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## **Irony in political debate: Functional coherence**

### **Abstract**

This article presents the results of a study aimed at identifying the pragmatic potential of irony in order to explain the reasons for its widespread use in the speech of politicians, particularly, in political debates. In the study, irony is considered a linguistic-discursive phenomenon represented at the text level by an utterance whose meaning is born as ironic based on the incoherence of two types of knowledge – the semantics of the expression and discursive knowledge. Semantic incoherence is associated with absurdity of the image or situation described by an ironic utterance which is removed due to discursive knowledge and becomes a source of a new meaning. This essential trait of irony sets its pragmatic potential and determines its functional originality: evaluative nature of semantics, comicality, implicitness, emotiveness, expressiveness, interpretability. These features of irony determine its widespread use in political communication, particularly, in the speeches of politicians participating in political debates. The latter are defined in this study as one of the forms of political discourse whose linguistic originality is determined by a strategic plan – discursive strategies and tactics subdivided into two main groups: strategies to lower the opponent's image and strategies to improve one's own image.

**Keywords:** irony, ironic meaning, incoherence of meanings, political discourse, political debate, pragmatic potential

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**For citation:** Solodilova I. A. (2023). Ironiya v politicheskikh debatakh: funktsional'naya kogerentnost' [Irony in political debate: Functional coherence]. *Teoreticheskaya i prikladnaya lingvistika* [Theoretical and Applied Linguistics], 9 (4), 124–135. [https://doi.org/10.22250/24107190\\_2023\\_9\\_4\\_124](https://doi.org/10.22250/24107190_2023_9_4_124)