as its use in designating vocal features (see section 2.2.1). Sarcastic prosody is to comprise all that makes an utterance sarcastic, including the previously mentioned lexical aspects (see section 5.1.1.1 for more details) as well as a "virtual intonation" that is parasitic on sarcastic patterns (see section 6.1.1). Overall, the findings have proven the hypothesis inasmuch as there is indeed both an ironic and sarcastic repertoire in the English language that is characterized by a distinctive vocabulary and grammatical patterns. Of course, these findings are the result of scratching a very restricted area of the surface and cannot be generalized over other verbs and adjectives, neither can they be generalized over other lexico-grammatical patterns that feature the keywords but were not analyzed in this study. In fact, the studying of irony and sarcasm is a never-ending activity. As is the case with so many other questions of language use, there are numerous ways to approach them, numerous ways to analyze them, numerous elements and facets of the phenomena to focus on, and all these then create additional questions; and so the cycle begins.

6.2.1 Limitations

This brings us to some of the limitations of the research. The problem of accountability inevitably creeps in on the level of the general research topic. Clearly, the data does not include all ironic and sarcastic instances in the soap opera corpus, and the goal was not to annotate the corpus for irony and sarcasm either. This restricts us in being able to draw conclusions about irony and sarcasm in general. Not to mention the small number of hits for certain patterns that does not allow for conclusions on a more particular level either. On the other hand, however, the study is accountable in the sense that the lexico-grammatical patterns were specific enough to

yield all instances in the corpus. Furthermore, the scope of the research poses some challenge. Analyzing a relatively large number of individual keywords (15) in a varying number of patterns (at least 27) yielding a varying number of tokens (between 3 to 3000+) unavoidably impinges a very in-depth examination. However, looking at it from a different perspective; concentrating on one keyword and its patterns would leave the corpus essentially unexploited. Finally, the methodology itself, using only the infinitive forms of keywords, necessarily hinders recall. What the thesis is in its current format is no more than a work in progress: the search can always be extended to many more keywords which yield many more patterns.

6.2.2 Contribution

In general, the interdisciplinary nature of the thesis is one of its main contributions inasmuch as it provides findings relevant to corpus linguistics, discourse analysis, and irony (and sarcasm) research as well. Furthermore, it is the first study that employs lexico-grammatical patterns in the identification of irony and sarcasm as well as the first empirical study to tease irony and sarcasm apart (not considering computational linguistic reports preoccupied with machine learning). A study like this, focusing on specific words and patterns, has the advantage of pointing out weaknesses of previous ideas that have been generalized prematurely based on a limited number of (often isolated and fabricated) examples (e.g. the notion of semantic reversal having been unreasonably eliminated from traditional irony treatment).

To mention some more general applications, Barbe (1995) noted that irony can be taught, provided that some observed regularity has been noticed and described (p. 65). This thesis did indeed provide some regularities not only in terms of irony but sarcasm as well which might be applicable to and exploitable for teaching. Having delineated specific patterns of irony and sarcasm may also aid writers and speakers, who can make more conscious choices as to what construction will drive home a certain message more effectively.

A contribution of the thesis on an even more generic level is its being a corpus-based descriptive account based on natural speech treating irony and sarcasm as separate entities.

6.2.3 Future tasks and vistas

The possibilities for future research are countless. Firstly, it was proposed that a certain tone may accompany ironic and sarcastic remarks, especially once they have been conventionalized. Studies on prosodic cues (Bryant & Fox Tree, 2005 & Bryant, 2010) invariably look for the general features that accompany ironic and sarcastic speech. A possibility worth looking into would be to conduct systematic research on the patterns proposed here to have acquired conventionalized ironic or sarcastic status and see if they are uttered identically in different contexts and/or whether they are uttered identically across different native English speaker populations and compare them with existing guidelines "as to what prosodic patterns we might expect in ironic speech generally" (Bryant, 2010, p. 560).

A logical next step is to use the patterns delineated in this thesis and verify their ironic/sarcastic vs irony/sarcasm-prone status across different corpora and employ them in machine learning and automatic detection tasks. In addition, the corpus can always be searched for other evaluative keywords or other lexico-grammatical patterns with the 'existing' keywords.

At last, if there was one thing the analysis showed me, it is how differently and discretely the keywords manifest. Each of them deserves a much fuller account, the compilation of which is the pleasant duty that awaits me in the near future. And in this case, there is no irony.

Appendices

Instructions for pilot study 1

Name of task: Annotation of tweet messages for evaluative language

Facts: 40 tweet messages in an excel table, 1 message/line

Definition of evaluative language:

1. the speaker's attitude, emotional reaction, stance, a judgement
2. it can be a single lexical item, or a string of words but NOT whole sentences (see examples below)
3. expression(s) whose connotation is either good or bad (positive or negative) (see examples below)

Guidelines:

- first, read the tweets one by one and look for evaluative language in them.
- For example: adjectives: it's terrible, splendid
  - adverbs: unfortunately, necessarily
  - nouns: he is a success, tragedy
  - verbs: win, I doubt that

- then, you have several options:

a) if you've found the evaluative expression(s), enclose them in [[double square brackets]]

b) if you think the tweet doesn't have any evaluative expression(s) or the evaluative expression(s) appear(s) with a hashtag#, redden column B (i.e. the tweet)

c) if you're unsure whether the tweet has evaluative expression(s), put a question mark (?) in column C

- use column D for any remark you may have.

- sample annotation for your reference:

example 1: Why is it, that keeping something 'safe' is [[so dangerous]]!? I can never find anything again. #irony

example 2: Michelle Obama is having lunch next door to my office. [[It's had zero affect]] on traffic or one's ability to cross the street. #sarcasm

example 3: [[Can't wait]] for Benfica next week. #FCPorto #Sarcasm

example 4: [[I love it]] when @finnsonator random friend @little_dyl99 rapes my twitter during a movie #thanks #not #gtfo

example 5: You refuse to go the night market because you don't want to be perceived as cheap but you're asking me where to get cheap stuff #irony (no single lexical item or string of words carries the evaluation here)

example 6: Just saw an undercover Seattle police officer driving an escape pull someone over. #irony (no single lexical item or string of words carries the evaluation here)

example 7: So having a black car and black leather seat... I burned my legs on the seat when I got in and sat down. #awesome #not (the evaluation appears with a hashtag (#awesome))

Snapshot of tweets in pilot study 1

Having to run to the train first thing in the morning is a great way to start the day #not

It was so nice of my dad to come to my graduation party. #not

//Always nice to come back onto clash of clans to see this... #Sarcasm http://t.co/uFddfdyQPG

@leerandyjr @tngstreet @BearlyDoug @MarkRogersTV @hwsport @ESPN_Future wait....where is Bama?? #sarcasm

PAT GOOD, the Austrian lead is now cut down to 49-7 with less than 2 minutes remaining. This could still be interesting #not #fec14

"@erikaekengren: From 50 to 100 degrees in less than a week #kansas" #cantwait #sarcasm

My ex said I was a bad boyfriend because I had trust issues. Her next boyfriend cheated on her now she has trust issues. #irony

And now I can say that I have been to New Castle, Indiana. Bucket List shortened. #sarcasm

Somebody take me to the concert too nuh so we could hug up n slow dance 🎶👫🎶 lol #not

eating black beans and rice for breakfast because it's my last day of high school and I don't give a hoot #Not #The #Word #I #Said #Mentally

I've never subtweeted anyone... Unlike SOME other people... #irony #justkidding #subtweet

@charlyavenell I do, massively, just wish he could have wanked Groves before now #radio #not #easy X

I love finding things out from other people. #sarcasm

RT @JozefKnazko: I'm so pleased to work with #Android API. Its consistency and intuitiveness is unbelievable. Thank you Google! #sarcasm

#sarcasm #sarcastictweet #SarcasmMuch #humour #FunFact #funniespicture #funniestbadgirls #relatable #fact #factonly http://t.co/JEfRemKbk9

Probably should have gotten a photo with my mentor yesterday ! Lol #Not

No one knows who invented the fire hydrant because the patent burned in a fire. #FunFact #irony

New generation may eat less food but definitely consume more data plans .. #irony

Well that was the sunniest most beautiful track meet ever!! #sarcasmatitsbest #sarcastictweet #rain ☔☔☔

#Not one more. God bless all victims of violence. After santa Barbara after newtown after every last one. Not one more god bless

Because drinking milk from a farm animal is way less weird. #sarcasm http://t.co/BIGm9Pcbdg

@ncampos84 @_Marcene @SPCAErieCounty THIS will increase the swag factor of the bachelor pad... #NOT

Wow my put putting skills are just so good. I could probably win a championship with my skills.... #not

#sarcasm ▣"▣If you find it hard to laugh at yourself, I would be happy to do it for you.• "▣

#raptors fans love that Joey Crawford is refereeing this game. #sarcasm

This makes me feel soooo good about myself #not 😊🔫

Well after pitching 8 innings this drive to grand forks should be a breeze #Not #SoreAF #OldProbs

@lovelarah Funny? #Not :-(I wish I'm stucked in ....say 32:-)

Competitive higher education and more expensive HECS fees... That's not going to drive the disadvantage away. #qanda #education #sarcasm

The looks I get when I'm out with Ava 😊 #teenmom #not

@RadioShack loved having 1 of your employees come in to where I work& harass me while I'm working to shop at your store #NOT #Unprofessional

Just seen a Cardiff fan mock the Villa over Senderos' statement that Villa are a "great club". Yes, a Cardiff fan. #irony

@The_Mad_Matter oh that's cute! I think that you have too very much swaggady daggady! #i #am #not #sober

Fiji water is the most expensive h2o in America, yet you can't drink the water when you're actually here... #irony

RT @AshishR151: The more attitude you show to people , the more they will run after you. Easy people are never sought after #facts #Irony

Thunder are going to be in big trouble without Derek Fisher next season. #Not

@Gbone82 At least he keeps possession well and never kicks it straight in to touch, that's the main thing #sarcasm

Why yes I would love to mow the yard right after working all day #Not

I must say I enjoyed that conversation. #words #sarcasm

5 minutes until I find out if I get my phone 😊😡🔫😊 #Lets #Hope #I #Get #My #Phone #I #Would #Be #So #Happy #But #Probably #Not #Going #Too

Appendix B

Revised instructions for pilot study 2

Name of task: Annotation of tweet messages for evaluative language

Facts: 60 tweet messages in an excel table, 1 message/line

Definition of evaluative language:

4. the speaker's attitude, emotional reaction, stance, a judgement
5. it can be a single lexical item, or a string of words (preferably no more than 4) but NOT whole sentences (see examples below)
6. expression(s) whose connotation is either good or bad (positive or negative) (see examples below)

Guidelines:

- first, read the tweets one by one and look for evaluative language in them.
- For example: adjectives: it's terrible, splendid

    adverbs: unfortunately, necessarily

    nouns: he is a success, tragedy

    verbs: win, I doubt that

- then, you have several options:

a) if you've found the evaluative expression(s), enclose them in [[double square brackets]]

b) if you think the tweet doesn't have any evaluative expression(s), the evaluative expression(s) appear(s) with a hashtag#, or you're unsure if there is any evaluation redden column B (i.e. the tweet)

- use column D for any remark you may have

- sample annotation for your reference:

example 1: Why is it, that keeping something 'safe' is [[so dangerous]]!? I can never find anything again. #irony

example 2: Michelle Obama is having lunch next door to my office. [[It's had zero affect]] on traffic or one's ability to cross the street. #sarcasm

example 3: [[Can't wait]] for Benfica next week. #FCPorto #Sarcasm

example 4: [[I love it]] when @finnsonator random friend @little_dyl99 rapes my twitter during a movie #thanks #not #gtfo

example 5: You refuse to go the night market because you don't want to be perceived as cheap but you're asking me where to get cheap stuff #irony (no single lexical item or string of words carries the evaluation here)

example 6: Just saw an undercover Seattle police officer driving an escape pull someone over. #irony (no single lexical item or string of words carries the evaluation here)

example 7: So having a black car and black leather seat... I burned my legs on the seat when I got in and sat down. #awesome #not (the evaluation appears with a hashtag (#awesome))

RT @Winkerbell_: The American National Spelling Bee, where winners are always Indians. #Irony #BrownSwag

American office is holding us back from a mad night out in walsham.. Wooo! @AndrewJBreeds #sarcasm #walsham #kack #Americanoffice #awesome

Oh how I just love not talking to my boyfriend for 2 days.... #not 😣😴

Big Brother Canada needs more cymbal sound effects. As a TV watcher, I'm too stupid to tell when a scene is suspenseful on my own. #sarcasm

#WCHS Announcements Party tonight..Whoop Whoop. Two partys in one weekend. #Ifeelcool #Not

not even jealous of anyone who's off today for the bank holiday 😣🚌 #sarcasm #LuckyPunks

Well that was just a great way to be woken up... #not

I can really see the effort you put in to change..... #not

@Derek91662871 @TateVeley_97 @CaidenCowger you tweeted me over 15 times. Your really making me rethink my ideas with blind arguments #not

.@Dougiejam @BrisbaneAirport Nah mate. They're a sponsor. Organised it just for you. Have a good flight! [#Sarcasm] #GoRoar #OrangeSunday4?

Fun fact of the day: No one knows who invented the fire hydrant because its patent was destroyed in a fire. #irony

The clear answer to all of these pitcher injuries is just to ban baseball. Amazed no one has thought of it. #sarcasm

Love watching news stories about plane issues while waiting at the airport #sarcasm

The day I get off my cruise, Titanic is on. I wish I was on it. #not #carnival4life

Had so much fun at the Duke Drian concert with @B_Frosty95 #Not #HeSucks

To EVERY Uncle & Unty's House's BUT My Mother ALREADY RANG Dem #NOT To Let Me In...So That Night I Slept In Da ONLY Safe Place I Knew...

@EmmaSamms1 @I_GregoryPorter @cheltfestivals @rockthecotswolds sorry slow on the #sarcasm today!

@mmarzarotto the only thing I'll ever remember about you, great first and last impression #not

it's nights like these that I wish I didn't have to be in Burlington for work by 7:30 #letsgetcray #not

I ❤ the amounts of busy work teachers give us when they leave. #Sarcasm #ItsFourthQuarter

This roller coaster of emotions is just SO awesome today. #not

I ❤ bus drivers that take their job sooooo seriously. #not it's one seat god damn

Because there's nothing more metal than listening to Metallica while coloring a pic of Goofy eating an ice cream come on the beach 😄 #not

RT @CodeBread: I think its hilarious that certain folk on nat radio from FF/FG/L talk about SF policies destroying the country #lolz #irony...

Mine would say #prone to #sarcasm and #suddenoutbursts lol! What would.yours? http://t.co/N6RO6GzpWH

You know you're a dj when you leave the tables for a couple mins #not

Gauging my nose so my hoop can fit through again. Yeah that feels awesome. #Not #NoPainNoGain

"@SirFranksnBacon: Factoid: Tribe has scored 5 runs the last 26 innings!" but we got BROHIO though...! #sarcasm

I love fighting with my sister in a foreign country #not

@FRONZ1LLA w o w you just talk so cool like you don't care about your own success #winner #sarcasm

I'm not even going out drinking tonight, but still it was lovely of them to tell me. #Not

Whoopey, I have a walk-in. Yay for Monday. #sarcasm

I talk too much. I have a lot of stories & opinions. I guess I will try to be more basic.. #NOT

Super excited to live with some totally random kid this summer!!!!! #not

I can't believe I waited 20m for a bus only to have it be delayed by too many busses getting in each others way #Irony #MKTransport #Arriva

@NiallOfficial yeah, thanks for following, tweeting and DM'ing me dude, I really appreciate it. #Sarcasm

@Grassybrit So being "green" could actually make your lawn brown. #irony

Oh wow just got into my dream school #sarcasm http://t.co/rHcjJYRKIi

@Jim_SFCMedia @bigadamsport I for one appreciate your efforts sir, sadly I guess people are taking out their anger at the board on you#not e

Getting pulled over is a great way to start my summer. #not

@gilly619 seriously!! Thanks for putting me in your #grouptext @glennstolen #not 👬👬💔🚌

@ThreeUKSupport will pass on your replies to Hugh Davis in the ex office many thanks for your replies #NOT

A woman worries about the future until she gets a husband. A man never worries about the future until he gets a wife #Irony #Worries #Life 😊

I love the fact that my dad listens to the music when he plays games on his phone. #NOT #SoAnnoying

Waking up to a 4 page cleaning list<<<<<< #greatstarttosummer #not #psychomom

@fsherjan Attention span of a goldfish, not reading ability! #Verbatims #ClearlyYouDidntReadThisClearly #Irony

@thesportsgreek At least the @Mets scored more then the @NYRangers today, so they have that going for them #sarcasm

Going to Jewel around 6:00pm is always an exciting adventure. #sarcasm #patience #stillbetterthanmarianos

I love the fact that no one in my family ever replies to my texts #not

I love working 8 hour shifts when it's nice outside #not

@SknnyME all generalisations are false; but this too is generalisation #irony http://t.co/zIhXc5GPZf

@citygrl903 so clearly it was a start to a beautiful high school career... #not lmao

Note- the #OPC supporters were the only ones who booed a candidate. #classy #not #ottsouthdebate #OttSouth

So I just colored with Ava for an hour. Yeah my summer so far has been so fun 😄 #not

A little birdie told me that some of my graduates are meeting up in Dallas to spend some quality time reading the bible 😊 #NOT

@NaraHodge yeh but u forget he had served 8yrs of those 13 life sentences so he was considered safe #sarcasm lol

Being spoiled doesn't necessarily make you happy. #not #materialistic

@BleacherReport With the way he played this postseason, I bet every team would give the Pacers whatever they want in exchange 4 Hibbert #Not

I just love when you're watching a show with your parents and then there's a sex scene. 🚌 #sarcasm

That would be fucking great #irony "@9GAG: I can't imagine a world without swear words...

Instructions for full-scale study

Name of task: Annotation of tweet messages for evaluative language

Facts: 781 tweet messages in an excel table, 1 message/line

Definition of evaluative language:

7. the speaker's attitude, emotional reaction, stance, judgement
8. it can be a single lexical item, or a string of words (no more than 4!) but NOT whole sentences (see examples below)
9. expression(s) whose connotation is either good or bad (positive or negative) (see examples below)

Guidelines:

- first, read the tweets one by one and look for evaluative language in them. Focus only on the tweet itself.
- For example: adjectives: it's terrible, splendid

    adverbs: unfortunately, necessarily

    nouns: he is a success, tragedy

    verbs: win, I doubt that

- then, you have several options:

a) if you've found the evaluative expression(s), enclose them in [[double square brackets]]

b) if you think the tweet doesn't have any evaluative expression(s), the evaluative expression(s) appear(s) with a hashtag#, or you're unsure if there is any evaluation redden column B (i.e. the tweet)

- use column D for any remark you may have

- sample annotation for your reference:

example 1: Why is it, that keeping something 'safe' is [[so dangerous]]!? I can never find anything again. #irony

example 2: Michelle Obama is having lunch next door to my office. [[It's had zero affect]] on traffic or one's ability to cross the street. #sarcasm

example 3: [[Can't wait]] for Benfica next week. #FCPorto #Sarcasm

example 4: [[I love it]] when @finnsonator random friend @little_dyl99 rapes my twitter during a movie #thanks #not #gtfo

example 5: You refuse to go the night market because you don't want to be perceived as cheap but you're asking me where to get cheap stuff #irony (no single lexical item or string of words carries the evaluation here)

example 6: Just saw an undercover Seattle police officer driving an escape pull someone over. #irony (no single lexical item or string of words carries the evaluation here)

example 7: So having a black car and black leather seat... I burned my legs on the seat when I got in and sat down. #awesome #not (the evaluation appears with a hashtag (#awesome))

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