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# The role of irony in the personal development of individuals: relational complexities and pedagogical paradigms in comparison

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## Introduction

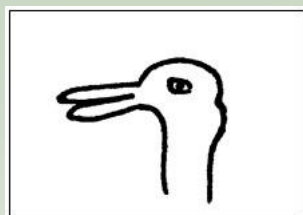
Irony is a pedagogical category still little investigated from the point of view of human sciences, even if it shows to be of great educational interest, especially in training processes and in relation to a *postmodern mind*. In Italy, irony has been brought back to the center of the pedagogical debate since 2006, thanks to scholars such as Cambi, Giambalvo, Becchi, Cives, Madrussan, Mariani, Mortari, Muzi, Cagnolati and others, all committed to highlighting its critical, deconstructive and reflective character.

In the wake of the *philosophy of mind* studies, this research wants to deepen and validate the remarks developed so far, especially in relation to the needs of a complex society. Moreover, starting from a conception of irony as a pedagogical category, we will explore the term in its polymorphic and polysemic dimension, its meaning in a diachronic sense and its place in the theoretical-educational panorama. The whole research is aimed at deepening the structure of Irony in its constitutive elements which can be considered valid from a qualitative standpoint according to the pedagogical foundations.

## Aims

The research project:

- examines the theoretical reflection around this pedagogical category in order to highlight the elements that can be qualitatively valid according to the pedagogical foundations;
- investigates the use of irony by both, teachers and students, in terms of awareness, self-perception and ability to see things from a different perspective, to offer a cross-section of reality of schools in this particular historical moment.



More to the point, the research project wants to:

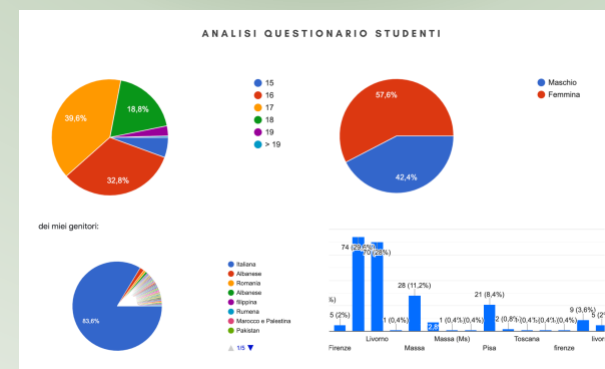
- Identify the uses of irony within educational contexts;
- Analyze the teachers and students perception about this pedagogical category;
- Investigate, starting from theoretical-pedagogical remarks, the construct of irony and its multiple dimensions: epistemological, cognitive and formative;
- Reflect on the importance of an ironic, metacognitive, reflective, critical, able-to-deconstruct mind, in order to make an individual able to face the complexity of the postmodern society.



## Methods

The research uses *mixed-methods* (Trincherò, Robasto, 2019) that combines in a structured way both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. More to the point:

- Qualitative-quantitative analysis (Mantovani, 1998) of the data of a survey to students (aged 15 to 19) and teachers in the Higher schools of Tuscany;
- Qualitative analysis, with an interpretative approach, of the semi-structured interviews made to the pedagogues who were interested in the subject.



## Results

- Offering an overview of the reality of today-school, understanding what is the link between Irony and the needs of a complex society;
- Spotting the value indicators that qualify Irony as a pedagogical and educational category.

## Discussion and future investigations

During the research work, there were some limitations due to the *coronavirus* pandemic which prevented me from doing face-to-face interviews with teachers/students and fieldwork in class with students. This highlighted the true value of Irony: the ability to question oneself and be able to redefine expectations.

Starting from the results that will emerge from this research, it would be interesting to deepen and investigate, through an *educational action-research*, the role that irony plays with adolescents and, more to the point, its ability to support the paradox of the reality.

## References

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