

Book review

Ruiz gurillo, leonor (2012): *la lingüística del humor en español* [The linguistics of humor in Spanish] MADRID, ARCO LIBROS, 163 PAGES¹.

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Verbal humor as a human communication mode and laughter as a way to individualize and materialize humor are two of the numerous issues that can be better studied and understood through the work presented by Leonor Ruiz Gurillo. *La lingüística del humor en español* [The Linguistics of Humor in Spanish] represents a significant contribution to humor studies in the context of Spanish linguistics, as it is supported on an essentially pragmatic theoretical foundation and a real reference corpus.

The author organizes her book in nine chapters. The first one of them is the introduction, where the author's aim is explained, namely: studying humor in Spanish from a pragmatic approach. The author tries to offer a methodological definition of humor within language, even though it may present other values, e.g. therapeutic or cultural ones. For this purpose, she reviews the main theories which have dealt with humor from this point of view, such as the superiority theories, the discharge theories, the incongruity theories, the hostility theories, the cognitive theories and the relevantist theories.

After the introduction, the second chapter is devoted to the study of humor from the aforementioned theories, especially those which refer to the standard model, the script-based Semantic Theory of Humor and the General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH), since they will provide the theoretical foundation for this book. Nevertheless, although the author chose these theories as the starting point for her study, she does not leave aside cognitive linguistics or the relevance theory either, as shown by the fact that each one of them is treated in a specific section seeking to link both theoretical conceptions with the study of humor.

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The third chapter is dedicated to the pragmatic model adopted by the author for the study of humor in Spanish: the General Theory of Verbal Humor. With this aim in mind, she provides a thorough explanation of the model from its origins in Raskin and Attardo until the present day with the GRIALE group. For the author, the GTVH is the best suited theory when it comes to explain the humorous text. However, she highlights a number of aspects which need to be clarified in her opinion, such as register or genre. That is why Ruiz Gurillo closes the chapter with a figure (p. 41) which shows the knowledge resources for the GTVH along with the elements that should be taken into account as well.

In the fourth chapter, the author draws a distinction between serious genres and humorous genres, stating that humorous genres use the textuality mechanisms which are typical of serious genres, from which can be inferred that the distinction between serious genres and humorous ones would be artificial. Furthermore, she proposes the joke as a humorous genre strictly speaking and analyzes it from the GTVH with the 6 knowledge resources which are used to understand it. The author is well aware of the fact that this is not the only valid analysis and that it can be done from other perspectives.

The analysis of audiovisual humor and, more precisely, of the monologue is also present in this book. Ruiz Gurillo dedicates the fifth chapter to study how the humorous monologue works using a corpus drawn from *El club de la Comedia* [The Comedy Club]. She reflects on the way in which the written script changes to become a monologue in action, thanks to the linguistic and paralinguistic elements which are at the service of humor.

The sixth chapter focuses on another specific type of humor: parody in the form of a *sketch*, the verbal humor format which is closer to satire and which is built on enunciative procedures, unlike other types of humor, which are constructed on the basis of linguistic procedures. The author analyzes parody from the GTVH and realizes that it is composed of an intentional verbal representation which serves to boast about its representation and where an act of criticism takes place; it all based on the analysis of a *sketch* performed by the actor José Luis Gil.

In the seventh chapter, the author studies a non-humorous genre: spontaneous conversation. After having analyzed humorous genres, the focus is now placed on the observation of strategies for the use of humor in colloquial conversation. In order to do that, she takes as her reference the Conversational Analysis developed by the Val.Es.Co. group and 59 fragments from the corpus published by this group which works with colloquial conversations. She dedicates several sections to irony in its social and structural dimension, as well as to humor as a conversational strategy. The author comes to the conclusion that humor is the

result of ongoing irony, laughter being its most immediate effect. This conclusion provides the basis for the construction of the following chapter.

The eighth chapter is devoted to irony and humor. In her capacity as director of a research group which studies verbal irony in Spanish (<http://www.griale.es>), Ruiz Gurillo brings us closer to this phenomenon from a neo-Gricean approach where irony appears through the infringement or inversion of pragmatic principles. Thus, humor and irony would be related from an inversion of the principles of Informativity and Manner and due to the fact that both phenomena are forms of distancing and contrast, even though there are aspects in these statements which they do not share in the same way.

The last chapter presents the conclusions. Ruiz Gurillo summarizes the most relevant ideas in each chapter, highlighting not only their achievements but also their limitations. Therefore, she leaves a door open to all those researchers who study humor from a linguistic point of view.

In short, the monograph reviewed here is an ambitious and original project about the linguistic study of humor in Spanish. It additionally represents an obligatory reference for all scholars interested in discourse and pragmatics. This book consequently offers high content quality complemented by great expository clarity that contributes to an easy, straightforward and instructive reading.