

IRONY, HYPERBOLE, JOKES AND BANTER

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In the last ten or fifteen years, following the collapse of the traditional definition of irony as a matter of saying one thing and meaning the opposite, a range of disparate phenomena including hyperbole, banter, understatement, jokes and rhetorical questions have been commonly treated as forms of irony in the experimental literature. Drawing on recent work by Wilson and Sperber (2012a; Wilson 2013), I will argue that these phenomena are not inherently ironical, display none of the distinctive features of irony in most of their uses, and should not be seen as falling within the scope of an explanatory theory of irony.

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