

L'HOMOPHONIE : UN GRAND RESSORT DE L'HUMOUR FRANÇAIS

Chantal Rittaud-Hutinet

Université Paris 3 – EA 1483, France , chrit@wanadoo.fr [ORCID: 0000-0002-0289-2132](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0289-2132)

Abstract:

To obtain a joke with homophonic resources requires that ambiguity is perceived in the mind of the person you are speaking to. Therefore, you bind him/her to choose one of the two (or more) potential meanings, and he/she is responsible of the – right or wrong – choice he/she makes. Three main rules explain the high number of sentences containing homophonies in French: the end of a word moves according to the syllabic structure of its environment; written -e- vowel, which is pronounced or not according to the number of preceding consonants; prosodic groups contain few syllables (even only 1) or many (up to 25!).

I analyse different cases where homophony may occur – daily life, playing time, gender, age, job, leisure, cultural activities, place of birth, etc. – to attempt to give responses to the following questions: Since when, where, when, who, for whom is it realized? What are the means taken by speakers to 'make' them, and for what purposes? For the speakers, what are the differences – if there are – between deliberate homophonies and nonintentional ones?

Keywords: *Oral rules in French; Ambiguity; Homophony; Joke; French history.*