

Compound figures: priority and speech-act structure

Mihaela Popa-Wyatt¹

© Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2016

Abstract Compound figures are a rich, and under-explored area for tackling fundamental issues in philosophy of language. This paper explores new ideas about how to explain some features of such figures. We start with an observation from Stern (2000) that in ironic-metaphor, metaphor is logically prior to irony in the structure of what is communicated. Call this thesis *Logical-MPT*. We argue that a speech-act-based explanation of Logical-MPT is to be preferred to a content-based explanation. To create this explanation we draw on Barker's (2004) expressivist speech-act theory, in which speech-acts build on other speech-acts to achieve the desired communicative effects. In particular, we show how Barker's general ideas explain metaphor as an assertive-act, and irony as a ridiculing-act. We use Barker's notion of *proto-illocutionary-acts* to show how metaphorical-acts and ironic-acts can build one on the other. Finally, we show that while an ironic-act can build on a metaphorical-act, a metaphorical-act cannot build on an ironic-act. This restriction on how they can be composed establishes Logical-MPT via a different route.

Keywords Metaphor · Irony · Ironic-metaphor · Metaphor-priority thesis · Embedding · Proto-illocutionary-acts · Speech-act composition

1 Ironic metaphor

Figurative utterances challenge many aspects of mainstream theories of meaning. The utterances considered by philosophers of language are typically uses of a single figure, either in a self-standing utterance, or embedded inside a more complex

✉ Mihaela Popa-Wyatt
Popa.michaela@gmail.com; mihaela.popa@ub.edu

¹ LOGOS, Department of Philosophy, University of Barcelona, Carrer Montalegre, 6-8, Barcelona, Spain

utterance.¹ There are, however, some nice examples of two different types of figure occurring within a single utterance (Stern 2000; Bezuidenhout 2001; Barker 2004; Camp 2006, 2012; Popa 2009, 2010). This paper is concerned with giving an account of these *dual-figure* uses, and unpacking the implications they have. Consider (1), uttered about a messy piece of handwriting (Stern 2000):

(1) What delicate lacework!

This utterance combines metaphor with irony: the referent is a piece of handwriting not a piece of lacework; and the utterance is a mocking pretence rather than a serious remark. We refer to this as an ironic-metaphor compound. This is an instance of a *figurative compound* that draws on both meanings, though it can't be reduced to either. This is subtly different to a compound sentence such as 'X and Y', where X might be ironic and Y metaphorical. For example (2), said about a person who is bullying their friend to get what he wants:

(2) Oh yes, the meeting went brilliantly, she flayed them alive.

Utterance (1) is different from (2) because in (1) the very same word 'lacework' is interpreted both metaphorically and ironically, with one interpretation nested inside the other. In this paper we are interested in nested, rather than non-nested, compounds. Grice (1965/1989) was the first to point out that such nested compounds require a *determinate order of interpretation*. He notes that the utterance:

(3) [*angry wife to her husband*] You're the cream in my coffee.

is first interpreted metaphorically, and only then ironically. I refer to this ordering, or priority, claim as a *Metaphor Priority Thesis (MPT)*. Several different types of MPT claim are possible, as shown by a brief examination of Stern (2000).

The type of MPT considered by Stern (2000: 235) is a question that "... concerns the logical order of interpretation. Do we first interpret the utterance metaphorically and only then determine its ironic interpretation? Or do we first determine the ironic interpretation ... and then determine the metaphorical interpretation of the contrary expression?" He emphasizes that, "The question is not one of temporal order or of actual psychological processing (although it may have implications for these); the issue is rather whether one interpretation is conditioned on the other." Thus we can distinguish two different possible priority claims: Logical-MPT (one interpretation is conditioned on the other) and Temporal-MPT (one is typically processed before the other).² I am concerned, as Stern is, with the former. Logical-MPT can be expressed as follows:

¹ For example, metaphor embeds in a conditional's antecedent: "If music be the food of love, then play on" (Shakespeare). Irony too embeds in a conditional's antecedent: "If Bill has been such a fine friend, you shouldn't speak to him again". We discuss embedded irony in Sect. 5.

² For discussion of empirical evidence supporting Temporal-MPT, see Popa (2009) and references therein. However, with a proper understanding of the speech-acts structure underlying such compounds, the psychological reality is much more complex than a sequential MPT-thesis might initially lead us to believe.

Logical-MPT: Metaphor is *prior* to irony in the sense that in the logical order of interpretation, the metaphorical content *must* come first

I follow Stern and Bezuidenhout in taking this priority ordering as uncontroversial. Where I disagree with them is in explaining why Logical-MPT is the case. Both Stern and Bezuidenhout use Logical-MPT as the starting point for arguments that irony and metaphor are markedly different types of figure, which—as a shorthand—I will refer to as their *distinctiveness* from one another. As we'll see, this distinctiveness between metaphor and irony isn't in question, but the way in which we explain that distinctiveness is. Essentially, both Stern and Bezuidenhout explain distinctiveness in terms of content-types. For Stern, there are really two different classes of figures: metaphorical-style tropes that are semantic, and ironic-style tropes that are post-semantic. Bezuidenhout explains the difference in terms of metaphor being pragmatic yet still truth-conditional content, while irony is implicature.³

Instead of focusing on *content* distinctiveness, I will develop an account of the *structure of the illocutionary-acts* a speaker makes, explained in terms of the distinctiveness of these illocutionary-acts and how they are layered within the speech-act structure of the compound. This will be an expressivist speech-act account. I contend it has two advantages over content-based accounts of compound figures. The first is that it gives an account of the role of attitude-expression in irony. It does this by showing that attitude is constitutive of what it is to make ironic-acts, but that neither ironic attitude nor ironic content can be extracted as a propositional content from the ironic-act. Instead we should understand irony in terms of an illocutionary-act, where there is no separation of content from act. The second advantage is that it works as an account of the structure of the communicative-acts the speaker is undertaking through a compound figure, not just as an account of the structure of its content.

We first consider in more detail the content-based theories that Stern and Bezuidenhout propose. We then reconsider the evidence for Logical-MPT, now taking into account the attitude expression central to irony. This leads us to consider an account based on Barker's (2004) expressivist speech-act theory.

2 Content-based theories of Logical-MPT

We now consider in a little more detail the arguments of Stern (2000) and Bezuidenhout (2001) for a content-based way of drawing the distinction between metaphor and irony. Stern's primary concern is with the nature of metaphor as being

³ Bezuidenhout adopts a widely assumed Gricean account of irony as *conversational implicature*—i.e. implicitly communicated content that is conveyed by means of acts of saying (or making-as-if-to-say). Ironic speakers are taken to convey some inverted content to what they say or make-as-if-to-say.

semantic.⁴ It is as part of this endeavour that he makes a claim for the marked difference between it and irony.⁵ Specifically, Logical-MPT is part of Stern's argument that metaphor and irony belong to two distinct families of figures (M-type and I-type). If M-type and I-type were the same, he argues, then we should expect freedom as to how they might be logically ordered. Since Logical-MPT seems to hold in the data, the explanation is that they must be distinct in such a way that I-type figures depend on M-type figures.

Stern's (2000: 238) explanation of this dependence is as follows: "(M)-type figures are semantic interpretations, interpretations determined by the semantic structure of the language; whereas (I)-type figures are post-semantic". To be absolutely clear what he means by "post-semantic" Stern continues by identifying irony as pragmatic: "it should be clear there is good reason not to draw an inference from the pragmatic status of irony to a similar conclusion for metaphor".

It's also important to dig a little deeper into how Stern sees M-type figures. Stern distinguishes two elements in metaphorical meaning: (i) *metaphorical character*—the rule that determines for each metaphorical expression, in each context of utterance, what the content of the expression is in that context; and (ii) *metaphorical content*—the propositional or truth-conditional content, as determined in context, corresponding to each metaphorical expression. Whereas Stern allows that metaphorical content varies with context as a matter of *pragmatics*, he takes this variation to be controlled by *semantics*. This is so because he takes metaphorical interpretation or use of an expression to be lexicalized through a lexical (unpronounced) operator, *Mthat*, at the level of logical form. The semantic rule for *Mthat* is:

Mthat: When prefixed to a (literal) expression \emptyset , 'Mthat' yields a context-sensitive metaphorical expression 'Mthat[\emptyset]' whose tokens in each context c express a set of properties presupposed in c to be m(etaphorically)-associated with the expression \emptyset , such that the proposition $\langle \dots \{ \text{Mthat}[\emptyset] \} (c) \dots \rangle$ is either true or false at a circumstance. (2011: 289)

For Stern, *Mthat* not only encodes that a metaphorical expression is context-sensitive but it constrains the range of possible interpretations that can be contextually generated—i.e. by constraining interpreters to map the metaphorically associated properties of \emptyset in c into a subset of properties that determines the truth-value of the utterance in c . In other words, *Mthat* captures the metaphor's context-

⁴ To understand Stern's emphasis on the semantic nature of metaphor it's useful to bear in mind these passages from his preface to Stern (2000). "I hope to show how a semantic theory can constructively inform our understanding of metaphor." (pp. xiv), and "I am concerned primarily with one question: Given the (more or less) received conception of the form and goals of semantic theory, does metaphorical interpretation, in whole or part, fall within its scope?" (pp. xiv), and "I cannot assume ... that metaphor lies within the scope of semantics ... Although I shall address various objections to the semantic status of metaphor ... my strongest evidence will consist in the semantic explanations I propose as working hypotheses." (pp. xv).

⁵ "I now want to turn to a difference between them [metaphor and irony] that points to their having distinct semantic statuses" (Stern 2000: 235).

dependence in terms of a non-constant function that determines different contents in different contexts. For example, ‘sun’ is interpreted in ‘Juliet is the *sun*’ and ‘Achilles is the *sun*’ as being beautiful and worthy of worship when predicated of Juliet, and being full of rage and anger when predicated of Achilles, whereby the relevant difference in context is due to different metaphorical properties raised to salience. Mthat thus prevents over-generation of the pragmatically determined metaphorical properties. Restricting them to only those that contribute to the utterance’s truth-conditions. Thus, by placing metaphorical content within the scope of Mthat, Stern aims to separate systematic constraints on metaphoric interpretations as part of our linguistic knowledge, from what varies in the determination of the metaphorical content according to context.

Applied to ironic-metaphor, this semantic conception of metaphor explains why metaphor must be prior to irony. For Stern (2000: 237), metaphor and irony employ different interpretive functions. Metaphorical interpretations are semantic operations on sentences that yield propositional contents in their contexts. Ironic interpretations, in contrast, are post-semantic operations on propositional contents to yield (different) propositional contents. Since semantic operations are prior to post-semantic operations, Logical-MPT follows.

However, this explanation for Logical-MPT depends on us accepting Stern’s account of metaphor, which many commentators do not. The arguments against this require more space than is available here, but are discussed at length in Popa (2009).⁶ I will, however, have space here to criticize Stern’s main argument concerning the distinctiveness of metaphor and irony. Bezuidenhout, among others, is skeptical that an Mthat-operator really exists. She lays out a second content-based explanation for Logical-MPT. First, she agrees with Stern that metaphor is truth-conditional but explains it instead in terms of a pragmatic process of fine-tuning or modulating the words’ meanings so that they express more fine-grained (ad hoc) concepts than those conventionally encoded.⁷ Bezuidenhout argues it is a consequence of how ironic-metaphor is interpreted that metaphorical content contributes to what is intuitively said/assorted rather than to what is implicated. This follows from a natural criterion according to which interpretations that serve as *input* for launching further implicatures belong to what is asserted. Bezuidenhout argues that only metaphor meets this criterion since in ironic-metaphor, the metaphorical interpretation is first generated from the particular expressions employed in a sentence, and then launches an ironic implicature.⁸ Since assertion is determined prior to, and inferentially warrants, the implicature-calculation, Logical-MPT follows.

Thus, though Stern and Bezuidenhout present different arguments as to how distinctiveness should be explained in terms of content, there is a similar structure to

⁶ In Popa (2009: 193–201) I offer a critical evaluation of the two main arguments Stern has made in favour of his semantic view of metaphor [the “Ellipsis” argument (Stern 2006: 257–261; 70), and the “Actual Context Constraint” argument (Stern 2000: 212)]. For detailed objections, see Camp (2006), among others.

⁷ See Carston (2002), Recanati (2004), Wearing (2013), among others.

⁸ Camp (2006) criticizes this criterion; for a response, see Popa (2009).

their arguments. First, they both take as evident from the data that in ironic-metaphor, metaphor must be logically prior to irony. Second, they both say that this priority can be explained in terms of content-types. Third, they both allocate content-types to metaphor and irony such that the content-type of irony depends logically on the content-type of metaphor. This content-type dependence thus explains the data, and so the data is taken to be supportive of the particular content-type distinctiveness claimed. I refer to such strategies as *content-based explanations for Logical-MPT*.

Although plausible, these content-based arguments do have some problems as a way of explaining Logical-MPT. To begin with, Stern's position that metaphor is semantic is controversial. Yet we have to accept it in order to obtain a clear distinction between metaphor and irony. Even if we accept his position on metaphor, we must also accept his view that irony is post-semantic. Contra this conclusion, Camp (2012) considers a case that we will discuss later, that one type of irony (lexical sarcasm) may be semantic, in which case the distinction is again dissolved for some cases where we would wish it to hold.

Bezuidenhout's argument, by contrast, allows metaphor to be pragmatic. Her take on metaphor is that metaphorical interpretation is a *free pragmatic process* of modulating the words' meanings so their more fine-tuned meanings contribute to the utterance's truth-conditions. She then allows that irony is an implicature, and so is different from metaphor in that it does not contribute to the utterance's truth-conditions. A difficulty for her is that Barker and Popa-Wyatt (2015) have argued that although irony is non-truth-conditional, it can embed in more complex utterances and therefore affect their truth-conditions (see Levinson 2000; Camp 2012). If irony can also contribute to truth-conditions, this dissolves the distinction between metaphor and irony based on the notion that one contributes to truth-conditions and the other does not.

Thus, in overview, it can at least be agreed that there are a number of positions on the nature of metaphor and irony as kinds of *content*, several of which threaten their distinctiveness. It may be that these difficulties for content-based theories can be resolved. But if we need to establish the distinction between metaphor and irony as a way of explaining Logical-MPT, are there not other ways to do so? The answer lies in the fact that there is one important aspect missing from both content-based explanations for Logical-MPT we have considered. Neither considers that irony is primarily about expressing an attitude, but attitude cannot be extracted as a propositional content. This insight leads us to a non-content-based way of drawing the distinction. In brief, the central idea is that it can be drawn in terms of the kinds of illocutionary-acts we're making with metaphor and irony. With metaphor we undertake primary illocutionary-acts such as assertions, questions, orders, and the like. With irony, in contrast, we undertake secondary illocutionary-acts such as ridiculing-acts towards primary illocutionary-acts, for example metaphorical acts. Therefore the assertion, or other primary illocutionary-act, must come before the act that ridicules it. This will provide an alternative explanation to Logical-MPT—an explanation in terms of the *structure of the illocutionary-acts* undertaken with metaphor and irony, and how they are layered one inside the other. We'll start by re-examining the data that support Logical-MPT.

3 Re-visiting evidence for Logical-MPT

First, let's return to see how the data motivates Logical-MPT. To do this, consider (1) again. Why believe that the order of interpretation must be metaphor-first, and not irony-first? The answer is that, as Stern (2000: 236) argues, it's hard to find an irony-first/metaphor-second interpretation that yields the intended compound meaning. What possible ironic interpretation of 'lacework' taken literally is there such that under a subsequent metaphorical interpretation it is conveyed that the handwriting is illegible? There doesn't seem to be one. Clearly, the speaker is not mocking the idea that the handwriting is real lacework.

An irony-first proponent might try to address this by constraining the ironic interpretation in (1) to operate on a restricted subset of the properties associated with 'lacework'—say, delicacy, intricacy, artistry, craft—that will subsequently give rise to the metaphor. But that is MPT by the back door: irony isn't grasped without some prior metaphoric understanding. For this example, it could also be argued that the word 'delicate' is the only one that is interpreted ironically, and that the metaphorical content of 'lacework' thus sits alongside, rather than being input to, the ironic content. But that position, while plausible, would mean that metaphor and irony sit alongside one another, rather than building one on top of the other in a nested compound. This would yield a combination of disjoint figures as in (2), not a nested compound. In any event, there are plenty of examples for which this explanation can't hold.

- (4) [*of a terrible orator*] Norman really is God's fountain pen, isn't he.
(Soames 2006)

In this case there is no possible restricted set of literal interpretations to feed to irony. It is simply not possible to think that what the speaker is ironic about here is that Norman is literally God's fountain pen. The point of the irony is to highlight that the metaphorical content is inappropriate given the circumstances—here that Norman is a fine orator.

Cases like these show that for irony to get off the ground, the metaphor must, at least sometimes, already be in place. This supports a *Weak-Logical-MPT*—that in most ironic-metaphor compounds, the metaphor must be logically prior, but in minority of cases this needn't be so. Can the order ever go the other way? Stern allows for an *indeterminate* order of interpretation when metaphor is conventionalised, thus allowing that irony can be prior in those cases. But in fact, even in those cases, irony-first doesn't always yield the intended compound meaning. Consider the following sarcastic comment on Andy Murray's lack of sex appeal:

- (5) Andy Murray is hot.

On irony-first, 'hot' is first inverted ironically to physical properties of 'coldness' and these are then most naturally reinterpreted metaphorically as psychological properties: unfriendly, unemotional, un-passionate. But this is not what is intended with (5). The problem is that the metaphorical interpretation of the ironic inversion ('cold')—say, 'unemotional'—doesn't match in an opposing way the ironic

inversion of a typical conventionalised metaphor of ‘hot’—say, ‘sexy’—in order to yield the intended compound (‘unsexy’). Thus, *metaphor-first* yields the intended compound, and *irony-first* gives the wrong one. This is because metaphor changes the conceptual space that is being used for interpretation. In this case, it moves it from a physical conceptual space (temperature) to one about sexual attractiveness. Irony merely moves us to some contrastive position within the current space. But where we are in the current (in this case literal) conceptual space affects hugely to which other conceptual space metaphor will move us. Thus, by making the first move with irony within the literal space (temperature) we change the conceptual space to which the metaphor will map us (from sexual attraction to emotional character).⁹

There is, however, a much more important problem for irony-first. This is that the irony-first proposal cannot predict the right attitude associated with the compound. On irony-first, the compound is overall metaphorical (more like simple metaphor), whereas on metaphor-first the compound is primarily ironic (more like simple irony). To see this consider another example of ironic metaphor from Stern:

(6) [*of an ineffectual politician*] He’s a towering figure.

Stern’s claim is that the order is indeterminate in the sense that a hearer will come to the same overall content regardless of whether the logical order of interpretation is metaphor-first or irony-first. This is correct, but it ignores the import of attitude, which is absolutely central to irony.¹⁰ To see both points compare (6) to two non-compound utterances, (A) is simple irony:

| | | |
|-----|-----------|----------------------------------------------|
| (A) | Utterance | He’s <i>impressive</i> |
| | Irony | He’s <i>unimpressive</i> [+ ironic attitude] |

and (B), which is simple metaphor:

| | | |
|-----|-----------|----------------------------------------------|
| (B) | Utterance | He’s not a <i>towering figure</i> |
| | Metaphor | He’s <i>unimpressive</i> [– ironic attitude] |

Clearly (6) is more like (A) than (B). Why? Although the same content is conveyed in (A) and (B), only in (A), the simple irony, are we expressing mockery towards someone thinking the politician is really influential. This suggests that ironic-metaphor is more like irony, than metaphor, in terms of the attitude expressed. In

⁹ Might there be another literal meaning of ‘hot’ that can be inverted ironically and lead to the right metaphorical interpretation? The clear answer here is no. The only other recorded *literal* use of ‘hot’ is to mean spicy (as regarding food), the antonym for this is ‘mild’ which then simply has a second literal interpretation as ‘of mild character’, i.e. someone not disposed to strong emotion.

¹⁰ Wilson (2006) and Currie (2006) strongly advocate reducing the point of irony to merely expressing dissociative attitudes, say, ridiculing, mocking, disparaging attitudes towards the thought evoked by the utterance. They disagree about how this thought is evoked—say, by *echoing* the content of someone else’s thought/utterance, or by *pretending* to be someone else with a defective stance about the world. For an integrated account, see Popa-Wyatt (2014).

other words, the compound is an *irony-driven compound* since it retains ironic attitude as part of its overall communicative goal. This is consistent with the following order of interpretation of (6):

(A*) *Metaphor-first proposal*

| | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Utterance | He's a towering figure |
| Metaphor: | He's <i>impressive</i> |
| Irony: | He's <i>unimpressive</i> [+ ironic attitude about <i>Metaphor</i>] |

but not with

(B*) *Irony-first proposal*

| | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Utterance | He's a towering figure |
| Irony: | He's a <i>diminutive figure</i> |
| Metaphor: | He is <i>unimpressive</i> [– ironic attitude] |

I would argue that, while (A*) and (B*) deliver the same content, (A*) preserves the ironic attitude as part of the whole compound, whereas (B*) does not: the attitude is lost. Why? What is targeted ironically in (B*) is a literal claim about physical tallness. But this is surely not what is ironically mocked in (6). On irony-first, the attitude gets the wrong target. Even though the ironic content ('*diminutive figure*') may be further re-interpreted metaphorically, no such manoeuvre is available for ironic attitude. There is no metaphorical re-interpretation of the attitude, and there is no other way of preserving the attitude as part of the whole compound. But losing the ironic attitude means losing the irony as part of what is communicated with the whole compound. It seems uncomfortable therefore to accept (B*) as a sensible interpretation of (6), even though the metaphor at hand is highly conventionalised. This suggests that a *Strong-Logical-MPT* holds—namely, that in *all* cases of ironic-metaphor, metaphor *must* be logically prior to irony. A solely content-based theory cannot enforce this, since it cannot prefer either (A*) or (B*). We will develop this point in the next section, where we will push home the point that attitude-expression is essential to ironic utterances (and thus to irony-based compound figures).

In this section, we've re-examined evidence for the proposal that metaphor has logical priority (Logical-MPT) in the interpretation of compound figures. While agreeing with Stern on the basics, I've held to the stronger position that even compounds with highly conventionalised metaphor follow Logical-MPT in terms of content-determination. Second, and crucial for the purposes of this paper, I've argued that evidence from the role of ironic attitude in compounds is also consistent with Logical-MPT, but inconsistent with the irony-first view. But although attitude is connected to the ironic content, Logical-MPT doesn't directly concern the attitude, and the content-based explanation for Logical-MPT doesn't either. What we need to develop is a complementary explanation of the role of ironic attitude in

the compound figure. To see this, let's first consider the role that content and attitude play in ironic utterances more generally.

4 Irony: content and attitude

To see the importance of attitude expression in irony, let's examine the following example, taken from (Barker and Popa-Wyatt 2015). Consider Tan's sarcasm, with two alternative responses by Sam:

(7) Tan: Here's George, the walking brain.

Sam¹: OK! It's absurd to think George is a genius: he's the very opposite of one. But we shouldn't be nasty about it.

Sam²: OK! George is *a real genius*. But we shouldn't be nasty about it.

In both cases Sam chides Tan for being sarcastic. However, whereas Sam¹'s utterance is felicitous, Sam²'s is infelicitous. Why are the two utterances different? Both express commitments characteristic of irony:

Irony (I1) Ridicule of a person who believes that *P*, for some contextually given *P*.¹¹
(I2) Belief that [*Invert-P*] is the case.

Clearly, the difference is that between *expressing* irony and *asserting* what would be expressed ironically. On the one hand, Sam¹ *asserts* the content of an attitude, that it's ridiculous to believe that George is a genius (I1), and *asserts* that George is actually an idiot (I2). In contrast, Sam² conveys the same inverted content, but not by asserting it—rather by implicating I2—and also critically by expressing the attitude, rather than merely stating I1.

This difference between asserting and expressing attitude is precisely what renders semantic explanations of irony inadequate. According to a semantic view, irony is propositional (truth-conditional) content. Camp (2012) explores the prospects for a semantic account that explains some forms of irony (lexical sarcasm) as being implemented with a covert semantic operator, *Sarc*,¹² which is realized at surface level by a conventional ironic/sarcastic intonation.¹³ *Sarc* is a

¹¹ The ridicule or derision typically expressed with irony can also be expressed towards oneself, as when I go out in pouring rain and say to myself 'Great!'.

¹² The *Sarc*-operator is not taken by Camp to apply to all ironic utterances. She restricts the *Sarc*-analysis to *lexical sarcasm*—i.e. cases where irony targets only a word or phrase while the rest of the utterance is sincere (e.g. "Your *fine* friend is here"). In addition, Camp claims that irony has a multi-faceted behavior, at times contributing to truth-conditions, at other times doing something else. Here we develop the proposal for the *Sarc*-operator to highlight the inadequacy of content-based approaches. We do not assume that Camp is committed to such approaches.

¹³ For Camp, semanticism about irony is a natural consequence of a semanticist methodology that explains so-called '*weak pragmatic intrusion*' into truth-conditions by postulating covert operators at the level of logical form. Parallel semantic accounts have been proposed to handle quantification (Stanley and Szabó 2000), indicative and subjunctive conditionals (King and Stanley 2005), and metaphor (Stern 2000).

linguistic rule that encodes ironic meaning semantically. The semantic rule for irony can be defined as:

Sarc: When prefixed to a (literal) expression ϕ , Sarc maps the meaning of ϕ onto a set of relevant alternatives or contraries relative to a context c —denoted with $[\text{Invert-}\phi]$ —such that the proposition $\langle \text{Sarc}[\phi] (c) \rangle$ is either true or false

Thus, ironic content enters compositionally into determining S 's truth-conditions. More generally, it can contribute to the speaker's primary illocutionary-acts, say, the content of what is asserted, ordered or asked (Camp 2012: 612). Thus, on Camp's rendering, *Sarc* is captured as follows:

Sarc1: 'Sarc(S)' is true iff $[\text{Invert-}P]$ obtains

This treatment ignores attitude altogether, but let's suppose that by expanding on Camp's *Sarc*-operator idea, we could incorporate the attitude into the truth-conditions of the utterance in this way:

Sarc2: 'Sarc(S)' is true iff (i) believing S is ridiculous/absurd, and (ii) $[\text{Invert-}P]$ obtains

In this new rule, Sarc does at least model the attitude in (i), by treating it as propositional content that can contribute to what is asserted or to the content of primary illocutionary-acts. This is however inadequate, as can be seen in the responses of Sam¹ and Sam² to (7). Sarc-analysis cannot explain the difference between them, since, for the Sarc-analysis, Sam¹'s utterance is *identical in content* to Sam²'s. Sarc-analysis can't explain the difference between when the attitude is expressed and when it is stated. Sam²'s utterance is pragmatically defective because Sam² is doing something that doesn't fit with his commentary: he is doing the very thing—displaying a ridiculing attitude—he explicitly says we should not be doing. The difference between Sam¹ and Sam² is thus a *difference in speech-acts*: whereas Sam² is undertaking an actual performance of an ironic-act, Sam¹ is merely stating that the relevant conditions in *I1–I2* obtain. Sam² is doing irony, but not Sam¹.

We can conclude from this example that irony cannot be *stating* or *asserting* that *I1–I2* hold. Irony must be a kind of *doing* that is not simply *stating* that one has a ridiculing attitude and believes an inverted content. We should instead think of irony as an *illocutionary-act*—a move in a conversational game—which isn't

simply a propositional (truth-conditional) act or assertion. It's a rhetorical form after all. The speaker is engaging in a pretence act that is a ridiculing portrayal of a cognitive state. She is dramatising something, in a ridiculing way, thereby *expressing*, rather than *asserting*, *I1–I2*. Thus, if the speaker engages in this ridiculing act, hearers can infer *I1–I2* as implicatures. By working out these implicatures, ironic attitude and content cannot be reduced to propositional content, however. The speaker is *doing* more than conveying content. She is pretending, dramatising, and expressing a variety of ironic attitudes—mocking, ridiculing, scorning, criticizing, poking fun, teasing—the power and colour of which would be lost if they were reduced to propositional content. These colourful modes of delivering irony are not a mere *vehicle* for conveying propositional content (say, that one has an ironic attitude and an inverted belief), they are integral to the ironic-act. Thus, we cannot separate the *mode of delivery* (the act) from the *content delivered* (the propositional content extracted from the act). In the next section, I'll argue that a speech-act theory that can explain what role *attitude-expression* plays in ironic-acts (whether embedded or used in figurative compounds) will be more appealing in that it should account for the contribution not only of ironic content, but also of ironic attitude.

In this section, I've suggested that we think of irony as an illocutionary-act but where attitude and content are treated as inseparable rather than separate. But if it's an illocutionary-act, it cannot embed. Nevertheless, in the next section we'll see that irony embeds, posing a serious challenge for us. To solve the problem we will utilize a piece of Barker's (2004) expressivist speech-act theory. Essentially, this will allow for a more primitive notion of speech-act—a *proto-illocutionary-act*—that is neither illocutionary nor propositional, but which has features of both. This will help establish what is going on with attitude-expression both in embedding of irony and in ironic-metaphor compounds. This will in turn establish the distinction between metaphor and irony, and thereby Logical-MPT, via a new route.

5 Embedding through proto-illocutionary-acts

We have argued that irony is an illocutionary-act other than mere assertion, precisely because it involves the performance of a ridiculing act that cannot be explained in purely content terms. How then shall we explain the participation of irony in logical compounds? The issue here is what embeds in the compound (i.e., what contributes to the truth-conditions of the complex utterance). On the standard view, irony cannot embed as an illocutionary-act. If we were to follow the SARC solution, then it would at least be able to embed as a propositional (truth-conditional) act. Only the latter can embed in the sense of contributing to the truth-conditions of the complex utterance. To see the contrast, take two utterances, a piece of simple irony in (8), and embedded irony in (9):

- (8) He's *a real genius*!
- (9) If he's *a real genius*, we are in serious trouble.

If it were possible for irony to embed as some kind of illocutionary-act, then we should expect that the same commitments expressed with (8)—*I1–I2*—should also be expressed with (9)—say, respectively, that the speaker is ridiculing someone who believes the man is really clever and implying that he’s a total idiot. But they don’t. In uttering the conditional, the speaker doesn’t incur such commitments. She’s only undertaking such commitments suppositionally—she is presenting *I1–I2* as holding within the scope of the antecedent in order to evaluate the consequent—but she isn’t undertaking them as believed commitments of the whole conditional. Nevertheless, irony is being used when (8) is embedded in (9); it is not quoted since a speaker uttering (9) shows a preparedness to make an ironic-act in the antecedent, so that the whole conditional participates in mockery.

If this is correct, it seems we are in a bind. We cannot treat the ironic attitude and content expressed with (8), when embedded in (9), as a propositional (truth-conditional) act (as we saw with the Sarc-analysis in Sect. 4), and we cannot treat them as part of an illocutionary-act (as we suggested treating irony later in Sect. 4). In fact, traditional speech-act theories are in this bind because they only have two options for treating what speech-acts consist in. Central to these theories is that the content of illocutionary-acts can be divided between a *content*-component and a *force*-component. The content-component (Frege’s ‘*sense*’) is a *propositional act*—i.e. uttering *S* with propositional (truth/false-assessable) content $\langle P \rangle$. The force-component is *S*’s *illocutionary force*—i.e. uttering *S* to perform different illocutionary-acts, like assertions, orders, questions, where illocutionary forces are analysed as communicative intentions with which *S* is uttered. Given the content/force distinction, we can perform different illocutionary-acts by applying *different* illocutionary forces to the *same* propositional act $\langle P \rangle$. Thus, self-standing acts like asserting $\langle P \rangle$, ordering $\langle P \rangle$, asking $\langle P \rangle$, are made up of forces added to propositions. One of the motivations for this reductionist impulse of separating content from force (or act) is to maintain a neat compositionality that operates only on the propositional act (or truth-conditional content), and no other content or force. Doing so, however, requires stripping away the richness of communicative-acts to extract a *common kind of content*—propositional content—that a wide variety of illocutionary-acts operate on. But not all kinds of communicative-acts are amenable to such reduction without loss of the intimate connection between content and act characteristic of an illocutionary-act. Figurative speech is a case in point.

Let’s return to see how this plays out in the embedding of figures like irony. If we are right that irony is an illocutionary-act, and that attitude and content are an integral part of it and cannot be separated (as suggested in Sect. 4), then it’s hard to see how content-based theories can explain the participation of attitude and content in complex utterances. It’s here that a reconceptualising of speech-acts will help us—one that allows speech-acts to compose into more complex speech-acts while preserving the intimate connection between content and act. One such candidate speech-act theory is that developed by Barker (2004). This will help us by making room for a more primitive notion of speech-act, that is neither illocutionary nor propositional, but which has features of both. This is Barker’s notion of a *proto-illocutionary-act* (for short *proto-act*). A key property of proto-acts is that they can

compose, and that the connection between content and act is maintained at this level.

Let's start, however, with self-standing illocutionary-acts. Central to Barker's expressivist speech-act theory is the idea that illocutionary-acts are acts in which speakers utter sentences and express mental states. The kind of mental state expressed determines the kind of illocutionary-act performed. Let's first look at a simple example: assertion. In a somewhat Brandomian (1983) vein, Barker takes assertions or saying-acts to be acts in which we express dispositions to provide reasons for certain mental states. Call this *defending* a mental state. Thus, an assertion expresses a disposition to *defend* a mental state *P*—for simplicity, let *P* be a belief with content $\langle P \rangle$ —by indicating reasons for *P*. The purpose of assertion is thus to manifest a defensive stance with respect to *P*, by showing how *P* relates to other mental states that can be taken as reasons for it. This somewhat schematic depiction of assertion will do for our purposes here. The key point for our argument is that assertions differ from implicating-acts in the following way. An implicating-act merely *indicates* a mental state, *P*, without expressing a disposition to *defend* *P*. Though obviously the speaker has reasons for *P*, it is not built into the purpose of an implicating-act to *defend* *P* by providing reasons for it when challenged. In Barker's (2014) words, implicating-acts have no “call to dialectical arms”. Saying-acts or assertions, when grounded in the speaker's doxastic (belief) states, are thus truth-apt, whereas implicating-acts are never truth-apt.¹⁴

Now what of embedding? To explain embedding of speech-acts, Barker appeals to *proto-illocutionary-acts*. These can embed. They are neutral acts that underpin both self-standing utterances and embedded utterances. For Barker, a proto-illocutionary-act is the most primitive speech-act by which one *presents oneself* as having an intention to make an illocutionary-act such as an assertion, order, question, etc. More generally, by presenting oneself as doing something, say an act *A*, one need not have the intention to *A*. It is enough if one is intentionally engaging in a behaviour characteristic of someone who intends to *A*. Doing so isn't doing *A* though. It's a kind of playing where one behaves consistently with the way one would if one were doing *A*, because doing so is a means to achieve some further goals, which later on may, or may not, include doing *A*. Thus, a proto-act-*A* may be used to support a full-fledged act of *A*, or it may be used to achieve other related *A*-acts.

For example, take *proto-assertion*—the most basic proto-act corresponding to assertion. In proto-asserting, a speaker (*U*) utters a sentence in a way that is consistent with having the intention to make an assertion, say, to defend a mental state *P*. Proto-assertion is neutral though: it can be used to support either sincere assertion (when *U* has the disposition to defend *P*), or insincere assertion (when she lacks the disposition, yet she doesn't communicate that she lacks it). Proto-assertion is not deception, however, because it doesn't involve commitment—*U* *does* communicate through various cues (or context may make it manifest) that she lacks

¹⁴ Truth-aptness here is inherited from the *defensive stance* with respect to the state expressed. Assertions are defensive-acts; implicating-acts are not.

the intention she presents herself as having. In that regard, proto-assertion, and proto-acts more generally, might be said to be *doxastically ungrounded*—i.e. U need not have the mental states she’s advertising through the acts she’s making.

It is this doxastic neutrality that is key in explaining how proto-acts may serve as building blocks to construct more complex speech-acts out of more basic ones in a compositional sort of way—in the sense that speech-acts may have as part of their structure more basic speech-acts. Being acts of presenting speech-act intentions, proto-acts are fit for fulfilling a wide variety of communicative intentions. For example, proto-assertion may be put in the service of making literal assertions but also non-literal assertions (e.g. metaphor as we’ll see below), and these acts in turn may serve to achieve further communicative goals (e.g. when metaphor is used to achieve ironic purposes). This utility of proto-acts for many different communicative aims is what makes them useful. All theories of language need to account for the re-usability of the elements of production: the fact that I can use the same sequence of symbols (e.g. words, sentences, proto-acts) for many different purposes. Thus, all theories of language must have, at some level, re-useable building blocks. The motivation for proto-acts in an expressivist speech-act account of language is precisely that they are the most basic building blocks for speech-acts. So while proto-acts are useful for solving our problem of embedding of figures, and compound figures as we’ll see later, they are motivated by much more general concerns. We now show how this idea of proto-acts is critical in explaining how irony embeds in logical compounds, and in the next section how metaphor embeds inside irony to yield compound figures.

Let’s return to irony embedded in a conditional like (9). First of all, by uttering the antecedent ironically, U is not performing a full-blooded ironic-act. Rather, she’s making a *proto-ironic-act*. How does she do that? She’s displaying an ironic behaviour by doing whatever ironic speakers usually do—say, using exaggerated voice-stress, non-linguistic cues (rolling eyes, ironic smile, mimicking gestures) to signal that she dissociates herself from whatever she appears to be doing in the antecedent. The proto-ironic-act works as a presentation of ironic behaviour in the antecedent, because the speech-act structure of the proto-ironic-act is also present in self-standing ironic-acts as in (8). We can represent this common speech-act structure thus:

Proto-Ironic-Act In uttering S, U intentionally:

- (i) engages in the behaviour characteristic of someone who defends <The man is really clever> (the behaviour of someone making a literal assertion) (*proto-assertion*);
- (ii) signals that she lacks the intention presented in (i), and that she performs (i) with the intention to *ridicule* someone who would defend that the man is clever (*proto-ironic-act*)

In both (8) and (9), the proto-ironic-act builds on a literal proto-assertion in (i), as the most basic speech-act-layer, which is then incorporated in a proto-ironic-act in (ii). However, whereas in (8) U communicates that she *has* the intention presented in (ii)—ridiculing the belief state advertised in (i)—in (9) she signals that she lacks

this intention. Thus, whereas in (8) the ironic-act is a full-fledged one, it is only a proto-ironic-act in (9). However, this is sufficient to display characteristic commitments of irony in the antecedent of (9), thus locating the ridiculing attitude in the antecedent. This is something content-based theories cannot explain. U's purpose in (9) is not to undertake any of those beliefs/attitudes in (I1)–(I2) as part of the commitments with the whole conditional, but rather to put them in the service of achieving other goals.¹⁵ The proto-ironic-act is used here as a basis for achieving a more complex speech-act with the conditional—by showing how characteristic commitments of irony in the antecedent can ground, together with background assumptions, the commitments associated with the consequent.

We've thus explained how irony can participate in more complex utterances. This is an account, not in terms of content, but in terms of speech-act structure. A proto-ironic-act isn't however reducible to a propositional act—neither to the literal truth-conditions of the embedded sentence, nor to their ironic inversion. Rather, a proto-ironic-act carries a *trace of the illocutionary-act* we're making with full-blooded ironic-acts—say, giving a ridiculing-portrayal of someone's belief states—since even at the level of proto-acts, content and act are inseparable. Thus, in virtue of uttering the embedded sentence under a ridiculing-act, U is able to put characteristic ironic commitments to further use, even though she's not undertaking them here and then. To drive this point home, we can see that a conditional like (9) with an ironic antecedent—"If he is a real genius, we are in serious trouble"—followed by saying "But we shouldn't be mocking him" is infelicitous. This is because the irony embedded in the antecedent carries a trace of the ironic illocutionary act of ridiculing, so the infelicity here parallels that in the utterance made by Sam² in response (7).

Using a proto-acts theory, we've explained embedding while avoiding the pressure of having to qualify irony either as a purely illocutionary or propositional act. As a type of speech-act, the proto-ironic-act carries with it expression of both attitude and content via the characteristic ironic behaviours the speaker is displaying through the embedded sentence, so that both take part in complex utterances.

6 Metaphor and its role in ironic compounds

We've seen that proto-acts help us explain, in terms of speech-act structure, how irony can embed in logical compounds—namely, as proto-ironic-acts. In this section, I'll show that proto-acts are also useful in explaining how metaphor can

¹⁵ A proto-ironic-act is not an *illocutionary-act type*—an illocutionary-act type is normally produced by a self-standing ironic-act that is not tokened (see Camp and Hawthorne 2008). Camp and Hawthorne argue that sarcastic utterances prefixed with "like" have as their semantic value an illocutionary-act-type of denial. This is an interesting insight about those cases, however their notion of illocutionary-act-type does not apply to the cases discussed in this paper. Further, it remains unclear from their analysis what it is for an illocutionary-act-type to semantically express a "force/proposition complex without committing oneself to it" (2008: 13). Another idea is to say that some kind of illocutionary-act is performed but its force is cancelled (see Hanks 2007). Barker and Popa-Wyatt (2015: 6–7) argue that the cancellation-notion remains far from clear. They also show that trying to make sense of the idea of an illocutionary-act-type in terms of an *indicating* relation faces serious questions.

come in the scope of irony to form a compound figure and what role metaphor plays therein. First, we'll use this speech-act approach to establish the distinction between metaphor and irony as a way of explaining Logical-MPT.

6.1 Distinctiveness and Logical-MPT

Irony involves essentially a *pretence-act of ridiculing* ways of thinking, being, and behaving that are seen as defective by the speaker. Metaphor, in contrast, involves essentially an act of *describing* how things are in the world, thus presenting them in a new, evocative light. How do metaphorical speakers do this? The dictum from the literature is that metaphor is fundamentally a matter of evoking similarities in thinking about one thing in terms of another. Thus a metaphor of the form '*a is F*' involves presenting the world as being a certain way, say *F*-way, only in order to describe *a* as being *F-like*—where *F-like* brings about a fresh way of seeing how *a* counts as being *F*. Metaphors thus extend our capacity to *describe* things, by allowing us to *see similarities* between distinct conceptual domains.

How shall we characterize the kinds of acts we're performing with metaphor and irony? In terms of the speech-act framework sketched in Sect. 5, both metaphor and irony are *modes of speech* that are non-literal. They are alike in that both involve uttering a sentence *S* to make a literal proto-assertion *P*—whereby *U* utters *S*, engaging in the behavior characteristic of someone defending *P*, while indicating that she lacks this intention. Where metaphor and irony differ is in the *mode-of-interpretation* this proto-assertion undergoes—that is, what further communicative goals the proto-assertion is used to achieve.

A metaphorical mode-of-interpretation involves using a proto-assertion *P* in order to express a *related* mental state *P**—where *P** is derived by the process (whatever it is) that governs metaphor.¹⁶ For example, I may utter '*What a delicate lacework*' to comment metaphorically on my grandma's beautiful handwriting. In doing so I seek to convey that a representational complex $\langle a \text{ is } P^* \rangle$ obtains—say, that I believe that certain metaphorical *P**-properties like delicacy, artistry, craft, elegance, etc. hold about my grandma's handwriting, and that literal *P*-properties such as containing holes, or being made of thread, don't. Importantly, this *related-state* expressed with metaphor inherits the *defensive stance* characteristic of the proto-assertion on which it builds. In being metaphorical I'm disposed to defend that certain *P**-metaphorical properties hold in a given context, by showing why I believe a given metaphorical description to be a true one. For example, I may provide you with reasons for why I think my grandma's handwriting is delicate by showing how delicacy is related to properties we believe to hold of lacework. This is what makes metaphor *truth-apt*, and thus open for dispute.

Irony, in contrast, is not open for dispute in the same way metaphor is. This is because an ironic mode-of-interpretation involves using a proto-assertion *P*, neither to

¹⁶ The audience must determine the range of properties *P**, and here metaphor theories differ about the exact processes through which metaphorical content is derived—that is, whether *P** involves weakening the denotation of literal-*P*, or rather transforming *P*-properties such that they apply to *a*. I'm not concerned with these issues here, but rather with the speech-act structure of metaphoric-acts.

defend its characteristic commitments nor characteristic commitments to its inversion. Rather, U is using the proto-assertion—thus invoking characteristic commitments of someone defending P —as object for ridicule with a view to expressing disparagement towards such defensive speech-acts and a belief that [*Invert P*] holds. Clearly, U is not asserting the disparaging attitude and inverted belief; she is merely *indicating* them without priming herself to give reasons for either. She obviously has reasons for both, and one may tap into those reasons, but it isn't built into the purpose of making ironic-acts to provide such reasons without defeating their purpose. This is what distinguishes irony from mere asserting of a corresponding content and attitude, as we saw with Sam¹ and Sam² in Sect. 4. Asserting that one has a disparaging attitude and inverted belief, as Sam¹ does, entitles one to ask for reasons, but is not irony anymore. Thus, it is of the essence of ironic-acts to merely indicate the attitude and inverted content without defending either. This is why irony is *non-truth-apt*—both attitude and inverted content are not open to dispute.

Let us state this more formally, for declarative sentences S , where P is the literal said-content of S :

Metaphoric-Act: U utters S , engaging in the behavior characteristic of someone defending P (the behaviour of someone making a literal assertion), in order to *defend* a related mental state P^* , or express any other primary illocutionary commitment to P^* .

Ironic-Act: U utters S , engaging in the behavior characteristic of someone defending P (the behaviour of someone making a literal assertion), in order to *indicate* a ridiculing-portrayal of someone's defensive-acts of P , any other primary illocutionary commitment to P .

Metaphor and irony are thus different kinds of illocutionary-acts. With metaphor we engage in *defensive-acts* with respect to P^* as when we make metaphorical assertions. But this is not all. We can also use P^* to achieve metaphorical non-assertoric (i.e. non-defensive) acts, say, to ask metaphorical questions, give metaphorical orders, or make metaphorical threats, etc. So a metaphorical-act can be used as basis to achieve a wide variety of speech-acts, and the commitments to the metaphorical-act will vary depending on the kind of illocutionary-act the metaphor aims to support. With irony, by contrast, we engage in a ridiculing-portrayal of defensive-acts or any other primary illocutionary-acts—whether literal or non-literal—thereby indicating a disparaging attitude, in a *non-defensive* way, towards those acts.

In sum, we've explained the *distinctiveness* of metaphor and irony via a new route. This distinctiveness is sufficient to explain Logical-MPT. But there is something more that needs explaining—namely, what role the metaphoric-act plays when embedded in an ironic compound.

6.2 The role of metaphor in compounds

The first thing to note is that when metaphor and irony merge into a compound, the speaker is not committed to being metaphorical. She is not using the metaphor to make a full-fledged metaphorical-act, but is using it merely as a basis for achieving

other goals, here being ironic about characteristic commitments to metaphorical-acts. What role does the metaphor then play within the compound? Utilising the notion of proto-acts we can now see that U is merely making a *proto-metaphoric-act*, and it is this act that is used as the target for ironic ridicule. We can thus give the speech-act structure of (1), said about illegible handwriting, and repeated here:

(1) *What delicate lacework.*

Ironic-Metaphoric-Act In uttering S, U intentionally:

- (i) engages in the behaviour characteristic of someone who defends <The handwriting is delicate lacework> (the behaviour of someone making a literal assertion) (*proto-assertion*);
- (ii) engages in the behaviour of someone lacking the intention presented in (i), but performs (i) with the intention to defend that the handwriting is beautiful, shows skill, etc. (*proto-metaphoric-act*);
- (iii) engages in the behaviour of someone lacking the intention in (ii), but performs (ii) with the intention to ridicule someone who would defend that the handwriting is beautiful (*proto-ironic-act*);
- (iv) communicates that she has the intention presented in (iii) (*full-fledged ironic-act*).

The ironic-metaphoric-act involves a layering of proto-acts. First, there is a literal proto-assertion (i), which is incorporated in a proto-metaphoric-act (ii), which in turn is incorporated in a proto-ironic-act (iii). The communicative intention pertains to the outermost act (iv), which is a full-blooded ironic-act having a proto-metaphoric-act nested inside it.

This speech-act structure straightforwardly explains Logical-MPT since a metaphorical-act can only build on defensive-acts (and primary illocutionary-acts more generally). Ironic-acts aren't defensive acts, so they provide an inadequate foundation for metaphorical-acts. Thus, the irony-first proposal can't work according to the speech-act account. But the metaphor-first proposal can, since the metaphoric-act provides a defensive (or primary illocutionary) commitment that is suitable for the ironic-act to build on.

Thus, making an ironic-metaphor compound amounts to giving a ridiculing portrayal of a metaphorical-act, by showing that it is inappropriate in the context. U is thereby expressing two kinds of commitments:

Ironic-Metaphor: (IM1) a ridiculing attitude towards anyone who would defend a metaphoric-act of P^* ,
(IM2) a belief that <*Invert P^** > holds—where [*Invert- P^**] is an inversion of a metaphoric-act of P^* .

The speech-act structure underlying an ironic-metaphor compound explains a further fact—namely, that in terms of communicative intentions irony is prior, and metaphor is merely instrumental to achieving that intention.¹⁷

¹⁷ This insight leads to a more sophisticated processing-ordering claim than a straight Temporal-MPT. I contend that knowing that the compound is primarily ironic can significantly ease metaphor processing. It does this by constraining the search to a narrower space where we look only for matching metaphorical

7 Conclusion

I've started with evidence from others about the logical structure of what is communicated by ironic-metaphor compounds. First, the paper extended Logical-MPT to cases of conventionalised metaphor, and argued that Logical-MPT also fits with our intuitions about the role of ironic attitude in ironic-metaphor. I then summarised some of the minor problems that might occur for *content-based explanations for Logical-MPT*. But the major problem we identified is that any content-based explanation for Logical-MPT fails to model the behaviour of ironic attitude. This led us to seek a speech act-account of Logical-MPT where the *distinctiveness* between metaphor and irony is explained in terms of the distinct illocutionary-acts they are used to perform. In such a theory content and attitude are joined at the level of the most basic building block: the proto-act. Thus, this expressivist speech-act theory can model the behaviours of both content and attitude. Metaphor has priority, because metaphorical-acts provide the basis for primary illocutionary-acts, and ironic-acts require and build on primary illocutionary-acts. So irony must build on metaphor and not the other way round. Thus, Logical-MPT is explained in a unified and elegant way through the speech-act structure underpinning the ironic-metaphor compound. This suggests that an expressivist speech-act account has something to offer theories of language.

Acknowledgments This work was supported by Beatriu de Pinós Project Grant No. 2013 BP-B 00266 from AGAUR/European Commission. I am very grateful for helpful discussions to Stephen Barker and Jeremy L. Wyatt. I also benefited from helpful comments on previous drafts and talks from John Barden, Delia Belleri, Liz Camp, Tyler Doggett, Ray Gibbs, Michael Glanzberg, Sam Glucksberg, Peter Pagin, Philip Percival, Ken Walton, and two anonymous referees.

References

- Barker, S. J. (2004). *Renewing meaning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Barker, S. J., & Popa-Wyatt, M. (2015). Irony and the dogma of force and sense. *Analysis*, 75(1), 9–16.
- Bezuidenhout, A. (2001). Metaphor and what is said: A defense of a direct expression view of metaphor. *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 25, 156–186.
- Brandom, R. (1983). *Asserting*. *Noûs*, 17, 637–650.
- Camp, E. (2006). Contextualism, metaphor, and what is said. *Mind and Language*, 21(3), 280–309.
- Camp, E. (2012). Sarcasm, pretence, and the semantics–pragmatics distinction. *Noûs*, 46, 587–634.
- Camp, E., & Hawthorne, J. (2008). Sarcastic ‘like’: A case study in the interface of syntax and semantics. *Philosophical Perspectives*, 22, 1–21.
- Carston, R. (2002). *Thoughts and utterances*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Currie, G. (2006). Why irony is pretence. In S. Nichols (Ed.), *The architecture of the imagination* (pp. 111–133). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Grice, P. H. (1989). *Studies in the way of words*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hanks, P. (2007). The content-force distinction. *Philosophical Studies*, 134, 141–164.

¹⁷ This insight leads to a more sophisticated processing-ordering claim than a straight Temporal-MPT. I contend that knowing that the compound is primarily ironic can significantly ease metaphor processing. It does this by constraining the search to a narrower space where we look only for matching metaphorical properties that can yield in turn relevant contrasting properties. On this hypothesis, recognition of irony is prior in terms of communicative intentions, though processing-wise metaphor retains logical priority over irony.

- King, J. C., & Stanley, J. (2005). Semantics, pragmatics, and the role of semantic content. In Z. Szabó (Ed.), *Semantics vs. pragmatics* (pp. 133–181). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Levinson, S. (2000). *Presumptive Meanings: The Theory of Generalized Conversational Implicature*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
- Popa, M. (2009). *Figuring the code: Pragmatic routes to the non-literal*. PhD dissertation, University of Geneva.
- Popa, M. (2010). Ironic metaphor: A case for metaphor's contribution to truth-conditions. In E. Walaszewska, M. Kisiełewska-Krysiuk, & A. Piskorska (Eds.), *In the mind and across minds: A relevance-theoretic perspective on communication and translation* (pp. 224–245). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Popa-Wyatt, M. (2014). Pretence and echo: Towards an integrated account of verbal irony. *International Review of Pragmatics*, 6, 127–168.
- Recanati, F. (2004). *Literal meaning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Soames, S. (2006). Understanding assertion. In J. Thompson & A. Byrne (Eds.), *Content and modality: Themes from the philosophy of Robert Stalnaker* (pp. 222–250). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stanley, J., & Szabó, Z. (2000). On quantifier domain restriction. *Mind and Language*, 15(2 and 3), 219–261.
- Stern, J. (2000). *Metaphor in context*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Stern, J. (2011). Metaphor and minimalism. *Philosophical Studies*, 153, 273–298.
- Wearing, C. (2013). Metaphor and the scope argument. In C. Penco & F. Domaneschi (Eds.), *What is said and what is not said* (pp. 141–157). Stanford: CSLI Publications.
- Wilson, D. (2006). The pragmatics of verbal irony: Echo or pretence? *Lingua*, 116, 1722–1743.