

Reflection of Irony in O. Henry's The Gift of Magi and Firat Cewerî's Bîsîklêt Stories

Çîroka O. Henry The Gift of Magi û ya Firat Cewerî
Bîsîklêt ji hêla Rengvedana Îronîyê ve

O. Henry'nin The Gift of Magi ve Firat Cewerî'nin
Bîsîklêt Öykülerinde İronik Yansımalar

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Abstract

In this study, an analysis was conducted of the stories of the American short-story writer O. Henry and the Kurdish short-story and novel writer Firat Cewerî, *The Gift of Magi* and *Bisiklêt*, in the context of irony. Such an approach is well-suited to the field of comparative literature. This study examined the literary data that could be provided by analysing two writers and their works, who have different literary, historical and social backgrounds, around a common theme of examination. An analysis of the ironic discourses in the two stories, both of which featured similar subjects and themes, was conducted within the framework of the main types of verbal irony, including situational and dramatic irony, with the aim of explaining how irony functioned in the discourse of each story and how it was connected to the fundamental elements of the narrative. Following a thorough analysis, it was determined that both writers employed the literary device of irony to shed light on the social and personal challenges faced by their characters. Irony functioned as both a narrative tool and a key plot element, allowing for the expression of deep human emotions and experiences. In addition, it was determined that while the use of irony was identified as a central feature of O. Henry's narrative structure, its employment by Firat Cewerî was found to be limited, and implicit rather than explicit, allowing readers to interpret it through the medium of their own experiences and perspectives.

Keywords: Comparative literature, verbal irony, situational irony, dramatic irony, O. Henry, Firat Cewerî

Highlights

- The concept of irony closely related to the narrator, plot and character in the story genre, provides important data for a comparative analysis.
- We analyzed O. Henry's *The Gift of Magi* and Firat Cewerî's *Bisiklêt* (Bicycle) stories in the context of irony.
- In our analysis of the stories *The Gift of Magi* and *Bisiklêt* according to verbal, situational and dramatic irony types, it has been determined that irony can be a functional language and narrative element in the processes of creating, presenting and resolving conflicts in the plot.
- In both stories, the common ironic ground is built on the conflict between material poverty and a strong bond of love.

Kurte

Di vê lêkolînê de, çîroka bi navê *The Gift of Magi* ya çîroknûsê Amerîkî O. Henry û çîroka bi navê *Bisiklêt* a çîroknûs û romanûsê Kurd Firat Cewerî di çarçoveya têgeha îronîyê de wekî mijareke di biwarê edebîyata berawirdî de hatin nirxandin. Bi dahûrandina du nivîskar û berhemên wan ên ku xwedî paşxaneyêke cuda ya edebî, dîrokî û civakî ne, hat armanckirin bê ka li dor mijareke lêkolînê ya hevpar, kîjan daneyên edebî dibe bîrê dabînkirin. Hêmanên gotinî yê îronîk ên her du çîrokan, ku mijar û temayên wan dişibin hev, di çarçoveya îronîya gotinî, îronîya rewşê û îronîya dramatîk de hatin analîzkirin. Di lêkolîna xwe de me hewl da ku em zelal bikin bê ka îronîyê çawa di nav vegotina her du çîrokan de cihê xwe girtiye û bi hêmanên bingeîn ên çîrokê ve bi çî awayî girêdayî ye. Di encama dahûrandinan de dîyar bû ku her du nivîskaran îronî bi kar anîne da ku pîrsgirêkên civakî û takekesî yê karakterên xwe derxînin pêş û bêtir berbiçav bikin. Di vê peywendîyê de van nivîskaran îronî wekî amûreke vegotinê û wekî hêmaneke bingeîn a çîroksazîyê ji bo îfadekirina hest û serpêhatîyên mirovî yê balkêş kardar kirine. Her wiha, di encamê de derket holê ku îronî di plana çîroka O. Henry

de xwedî cihekî navendî ye û hêmaneke serdest e, lê ji bo Firat Cewerî bi awayekî sînardar û sergirtî bûye tercîh ku bi şîroveyên xwîner û ezmûnên xwendinê bêtir berbiçav dibe.

Peyvên Sereke: Edebîyata berawirdî, îronîya gotinî, îronîya rewşê, îronîya dramatîk, O. Henry, Firat Cewerî.

Xalên Sereke:

- Têgiha îronîyê di cureya çîrokê de ji nêzik ve bi vegêr, karakter û çîroksazîyê re têkildar e û ji bo dahûrandineke berawirdî daneyên giring berdest dike.
- Me çîroka O. Henry *The Gift of Magi* û çîroka Firat Cewerî *Bîsiklêt* li dor pêwendîya îronîyê rûberî hev kir.
- Di encama dahûrandina me ya her du çîrokan de ya li gor îronîya gotinî, îronîya rewşê û îronîya dramatîk, diyar bû ku îronî di pêvajoya afirandin, pêşkêşkirin û çareserkirina arîşeyên nav çîrokê de dibe hêmaneke zimanî yê kargîn û hêmaneke esasî ya vegêranê.
- Di her du çîrokan de, bingeha hevpar a îronîk li ser nakokîya navbera feqîrîya madî û girêdana xurt a evîndarîyê ava bûye.

Öz

Bu çalışmada Amerikalı öykü yazarı O. Henry ve Kürt öykü ve roman yazarı Firat Cewerî'nin *The Gift of Magi* ve *Bîsiklêt* adlı öyküleri ironi kavramı bağlamında karşılaştırmalı edebiyat alanına konu olabilecek şekilde karşılaştırılmıştır. Farklı edebi, tarihsel ve toplumsal arka planlara sahip olan iki yazar ve söz konusu eserlerinin, ortak bir inceleme teması etrafında yapılacak analizlerinin ne tür edebi veriler sağlayabileceği irdelenmiştir. Benzer konu ve temaları olan her iki öykünün ironik söylemleri başlıca sözel ironi, durumsal ironi ve dramatîk ironi türleri çerçevesinde analiz edilmiş ve ironinin her iki öykünün söyleminde nasıl bir yer edindiği ve öykünün temel öğeleri ile nasıl ilişkilendiği aydınlatılmaya çalışılmıştır. Yapılan analiz sonucunda, her iki yazarın da karakterlerinin yaşadıkları sosyal ve bireysel sorunları yansıtmak için ironiden yararlandıkları ve vurgulamak istedikleri çarpıcı insani duygu ve yaşantıları dile getirmek için ironiden bir anlatım aracı ve olay örgüsünün bir parçası olarak istifade ettikleri görülmüştür. Ayrıca ironinin O. Henry'nin söz konusu öyküsünde merkezi bir konumda ve öykü planının temelinde başat bir öğe iken, Firat Cewerî için sınırlı bir şekilde tercih edildiği ve okurun yorumları ile açığa çıkabilecek şekilde örtük olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Karşılaştırmalı edebiyat, sözel ironi, durumsal ironi, dramatîk ironi, O. Henry, Firat Cewerî

Önemli Hususlar

- İroni kavramı öykü türünde anlatıcı, olay örgüsü ve karakter gibi öğelerle yakından ilişkili olup karşılaştırmalı bir analiz için önemli veriler sağlar.
- O. Henry'nin *The Gift of Magi* ve Firat Cewerî'nin *Bîsiklêt* (Bisiklet) adlı öykülerini ironi bağlamında analiz ettik.
- *The Gift of Magi* ve *Bîsiklêt* öykülerinin sözel, durumsal ve dramatîk ironi kavramlarına göre yaptığımız analizleri sonucunda, ironinin olay örgüsünde çatışmaları yaratma, sunma ve çözüme kavuşturma süreçlerinde önemli bir dilsel ve anlatım işlevine sahip olabileceği görülmüştür.
- Her iki öyküde de ortak ironik zemin maddi yoksunluk ile güçlü sevgi bağları arasındaki tezat üzerine kurulmuştur.

Introduction

Comparative literature continues to offer the opportunity to compare writers with different literary backgrounds and preferences, and who have written works in different languages and from distant geographies, with various priorities and limitations. In this study, we examine the stories of O. Henry, who left his mark on the story genre in the early twentieth century in American literature, and Firat Cewerî, one of the late story writers of modern Kurdish literature. William Sydney Porter, better known by his pen name O. Henry, is a famous short story writer in American literature. He wrote his stories in the early 20th century and as Long (1949, p.1) stated, the short story was a popular genre at the time. Newspapers and magazines encouraged writers and paid them to send short stories. According to the information provided by Scofield (2006, p.115-120), most of O. Henry's stories were published in famous magazines such as *Dispatch*, *Ainslee's* and *Sunday World*, and all of his stories were included in a collection of 12 books. He wrote stories for newspapers, and in order to be read more and gain interest, he had to come up with interesting stories. So irony was one of the means he used to make his stories catch the attention of readers. He tells the lives of ordinary city dwellers in his stories.

Having settled in Sweden for political reasons in the early 1980s, Firat Cewerî began his writing career in this country. As Scalbert Yücel (2016, p.176-180) points out that Sweden is the birthplace of professional Kurdish writing and that Kurds who have sought asylum in Sweden for compelling political reasons, she also mentions the name of Firat Cewerî as a writer from this generation. In the early years of his writing career, he mainly wrote short stories. In an interview he gave in the early 1990s, he stated that he had been working on story writing techniques for over ten years and that he wanted to break new ground in the modern Kurdish story (Uzun, 1995, p.403). In the later years, he became known for the novels he wrote. Cewerî's works have a characteristic that addresses political and social issues in the context of Kurdish society, focusing on individual and social conflicts experienced by individuals. Even if we cannot speak of an ironic style and narrative approach that is indispensable in Cewerî's works in general, as he usually chooses his heroes from individuals who represent the problems, inequality and oppression of Kurdish society, ironic situations and characters can be traced in his stories.

We focus on *The Gift of Magi* and *Bisiklêt* (Bicycle), which have similar characteristics in terms of subject, theme and character, in the context of the concept of irony. The concept of irony, which is closely related to the narrator, plot and character in the story genre, provides important data for a comparative analysis. This is because irony is open to discovery in literary texts as inherent in the basic elements of the story. In some cases, although it is not directly observed through the narrator, plot or character, the subject and theme chosen by the author and the extratextual meaning of this subject theme can form the basis for an ironic perception in the reader.

In the stories *The Gift of Magi* and *Bisiklêt*, the subject chosen by both authors is shaped around the theme of poverty and the characters they portray want to buy gifts for their loved ones despite being poor. Material poverty and limited purchasing power lead them to different searches and they react differently. The economic problems experienced by individuals with similar social and economic opportunities and the desire to make their loved ones happy despite these problems are a common theme that unites both stories. In our study, the authors' methods of handling these subjects, themes and problematic similarities, their methods of using irony as a narrative element and their ironic and empathetic attitudes towards their characters are examined. After discussing the concept of irony in general, we will touch upon irony in the field of literature and analyze both works within the framework of the concepts of verbal irony, situational irony and dramatic irony.

1. A Summary of *The Gift of Magi* and *Bisiklêt* Stories

The Gift of the Magi tells the story of Della and Jim, a young but poor couple. Della is a young woman who lives with her husband Jim in a cheaply furnished rented flat. On the day before Christmas, she sits at home counting her savings. In the early years of their marriage, Jim's business was doing well and he was making more money, but over time the couple had grown poor. Della has been a good saver, but her savings are very small. She wants to buy Jim something special for Christmas with her savings, but when she realizes she doesn't have enough money for a present, she has tears in her eyes. Della looks at herself in the dirty mirror and decides to try to do something. Her long brown hair has been Della's greatest treasure. She puts on her old coat and her old hat and goes to a shop where hair is bought and sold. The owner of the shop, Madame Sofronie, agrees to cut Della's hair and to buy it from her. Della spends the rest of the day wandering about trying to find something to give Jim. Jim has a gold pocket watch that had been in his family, and Della wants to buy a nice chain to match it. She finally finds a beautiful platinum chain. Della is so excited that she goes home to give Jim his gift.

When Della gets home, she tries to style her short hair in the best possible way. She is afraid that Jim will be angry and that he will no longer think she is beautiful. When Jim sees Della cutting her hair, he has a strange look on his face. She explains that she sold her hair to pay for his Christmas gift. Jim gives her a hug in return and tells her that he loves her no matter what her hair looks like. He then gives her a Christmas present: a set of jewelled tortoiseshell combs that she once admired in a department store window. Della loves the gift, but when she realises that she will not be able to use it, she bursts into tears. Jim tries to comfort her, and Della excitedly gives him her platinum watch chain as a present. Jim laughs and tells her that he had to sell his precious watch to pay for the combs. The narrator praises the couple for their selfless gift of love, ending the story by comparing them to the three wise men who brought gifts to the baby Jesus.

Remo, a child from a poor family, and his passion for bicycles is the central story of *Bisiklêt*. Remo's family, who have moved to the city due to financial difficulties in the village, continue to live in poverty. But Remo's desire to own a bicycle, which only the son of the landowner in the village had and which became a passion for him, continues in the city. When Remo returns from school, he sits unhappily at the table and refuses to eat. This upsets his mother and makes his father very angry. When he does not answer his father's persistent questions, his father scolds him and tries to hit him, but his mother stops him. Knowing that the reason for his sadness is the bicycle they could not buy, his father tells him that he will buy him a bicycle to calm him down after a while.

His father keeps asking him questions like where in the city bicycles are sold, the addresses of the places that sell them, and Remo wants to be sure by giving detailed answers to these questions. Having difficulty believing his father's words, he offers to go look tomorrow, but his father refuses, promising to buy it tomorrow. Remo falls asleep dreaming of a bicycle but is haunted by nightmares of never owning one. In the morning, his mother comforts him by telling him that his father will buy him a bike when he goes to school. When he comes home from school in the evening, he first has trouble believing it when he sees a red bike in front of the house, then he gets on the bike and rides off with joy and tears. Remo's parents try to escape feudal exploitation and poverty in the village by moving to the city, but they can't escape poverty there either. The story ends happily enough with Remo getting a bike, but it's a bit of a irony that the poor Kurdish villagers who want to live a happy and prosperous life by moving from the village to the city are met with the opposite of their expectations, and it's a theme that many Kurdish writers have chosen for their works, such as this story.

2. Irony in General

McArthur (1992, p.532) draws attention to the etymological roots of the concept of irony in both the Latin word “ironia” and the Greek “eirôneia”, and defines “irony” as the expression of words that imply a contrary meaning to that typically associated with them. In general usage, irony is an imbalance between what is expected and what happens. Pfordresher et., al. (1989, p.973) state that irony is a concept used to express the contrast between the seeming state of something and its actual state. Peck & Coyle (1984, p.135) define irony as a way of writing in which what is meant is contrary to what the words appear to say. According to Wright (1953, p.111), the existing discourse is not yet sufficiently universal to permit the use of the term “irony” without some explanation, but the word has clear meanings of a limited kind: dramatic irony, verbal irony, romantic irony, the irony of fate.

The historical background of irony goes back to ancient Greece. Aristophanes' comic plays and Socrates' questioning wisdom disguised as an ignorant man are considered to be the pioneers of the ironic style. Colebrook (2005, p.2-10) points to the changing function of irony in the historical process from ancient Greece to the present day. Prior to the explicit and extended theorisation of irony in the nineteenth century, irony was a recognised but minor and subordinate figure of speech. Up until the Renaissance, irony was theorised within the field of rhetoric and was often listed as a kind of allegory. Tittler (1984, p.15) claims that although somewhat displaced by the concerns of deconstructive criticism, irony remains a key element in contemporary literature, literary criticism and theory.

Irony has been studied theoretically and has attracted interest from many different disciplines. Historical and contemporary studies of irony can also be found in fields as diverse as anthropology, literary studies, linguistics, psychology, philosophy, cultural studies and more, as Colston & Gibbs (2007, p.3) note. The subjects that are related to irony are as diverse as the arts, literature, the media, language, politics, and many others. As a result of attempts to define and classify the concept of irony, various expressions and definitions have emerged. McArthur (1992, p.532) classifies the types of irony that have developed in the course of history. Three types of irony have been recognized since antiquity: (1) Socratic irony, which involves adopting a mask of innocence and ignorance to win an argument; (2) dramatic or tragic irony, in which events in a play or real situation present a double vision; and (3) linguistic irony, a duality of meaning now considered the classical form of irony. In modern times, two further concepts have been added: 1) Structural irony, a quality built into texts where a naive narrator's observations reveal the deeper implications of a situation. 2) Romantic irony, where authors make a deal with readers to share the double vision of what is happening in the plot of a novel, film, etc.

Pfordresher et al. (1989, p.973:) discuss irony under three headings: “verbal irony”, “situational irony” and “dramatic irony”. In verbal irony, the literal meaning of a word contrasts with its intended meaning. Situational irony refers to what happens as opposed to what is expected or intended to happen. Dramatic irony relates to a situation in which events or facts unknown to one character in a work of fiction are known to another character and to the reader. Colebrook (2005, p.13) alternatively uses the term “cosmic irony”, saying that it is as if human life and understanding of the world is undermined by some other meaning or design beyond our powers. Colebrook (2005, p.15) also distinguishes between types of irony. Dramatic, cosmic and tragic irony are ways of thinking about the relationship between human intentions and contrary outcomes. Muecke (1986, p.23) defines the concept of “romantic irony”, which he attributes to the German philosopher and literary critic Schlegel, as the irony of the universe with man or the individual as the victim. He also uses two concepts, “instrumental irony” and “observable irony”. While the instrumental irony is more functional in text-centred communication and in literary texts, the observable irony is that in which language is the instrument.

Tittler (1984, p.17-18) explains the concept in terms of the human attitude towards irony and

attempts to explain the concept in terms of its subjective and objective nature. Irony can be divided into two elements, objective and subjective. There are also two types of objective irony, commonly called intended irony (mostly verbal) and another called accidental irony (alternatively, irony "of events"). Colebrook (2005, p.15) refers to various expressions of the linguistic function that reveal and specify irony. We know that a word is ironic when it seems out of place or unconventional. The recognition of irony therefore brings to the fore the social, conventional and political aspects of language. Lucariello (2007, p.471-472) brings the function of irony to the surface in the context of the outcomes it produces, noting that irony produces various social outcomes, primarily gains and losses.

2.1. Irony in Literature

Irony is a concept that has become important in literary studies and in creating literary texts in general. According to Muecke (1986, p.3), the importance of irony in literature is beyond question. All art, or all literature, is essentially ironic - or all good literature is said to need to be ironic. Literary irony is often used for critical or humorous effect. Different types of irony can be used to express various emotions in the dialogue of a literary text. The author may aim to create an ironic text to create a sense of surprise in the reader, to convey a persuasive message or to convey an idea with such an effect on the reader's emotions. Mavlanova & Ruziyeva (2020, p.362) touch on the function of irony in literature, stating that most of the irony is of a rhetorical, satirical or heuristic nature. Irony can be used as a rhetorical device to assert one's meaning. It can be used as a satiric device to attack a point of view or to reveal folly, hypocrisy or vanity. It may be used as a heuristic to make the reader see that things are not as simple or certain as they seem, or perhaps not as complex or dubious as they seem.

According to Kostenko (2014, p.12), irony in literature is a much more complicated manifestation. It appears in the confrontation of the human mind with the paradoxes of life, which have no solution, and it is here that an ironic distance, understanding or fixed uncertainty of human life and knowledge becomes an alternative, which allows a person to live with the awareness of the paradox of existential problems. Irony is a device of the implicit meaning of the text, it is a construction based on the difference between an objectively simple meaning and a meaning as a concept. It acts as a hidden joke and in this way it differs from satire and parody. Farrell et., al. (1987, p.537) assert that to understand irony requires experience in reading. In literature, it is very common for an ironic twist to come only at the end of a poem, a story or a play. The purpose of dramatic irony may be to elicit sympathy for a character, to create a sense of suspense, or to produce a comic effect.

Irony can be found in almost all literary genres. According to Muecke (1986, p.68), among literary genres, irony is most closely associated with the genre of theatre. Theatre, drama and irony are related in many ways. All observable ironies are by definition theatrical. They require the presence of an observer to complete the irony. Irony is not just something that happens; it is something that can at least be imagined as happening. As Muecke (1986, p.70-71) puts it, we can think of the *dramatis personae* as the victim of irony. We can say that drama, though not necessarily ironic, is usually ironic. In most plays, the audience will have more knowledge of what is going on than the *dramatis personae*. As a result, it will see the *dramatis personae* as being possessed by false or unnecessary hopes, fears, or beliefs.

Colebrook (2005, p.18) suggests that poems are ironic because they take the words we use in everyday language and give them a range of significations. Texts are ironic not because they refer to the world and its conflicts; irony lies in the tensions of language. Muecke (1986, p.92) points out that what is perhaps more important is that, unlike drama, prose fiction does not bind its audience, the individual reader, to a fixed time for performing. The freedom of the reader to read at his or her own pace, to pause, to re-read and to reflect, makes a number of things possible. It allows greater length,

therefore breadth, and finer detail, complexity, explanation, reflection and deliberation. Irony in the novel, for Muecke (1986, p.87-88), is the false picture a character has formed of the world he inhabits, which conflicts with the real world. This wider irony has been a basic irony of the novel from the beginning.

2.2. The Use of Irony in Short Story

In stories, the basic elements of the story genre, such as character, narrator and plot, are most often used to create irony. The writer sometimes creates irony by using an ironic narrative style. In order to create an ironic effect, some writers use an ironic character as the narrator in their works. The actions and expressions of such a narrator arouse suspicion in the reader. The writer and the reader meet at an ironic point through the words and actions of the ironic character, which are not in accordance with the real or ideal situation. Sometimes ironic characters set the stage for irony. Sometimes the plot creates an ironic situation with various contrasts, coincidences and difficulties. Although irony is most often found in literary works with comic situations, Wright (1953, p.114) points out that there are also ironic situations that do not contain comedy or even humour. He gives the example of Oedipus searching for the murderer of King Laius when the murderer is himself.

Colebrook (2005, p.10) states that irony can either lie in the situation, where what the character says is undercut by what he does or says elsewhere; or the irony can lie in the speech itself, where the rhetoric is so excessive or clichéd that we assume the author is making fun of the character's own limited imagination. Irony in its various forms is, according to Alkhidir (2024, p.50), a powerful plot device. Unexpected events or the behaviour of characters can create a sense of suspense for the reader, enhance the humour of a literary work, or leave a greater impression on the audience. As a means of plotting, irony makes the reader reconsider his or her knowledge, expectations, and understanding. In this way, writers can draw attention to themes in their work and at the same time catch their readers by surprise. As a literary device, irony does not just reveal unexpected events or turns in the plot. It is used to show the differences in the behaviour of characters, making them far more complicated and realistic. By challenging the audience's assumptions and expectations, irony can also reveal their prejudices. As such, it is a powerful tool to use when writing.

It should be noted that irony is used in stories for a variety of purposes. It is an effective and strong literary device that is used by many writers for decoration, to create a twist of fate and to give many twists in such a way that the last events are back to the previous ones, or to create a sense of excitement. It is used for its social function, to show how the speaker feels about a certain social problem. It is used to bring some real social problems to the readers, which are covered with deep and unexpected irony, either in the form of statements made by some characters, an unexpected situation, or a misunderstanding and unawareness among the characters. Irony allows the reader to view the events, situations and actions of the characters in the work with judgement and questioning. It is used to judge, to criticise, to mock and to tell the truth in an indirect way. It is also used to show a degree of emotional control, making the reader consider what he or she expects or what the speaker intends.

3. Reflection of Three Types of Irony in *The Gift of Magi* and *Bisiklêt*

The Gift of the Magi is one of O. Henry's most representative works, which exemplifies his mastery of irony. In this work, O. Henry ironically narrates the social and economic situations of his characters who are experiencing financial difficulties and their ordinary desires, which are often not fulfilled according to their tastes. Scofield (2006, p.118) regards O. Henry's ironic attitude as indicative of love and sympathy towards his characters, and asserts that O. Henry's most famous story, *The Gifts of the Magi*, exemplifies his usage of plot in relation to the lives of the poor in the big city. Firat

Cewerî's story *Bisiklêt*, written in the early 1980s and selected from the author's book *Girtî*, published in 1986, is one of the author's early works. In this story, the author chooses a narrator who expresses a sympathetic attitude towards the main character, Remo. The narrative style used in *Bisiklêt* is notable for its absence of judgmental, critical or ironic discourse. Instead of subjecting the characters and their situations to open and direct irony, the author presents situations that may be ironic to the reader with a neutral attitude. In the analysis that follows, we will examine the stories *The Gift of Magi* and *Bisiklêt* through the lenses of 1) verbal irony, 2) situational irony, and 3) dramatic irony. These three types of irony are widely studied in the literary genre.

3.1. Verbal Irony

As stated by Wilson & Sperber (2007, p.36), verbal irony finds expression in literary texts through techniques such as "ironic understatements", "ironic quotations" and "ironic interjections". Understatements are typically analysed as statements that do not convey the opposite of the intended meaning, but rather, they convey a less intense version of the intended meaning. Ironical quotations, for example, are only successful as irony if they are recognised as quotations, rather than merely being interpreted as the opposite of the literal meaning. Finally, ironic interjections involve the narrator or one of the characters preparing the ground for an ironic situation by interrupting or intervening. Colston & Gibbs (2007, p.6) state that utterances of verbal irony must 1) violate the sincerity or belief condition, and 2) occur in instances of a violation of expectations.

It is evident that verbal irony is present in certain instances. The author uses examples of verbal irony, exemplifying the interjection technique through the narrator, to provide an ironic tone to the narrative. The narrator, who uses the term "bulldozing" to inform the reader, states that Della bullies the shopkeepers in various ways in order to save small amounts of money:

Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher.

In the subsequent sentence, the narrator similarly disrupts the sequence of events and expresses an ironic perspective by contrasting the conventional functionality of tools such as "letter-boxes" and "electric buttons" with their present state of malfunction.

In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring.

In the story *The Gift of Magi*, the narrator skilfully uses irony to create striking situations by exaggerating some of Della's behaviours through the use of idiomatic expressions, or by providing an ironic twist to her actions and reactions. For example, her excitement at buying gifts with the money she receives from selling her hair is expressed as follows:

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings.

Della's visit to the stores is characterised by a sense of excitement. The word "ransacking" is used ironically to describe the act of looting the stores:

She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

Furthermore, the following statements exemplify the underestimate approach in the narrator's discourse. While the narrator presents the gift and the intended recipient in an ironic manner as unique, this actually serves to normalise the gift:

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design. It was even worthy of The Watch.

In the story *The Gift of Magi*, there is an ironic tone in Della's monologues in the final parts of the story:

"If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to herself, "before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl.

A similar ironic tone can be seen in the dialogue between Jim and Della:

"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, laboriously,

"Cut it off and sold it," said Della.

"You say your hair is gone?" he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

"You needn't look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you--sold and gone, too.

In the story *Bîsiklêt*, there is minimal use of irony in the narrator's language or the conversations between the father, mother and Remo, with only one or two exceptions. However, the irony is indirect, through creating expectations, which are initially left unanswered and which reach a happy conclusion depending on the characters' various reactions. The subsequent conversation is notable for the abrupt shift in tone of Remo's speech when he refrains from answering the father's questions at the story's outset, leading to the father's reaction. This serves as an example of verbal irony:

- Dersa te îro çawan çû, lawê min? (How was your class today, my dear son?)

Despite not receiving an answer, the father repeats his question in a more insistent tone:

- Ez ji te dipirsim lawê min, dersa te çawan çû? (I'm asking you my son, how was your class?)

When he repeats his question for the third time, the father becomes visibly agitated, as he feels that his expectation of an answer has not been met. The profanity he incorporates into his speech when posing his final question is, ironically, directed at himself. Another ironic choice in the speech is to ask Remo, who has remained silent despite the shouting, if he has heard.

- Ez ji te re dibêjim, ker lawê keran, ma qey deng nayê te? (I'm telling you, you son of a donkey, don't you hear me?)

The following sentence is an example of verbal irony in the story *Bîsiklêt*. The author expresses an idiom that also has a swear word version by changing its verb, probably because it is a conversation between a father and his son. He uses the following expression in an absurd tone to express the financial impossibility of buying a bicycle:

- Kuro, ma ezê bi kenê xwe ji te re bîsiklêtan bikirim? Ma tu rewşa me nabîni? (Boy, shall I buy you a bike with my laughter? Can't you see the situation we're in?)

In the above example, we observe a clear violation of expectation. Remo's father had previously promised to buy him a bicycle, but did not keep this promise. Consequently, Remo expresses his disappointment verbally, showing signs of sadness and a lack of desire to eat. He anticipates a positive reaction from his father, but instead receives a scolding and an expression of financial constraints. This interaction consequently results in a violation of expectation for Remo.

In the story of *Bisiklêt*, the narrator employs the following strategy to present a situation as significant, whilst adopting an underestimated attitude:

Remo wisan ji matematîkê hez dikir, ku li ser wê ruh û can dida. Wî ji yekê heya bi milyonan û deh milyonan kanî bû bihejmarta û binivîsanda. (Remo was mad about maths, he was practically obsessed with it. He could count and write from one to a million, and even up to ten million.)

The ironic situation that emerges in this example may be an intentional irony created by the author through the narrator, or it may be an ironic perception on the part of the reader that arises from the fact that Remo's mathematical skill no longer has any importance today, regardless of the narrator's intention.

3.2. Situational Irony

As described by Peck & Coyle (1984, p.136-137), situational irony depends on a gap between how characters understand a situation and the true nature of the situation. Lucariello (2007, p.467) explains that situational irony is a state of events that is contrary to what was or could be naturally expected, or a contradictory outcome of events. Situational irony points to those situations that should not be the case. Similarly, Lucariello (2007, p.467-468) notes that situational and verbal irony could be said to be similar in that they exhibit a duality characterised by an opposition of concepts. However, the two forms of irony are not equivalent, despite these similarities. Verbal irony implies an ironist, a speaker who consciously uses a technique. Situational irony does not imply an ironist. It implies an observer of a situation that is perceived as ironic.

The Gift of Magi begins with a sentence emphasizing a small amount, "One dollar and eighty-seven cents." The second sentence, "That was all," expresses that this is the total amount of money. The ironic presentation created by listing one dollar and its fractions with the expression "all" is reinforced with the sentence "And sixty cents of it was in pennies.", so that we learn that some of the money is also change. The fact that one dollar and its fractions are "all" expresses an ironic absence. In the following sentence, we learn how Della, who counted this small amount of money three times, saved this amount with great difficulty. Finally, the narrator makes the situation of not having money even more ironic by equating it to a time when money should be spent with the sentence "And the next day would be Christmas." Later in the story, we learn that Della and Jim, who are a young and poor married couple, experience financial deprivation and the fact that the next day is Christmas. This creates the ironic structure of the story.

In the following sentence, there is an irony built on the contrast between the functions of objects as they should be and their current dysfunction:

In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring.

In the example below, we see a type of situational irony with the wealthy years of Jim and Della's lives and their current poor state, the name tag on the door and the fading and fading colors. This example is also a type of irony of fate, showing how material wealth and poverty affect today's human life and perception.

The "Dillingham" had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid \$30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to \$20, the letters of "Dillingham" looked blurred, as though they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D.

Della has decided that she will definitely buy a gift for Jim's watch, and she will get the money she needs by selling her hair. The narrator's comparison of Della's hair to a flowing brown waterfall, the way her hair complements Della, and the decision to cut it gives an ironic image of the situation:

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her.

Della's most distinctive and unique feature is her thick hair, but Della is going to cut it and sell it. Although Della gives the impression of being hesitant for a while between the thick and beautiful appearance of her hair and her decision to sell it, the narrator quickly dismisses this hesitation with Della's hasty and nervous mood. The narrator distances both the reader and Della from the ironic reality of the situation and moves on to the next step in the plot:

And then she did it up again nervously and quickly.

While the author contrasts the word possession with the difficulties of being poor, which is its equivalent, being wealthy, in the story, he also displays a separate ironic attitude by expressing material and spiritual capital only with the word "possession":

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair.

While Jim's gold watch has a material property value, a physical part of us, such as our hair, is presented in the context of material possessions. There are other examples of situational irony in the text, as the story culminates in some examples of verbal irony and a major example of dramatic irony in the final part.

The conflict in the story of *Bîsiklêt* is established with an approach that corresponds to situational irony. Remo, who should be happy, eating and talking to his parents under normal circumstances, displays the exact opposite mood. Remo, who is expected to be happy to return home from school, is quite sad:

Gava ku Remo êvarî ji dibistanê vegehiya malê, kêfa wî ne lê bû, çentê di destê xwe de avête ser masê û li quncikeke xênî runişt. (When he came home that evening, he looked pretty unhappy, and he was in a bad mood, he threw his bag down on the table and sat in a corner.)

Similarly, although he should be eating at the table, he sits without eating anything. He does not answer his father's question, which he repeats three times with different tones and emphasis:

Lêwik lêva xwe daliqand, milên xwe hejandin û tu bersiv neda. (The boy just pursed his lips, shook his head and didn't say anything.)

Living a poor life in the village, Remo's family moved to the city to get better living conditions. Remo was beaten by the son of the lord in the village because he was playing with his bicycle, but his father promised him that he would buy him a bicycle when they moved to the city:

Bavê wî jî jê re gotibû "Lawê min jehr di bîsiklêta lawê axê de be, mere cem wî; ku em malê bar kin bajêr, bi soz ezê ji lawê xwe re bîsiklêtekê bikirim. (His father said: "Damn my son, Aga's son's bike, don't play with it, when we move to town I promise I'll buy you a bike.)

However, despite moving to the city for a year, his father does not buy Remo a bicycle and constantly puts him off. Therefore, Remo's silent reaction is against this unfulfilled promise. The father probably

sees Remo's desire for a bicycle as a luxury to be put on the back burner, since they also have financial difficulties in the city. However, for Remo, bicycles are a passion and moving to the city is equivalent to having a bicycle for him. In this case, situational irony occurs due to the difference in attitudes of the father and son, who perceive a given situation differently and react accordingly.

The contrast between the family's poverty and Remo's unhappy state is resolved by the strong feeling of love that the parents feel for their children. First, the mother instills a vague hope in her son:

Îcar diya wî li ber geriya û got:

- Erê lawê min, hela were şîva xwe bixwe, emê dû re li ser bipeyivin.

(Now his mother spoke to him pleadingly.

- Ok, my son, come and eat your meal, we can talk about this later.)

Later, an attitude towards buying a bicycle is observed in the Father, and he reflects this by asking Remo questions about places that sell bicycles. The fact that the Father asks Remo questions about places that sell bicycles shows that he is making some calculations in his mind.

Bavê wî bi dengê hebekî bilind got:

- Niha ew jehrîketiyên bîsiklêtan bi çiqasî ne? (His father asked a little loudly:)

- So, how much are these goddamn bikes?

The questions asked by the father at short intervals, similar to the ones above, appear as a kind of situational irony. Because the reader witnesses the internal ironic conflict and questioning experienced by the father through the questions he asks.

3.3. Dramatic Irony

Dramatic irony is a literary device that allows the audience to know more than the characters in a story, thereby creating a sense of awareness regarding the characters' potential challenges. This is achieved by the author providing information to the reader that the character is unaware of, thus creating a form of dramatic tension. Muecke (1986, p.81-82) asserts that dramatic irony emerges when an audience perceives a character to be confidently unaware of their own ignorance. Tittler (1984, p.22) emphasises that dramatic irony is a pivotal concept, as it depends on the reader's or spectator's knowledge of the character's situation, which the character themselves does not. It is relevant in both the intended and accidental fields. According to McArthur (1992, p.532), a sophisticated ironic style was established in European writing during the 17th and 18th centuries. This can be seen in examples such as Henry Fielding's novels, where he would interrupt the action to address his readers directly and comment on events. By engaging in this technique, writers are able to combine creative egotism with a charming and satirical self-mockery. The following example illustrates the ironic attitude of the narrator and the reader towards Della and Jim throughout the story:

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home.

Della's situation is an example of dramatic irony, as she is unaware that the narrator has given up on telling about her, leaving her alone in her tearful state and showing the poor state of the house to the reader.

The most striking example of dramatic irony in the story *The Gift of Magi* is when Della and Jim unknowingly give up their most valuable possessions to buy each other gifts. Della sold her hair for \$20 and bought a platinum watch chain for Jim's gold watch. However, Della is unaware that Jim sold his gold watch to buy a comb for Della's long hair:

"Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered," she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, "but nobody could ever count my love for you."

On the other hand, the reader is aware of the characters selling their most valuable possessions to buy each other gifts. However, at the end of the story, Della and Jim find out about what happened much later than the reader, and in this way, the story ends with a kind of dramatic turn.

In the story of *Bisiklêt*, dramatic irony is not a technique preferred by the author. However, although Remo's sadness and hiding this sadness offers the opportunity to use the dramatic irony technique in the narrative, the author does not prefer this method. Similarly, if a plot such as the father buying a bicycle without telling Remo was preferred and the narrator had only informed the reader at the beginning and conveyed this information to Remo at the end of the story, a concrete dramatic example that we can analyze would have emerged in the story of *Bisiklêt*.

The reason for Remo's sadness can be shown as an example of dramatic irony, even if only partially, from the mother's perspective. The mother has difficulty understanding Remo's state, which is sad and does not eat:

- Çi ye lawê min, ma çi bûye? Qey dersdarê te bi te re xeyidî ye? (What happened son, what's the problem? Was your teacher angry with you?)

However, the father knows the reason and tells her immediately. Therefore, the mother's unawareness of the source of Remo's sadness ceases to be a factor affecting the plot.

Conclusion

In our analysis of the stories *The Gift of Magi* and *Bisiklêt* according to verbal, situational and dramatic irony types, it has been determined that irony is a functional language and narrative element in the processes of creating, presenting and resolving conflicts in the plot. In both stories, verbal irony elements have been an important means of expression to clearly and strikingly express the material difficulties experienced by the characters. In *The Gift of Magi*, the knowledgeable discourse of the ironic narrator expresses ironic expressions with more complex words, sentences and emphasis, while in *Bisiklêt*, irony is expressed simply and directly with the plain expression possibilities of the father or other characters. In the story *The Gift of Magi*, examples of verbal irony, situational irony and dramatic irony have been seen to be placed throughout the story in a planned manner. While verbal irony is mostly conveyed through the narrator's tone, it is also present in character conversations. The attitudes and actions of the Della character, who is the focal point of the story, have been made verbal irony material by the narrator with exaggerated idioms and statements. In the story of *Bisiklêt*, more situational irony examples were detected. Although the author included some verbal irony examples, he did not prefer the dramatic irony technique.

As a result of our analysis, it has been seen that in the story of *The Gift of Magi*, irony is considered by the author as a fundamental feature of the text. Irony is the main form of discourse of the narrator and the plot is meticulously processed to reinforce the ironic effect. In this respect, irony is delicately constructed as a conscious choice of the author in the story of *The Gift of Magi*. In the story of *Bisiklêt*, irony is not a technique placed at the center of the narrative. In this work, irony can be observed

through a mediation created by the situations such as the opposing perceptions and priorities of the characters in the story and their unmet desires, which can be interpreted by the reader or the researcher. Therefore, a key difference between O. Henry and Firat Cewerî is how they incorporate irony. While irony is central to *The Gift of the Magi*, it is used more subtly and sparingly in *Bisiklêt* despite thematic similarities.

In both stories, the common ironic ground is built on the conflict between material poverty and a strong bond of love. In the story *The Gift of Magi*, both Della and Jim reflect the sadness of the lack of money with their behaviors, while on the other hand, even in this poverty situation, they do not neglect to buy love and a gift for their loved ones, which is an indicator of this. Similarly, in the story *Bisiklêt*, Remo's parents reflect their strong love for Remo by buying a bicycle, which is a luxury for their poor lives. It is a typical irony of life that poor people who have difficulty in buying gifts for their loved ones due to financial difficulties make sacrifices with strong bonds of love. In this way, there is a common ironic ground that brings the two stories and the attitudes of their characters together. In both stories, the writers have created a spiritual and moral shelter for their characters by working on spiritual values such as love, loyalty and sacrifice. Irony has acquired a function that makes the difficulty of the conditions and the solutions found by the characters striking in both stories. As a result, despite their obvious differences, it has been seen that the interpretation of the two works we have examined, one written in English and the other in Kurdish, with a historical difference of half a century between them, within the framework of a concept such as irony, provides some literary data that can be used for various research purposes.

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