

# Irony and metonymy at the crossroads: An analysis of echoing

Inés Lozano Palacio

*Universitat Politècnica de València*

The notion of *echo* was introduced for the first time by Relevance Theory in their approach to irony (Sperber & Wilson, 1981). Since then, echoing has awakened interest mostly in relevance-theoretic analyses of irony, which have set the echoic account of language in contraposition to other accounts, like Clark and Gerrig's (1984) Pretense Theory (Wilson, 2006; see also Wilson & Sperber, 2012), but also in Cognitive Linguistics (e.g., Ruiz de Mendoza & Galera, 2014; Ruiz de Mendoza, 2017; Lozano & Ruiz de Mendoza, 2022). Within Cognitive Linguistics, and specifically, within cognitive modeling, echoing is understood as a cognitive operation. In this view, echoing is a core operation of the construction of a pretended agreement scenario that clashes with the observable reality, thus giving rise to an attitudinal element later parametrized contextually (Ruiz de Mendoza & Lozano, 2019ab; Lozano & Ruiz de Mendoza, 2022). For instance, A's ironic utterance *It's never sunny in Helsinki* when a heatwave is taking over the country features an echoed scenario built on the basis of epistemic knowledge about weather conditions in Helsinki, and it clashes with the observable reality of the heatwave hitting the country. In this context, A expresses an attitude of dissociation towards his or her previously held belief about Helsinki having a very cold and cloudy weather. Recent research on the topic has unveiled several strategies that endow the ironic echo with complexity. These include echoic cumulation, echoic chains or multi-operational echoes (i.e., the combination of echoes that link two or more figures of speech). In this case, irony very often appears jointly to other figures of speech, namely hyperbole, metaphor and metonymy. This study will address the multi-operational echoes that include irony and metonymy. These echoes are typically used to reach a wider audience. For instance, let us take Sophocles' tragedy *Oedipus the King*, where the main character stands for mankind. In the play, by building an irony through Oedipus' actions, the playwright is building an irony whose echo is a metonymic one. In this context, the study of multi-operational echoes within echoic complexity unveils key aspects of the relationship between different figures of speech in general and metonymy and irony in particular.