Analysis of Sarcasm Language Use on Instagram Social Media (Case Study of Students from the Faculty of Social Sciences UINSU)

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Abstract

This article aims to examine the dynamics of sarcasm language use by students of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UINSU) in their interactions on Instagram social media. The urgency of this research arises from the observation that sarcasm, although often used as a communication tool, frequently leads to misinterpretations and interpersonal conflicts in the digital context that lacks non-verbal cues. This study adopts a qualitative case study approach with a constructivist paradigm, using thematic analysis techniques to interpret data obtained through in-depth interviews and observation of social media activities. Data validity testing was conducted through source triangulation to ensure the reliability of the findings. The research results indicate that students have significantly varied understandings of sarcasm, which is often misinterpreted as serious communication, leading to undesired emotional reactions. In the segment "Social Cognition: Student Poll on Sarcastic Comments on Instagram," it was found that although students could identify sarcasm, emotional reactions to sarcasm varied, indicating a need for higher digital literacy to effectively manage and process information in social interactions. The discussion in this article emphasizes that sarcasm on social media, while being a dynamic expression tool, requires deep contextual understanding to avoid misinterpretation. Therefore, enhancing media literacy is crucial to help students understand communication nuances and reduce the risk of misunderstandings in digital interactions. This study highlights the importance of effective digital literacy education, which not only enhances students' communication skills but also prepares them to navigate the complex and often ambiguous digital ecosystem.
Keywords: Language, Sarcasm, Instagram, Students

INTRODUCTION

The use of sarcasm as a complex and multifaceted linguistic expression generates various interpretations and reactions in the context of digital communication [1], [2]. In the current digital era, social media platforms like Instagram not only function as tools for sharing information and personal experiences but also as arenas for social interaction where various forms of language, such as sarcasm, are often used to convey satire, humor, or social criticism [3], [4], [5], [6].

Given the complexity and prevalence of sarcasm usage on social media, this study underscores the importance of understanding how students perceive and use sarcasm. This research is crucial because inappropriate use of sarcasm can lead to misunderstandings and interpersonal conflicts, especially in an anonymous and diverse environment like Instagram. Students, as part of the younger generation actively using social media, play a key role in shaping communication dynamics within the networked society. Therefore, a deep understanding of how they interpret and respond to sarcasm is essential [7], [8].

From a theoretical perspective, this research integrates Network Society theory and media ecology to analyze the dynamics of sarcasm use on social media. Network Society theory, proposed by Manuel Castells, aids in understanding how social structures and information technologies influence and shape individual communication methods in society [9]. Meanwhile, the media ecology concept extends this understanding by emphasizing the influence of the media environment on communicative processes and how media shapes human perception and interaction [10].

According to the media ecology perspective, Instagram is not just a platform for communication but an environment that influences and is shaped by its communicative practices. In this ecosystem, sarcasm can function as either a defense or attack mechanism, depending on intent, context, and audience perception. This consideration adds a layer of complexity in understanding how messages are conveyed and received, challenging users to consider the social and emotional implications of their interactions [11], [12], [13].

Sarcasm on social media is often widely used but not always correctly understood by the recipient. Alongside digital technology advancements, human interaction becomes faster and more efficient [14], but

this also brings new challenges in interpreting communicated messages. Social media, particularly Instagram, becomes a vital arena for exchanging ideas and personal expressions, but it can also become a ground for social conflict if messages are not conveyed or received appropriately [15].

In an increasingly fragmented and pluralistic society, students' use of sarcastic language not only reflects linguistic intelligence but often signifies a critical stance towards social, political, or cultural phenomena. This underscores the importance of understanding the context and nuances of the language used in sarcasm, which depends not only on the words spoken but also on the broader social and cultural context in which those words are articulated.

The relative anonymity offered by social media can increase opportunities to use sarcasm without considering the direct consequences of such expressions. This demands a higher interpretive ability from the recipient, who must be able to assess whether a statement is serious or merely satirical. Therefore, digital literacy is not just about understanding how to use digital platforms but also about understanding and interpreting the content shared within those contexts.

The urgency of this research focuses on the importance of enhancing media literacy among students to address the challenges of navigating the complex digital ecosystem and understanding the implications of using sarcastic language on social media platforms like Instagram. In a networked society that emphasizes rapid and superficial interactions, a deep understanding of the social and psychological nuances of sarcasm becomes critical, as its use often carries a high risk of misinterpretation, exacerbating interpersonal conflicts, or triggering broader misunderstandings. Therefore, this study aims to equip students with adequate digital literacy skills, enabling them to communicate more wisely and effectively in digital spaces, thereby reducing the risk of misinterpretation and enhancing the effectiveness of their interpersonal communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The media ecology theory developed by Marshall McLuhan states that media technology not only changes how we view the world and interact but also shapes our thought processes and socialization. McLuhan, with his phrase "the medium is the message," emphasizes that the intrinsic characteristics of the medium are more important than the content it conveys [16]. According to him, each medium has a significant impact on social structure and individual interaction by creating new communication environments that influence how we communicate, think, and behave in society.

The Network Society theory developed by Manuel Castells [17] outlines how the information and communication technology revolution in the late 20th and early 21st centuries transformed traditional social and economic structures into networked societies. In this society, nodes and connections formed by the rapid flow of electronic information become the core of social, economic, and political organization, with the ability to manage information being key to generating wealth and driving innovation, reflecting a fundamental shift in the dynamics of power and societal structures.

According to Gibbs et al. [18] who examined how sarcasm is interpreted in online text communication, without the presence of non-verbal cues, sarcasm is often easily misunderstood, which can trigger misunderstandings and interpersonal conflicts.

Skovholt, Grønning, and Kankaanranta [19] explored emotional expression on social media, such as LinkedIn, and found that sarcasm, although not frequent, can provoke strong and varied reactions depending on the context and relationships between individuals.

Utz, Tanis, and Vermeulen [20] discussed how Instagram, as a visual-based platform, changes social interaction and how individuals express themselves. This media facilitates unique forms of interaction and alters the way individuals build and maintain social relationships, including in the use of figurative language such as sarcasm.

Lastly, based on Manuel Castells' Network Society theory, Van Dijck [21] evaluated how digital social networks affect social norms and practices, demonstrating how technologies like Instagram can reinforce social networks while influencing communication structures and social interactions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is designed as a qualitative study adopting a case study approach with a constructivist paradigm, focusing on the use of sarcastic language by students [22], [23]. The research aims to deeply understand and interpret how students comprehend and use sarcasm in their interactions on Instagram. Through the constructivist paradigm, this study recognizes that reality is a social construct shaped by individual experiences and interactions, in this case, students.

The research was conducted over one month at Campus 4 UINSU Tuntungan, where students frequently access and interact via Instagram. Data sources in this study include primary data obtained through data collection techniques such as interviews, observations, and documentation. Secondary data were also collected through literature studies and relevant online materials to support and strengthen the analysis of primary data [24]. The total number of informants in this study was 10, selected through purposive sampling techniques, with specific criteria relevant to the research needs, such as the frequency of Instagram use and the tendency to use sarcasm. The informants are as follows:

Name (Initials)	Gender	Age
KN	M	21
AGN	M	21
CR	F	22
K	F	20
MAAL	M	23
FP	M	23
AM	F	22
SR	M	20
NSAM	M	19

Table 1. Research Informants

The data collection techniques involved in-depth interviews to gain a broader understanding of the informants' perceptions and experiences with sarcasm. Observations were conducted to directly monitor how sarcasm is used in daily interactions on Instagram, and documentation was used to collect written or visual evidence of these interactions. Data analysis was carried out using thematic analysis techniques, which identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within the data. Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke are experts

often associated with this thematic analysis technique, providing a framework for identifying themes emerging from data narratives [25].

The validity of the data in this research was tested using source triangulation methods, where data obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation were cross-checked to ensure the accuracy and depth of the analysis [26], [27]. Triangulation helps verify the validity of the constructed data interpretations, thus enhancing the credibility of the research findings. Through this approach, this study aims to provide a comprehensive and reflective overview of the dynamics of sarcasm use among FIS UINSU students on social media.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
STUDENTS UNDERSTANDING OF SARCASTIC LANGUAGE ON INSTAGRAM

The understanding of sarcasm among students on Instagram has become a relevant topic amid the increasing digital social interactions, especially among students of the Faculty of Social Sciences at UINSU. Sarcasm, as a form of expression often used to convey subtle or sometimes harsh criticism, requires deep contextual understanding to avoid misinterpretation. Although sarcasm can serve as an effective communication tool or even entertainment, the risk of misinterpretation is quite high, particularly in text-based communication without nonverbal cues [28].

This study analyzes how students perceive and respond to the use of sarcasm in comments on Instagram. Based on interviews with several respondents, it was revealed that there is variation in understanding what sarcasm is and how to respond to it. Factors such as the context of the comment, the relationship between users, and the nuances of language play significant roles in how sarcasm is received and interpreted. Misinterpreting sarcastic comments as serious often leads to unwanted emotional reactions, highlighting the importance of higher digital literacy among students for more effective navigation in digital social communication. The table is as follows:

Category	Understanding of Sarcasm	Misinterpretation as Serious Comment
Awareness of Sarcasm	Many students understand sarcasm as a language used to insult or criticize, often with negative connotations. Others understand that sarcasm can be an ironic way of giving compliments.	Generally, students often misinterpret sarcasm as a serious comment, especially when the context is unclear or they do not know the commenter.
Interpretation	Several respondents stated difficulty in distinguishing sarcasm from serious comments, mainly due to lack of context or clear understanding of the writer's intent.	Some students actively interpret sarcastic comments as serious because they feel the language implies serious intent and might hurt someone's feelings.
Emotional Reaction	Some students feel that sarcasm can be hurtful and impolite, showing that they react emotionally to the use of sarcasm.	Misinterpreting sarcasm often triggers strong emotional reactions, where students feel offended or disappointed by comments they consider serious.

Tabel 2. Student Understanding

Various student responses reveal diverse understandings of sarcasm, often seen as a form of communication containing negative elements. The first respondent, for instance, acknowledges their ability to differentiate sarcasm but has experienced difficulties in determining whether a comment is sarcastic or serious. This indicates that even with awareness of sarcasm, there is still ambiguity in accurate reception and interpretation in social media contexts [29].

The second respondent underscores similar difficulties in distinguishing sarcasm, exacerbated by the fact that many others also face the same challenges. This reinforces that sarcasm, while commonly used, is often misunderstood or misinterpreted by the broader social media user community. This comment highlights the importance of media literacy education to interpret language nuances more effectively [30].

Another respondent expressed uncertainty about what sarcasm is, associating it with negative expressions aimed at hurting or insulting others. This indicates a negative stigma attached to the use of sarcasm, often seen as an impolite or even malicious form of communication, highlighting a gap in understanding that may affect social interactions [31].

A student opined that sarcasm can sometimes mean an ironic way of giving compliments, providing a concrete example of how sarcasm can be confusing. This experience emphasizes that sarcasm is often multi-interpretative and context-specific, demanding a deep understanding of the situation and interpersonal relationships involved.

Another student's experience of frequently mistaking sarcasm for serious comments shows that without clear context, sarcasm is easily misinterpreted, underscoring the importance of context in digital communication.

A respondent noted that sarcasm is sometimes difficult to distinguish, particularly because it is challenging to know the actual intent of the commenter. This illustrates how anonymity and the absence of nonverbal cues in digital communication can increase the risk of misinterpretation, highlighting the need for more careful interpretation in social media interactions.

Some students described sarcasm as a form of mockery or derision, identifying sarcasm as a communicative strategy aimed at irony. This experience illustrates how sarcasm can be used as a complex social expression tool, showing the power of words in shaping social dynamics [32].

A student stated that sarcasm is often used when literal answers do not make sense, indicating a tendency to use sarcasm in situations where reality is too absurd or ironic to be expressed directly. This suggests the adaptation of sarcasm as a form of social criticism or cultural commentary [33].
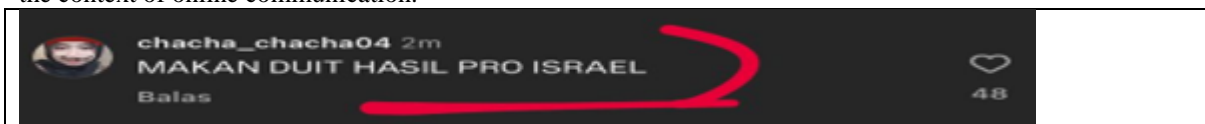
Another experience mentioned that mistaking sarcasm can have negative consequences, such as damaging social relationships or causing serious misunderstandings. This underscores the social consequences of misinterpreting sarcasm, emphasizing the importance of clarity and mutual understanding in communication.

Finally, the common experience of misinterpreting sarcasm as serious among students highlights the challenges they face in distinguishing comments meant to be light-hearted from those that are hurtful. This reveals how complex and challenging navigating social interactions on social media can be, especially when sarcasm is involved.

SOCIAL COGNITION: STUDENT POLL ON SARCASTIC COMMENTS ON INSTAGRAM

In the current digital era, social media has become a rich interaction space filled with nuances of communication, including the use of sarcasm, which often serves as a tool for self-expression. Sarcasm is frequently used both for humor and criticism, bringing significant implications for online social dynamics. The subchapter "Social Cognition: Student Poll on Sarcastic Comments on Instagram" focuses on how students of the Faculty of Social Sciences at UINSU understand and respond to sarcasm in comments on the platform. Through this research, we delve deeper into the emotional reactions and social perceptions related to the use of sarcastic language [34], [35].

A survey method was chosen to collect responses to comments considered sarcastic by the students. Thematic analysis of the obtained data aims to understand the influence of sarcasm on individuals and their social interactions in a digital environment. It is expected that the results of this poll will provide insights into how interactions on social media, particularly sarcasm, affect students' social lives and emotional awareness in the context of online communication.

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Category	Number of Cases	Details
Identification of Sarcasm Emotional Reaction	Sarcasm (6)	The majority of comments were identified as sarcastic by respondents.
	Not Sarcasm (4)	Some respondents considered the comments to be serious rather than sarcastic.
Impact on Social Life Identification of Sarcasm	Not Emotional (3)	A small number of respondents were not emotionally affected
	Slightly Emotional (2)	Some respondents experienced slight emotional responses.
	Emotional (4	The majority felt emotional towards the comments, ranging from mild to highly emotional.
Emotional Reaction Impact on Social Life	Influential (7)	Most respondents felt that such comments could have a significant impact on social life.
	Slightly or Not Influential (3)	Some felt that the comments had little or no impact on social life.
Awareness of Commentators	Awareness Present (6)	Most commentators were considered aware of

		their statements and their impacts.
	No Awareness (4)	Some were perceived as not considering or being insensitive to the impact of their comments.

**Tabel 3.** Analysis of Sarcasm Comments on the @fuji_ann Account

The context of sarcasm usage on social media, particularly on Instagram, among students of the Faculty of Social Sciences at UINSU shows significant variation in interpretation and reactions to comments such as "eating pro-Israel money." This comment, found on the @fuji_ann account, sparked an in-depth discussion about the boundaries between sarcasm and seriousness. Some respondents interpreted this comment as sarcasm, viewing the use of capital letters and the context of the sentence as indicators of a sarcastic style. However, others perceived it as serious criticism, highlighting how emotional pressure and associated negative connotations could affect their perceptions.

The emotional responses resulting from this interaction varied, ranging from neutral to highly emotional reactions. Respondents who felt unaffected emotionally tended to view the comment as part of the normal dynamics of social media, where sarcasm is often used as a communication tool. Conversely, those who experienced emotional responses showed a tendency to reflect more deeply on the implications of the comment, both personally and within a broader social context. This demonstrates how individual context and personal experiences can influence the interpretation of the same message [36].

The impact of comments on social life was also a key topic in this discussion. The majority of respondents believed that such comments could have a significant impact on the reputation and social image of the targeted individual. This view is supported by the experiences of some respondents who have witnessed or experienced social consequences from sarcastic or critical comments on social media. They acknowledged that even comments intended as jokes could be interpreted negatively and trigger unintended social consequences [37].

Regarding commentator awareness, opinions were divided between those who believed that commentators were aware of the potential impact of their words and those who felt that commentators might not consider the long-term effects of their comments. Some respondents emphasized the importance of understanding the context before responding, suggesting that this awareness is crucial to prevent misinterpretation and excessive reactions.

The analysis reveals the complexity of interpreting and reacting to sarcasm on social media, which depends not only on the words used but also on the social context and personal experiences of users. This underscores the need for a more nuanced approach to understanding digital communication dynamics, where a single expression can have multiple meanings and consequences depending on who reads it and in what situation.
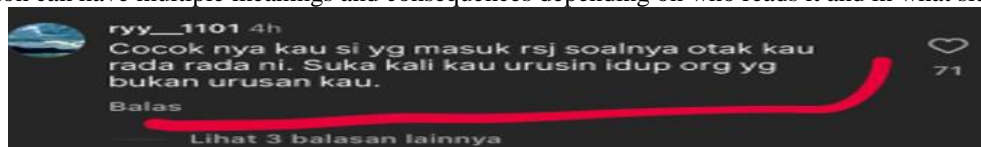
Category	Number of Cases	Details
Identification of Sarcasm	Sarcasm (5)	The majority of respondents identified the comments as sarcastic.
	Not Sarcasm (5)	Others viewed it as a serious attack rather than sarcasm.
Emotional Reaction	Not Emotional (2)	Some respondents were not emotionally affected.
	Slightly Emotional (3)	These respondents experienced slight emotions in reaction to the comment.
	Emotional (5)	The majority of respondents felt very emotional, reflecting a greater impact.
Impact on Social Life	Influential (7)	The majority felt that the comments could significantly affect reputation and social interactions.
	Slightly or Not Influential (3)	Some felt that the comments had minimal or no impact.
Awareness of Commentators	Awareness Present (6)	Most respondents believed that commentators were aware of the impact of their statements.
	No Awareness (4)	Others felt that commentators were unaware of or did not consider the impact of their comments.

**Table 4.** Analysis of Sarcastic Comments on the @yolo_ineee Account

Viewed within the context of social media, the use of sarcasm often carries diverse implications for users' understanding and social dynamics. A case study conducted with students from the Faculty of Social Sciences at UINSU demonstrates that the interpretation of sarcasm is not always uniform and can be influenced by the context and personal experiences of individuals. Sarcastic comments such as "a suitable place for you would be a mental hospital because your brain seems a bit off. You really enjoy meddling in other people's affairs that aren't your business" on the @yolo_ineee account, for example, were perceived by some respondents as sarcastic in a mocking tone, while others viewed it as a form of invective or personal attack.

The emotional reactions elicited by such comments varied. Some respondents reported being unaffected emotionally, suggesting they could detach from the impact of the words or perhaps understood the context of the sarcasm used. On the other hand, some felt highly provoked emotionally, considering that the comment was not only inappropriate but also potentially damaging to an individual's reputation and personal image on social media. This reaction is often intensified by personal experiences with cyberbullying or similar attacks on digital platforms [38].

The impact on social life was also a significant point in this analysis. Respondents indicated that such comments could have a substantial effect on how an individual is perceived within their social environment. Harsh and disrespectful comments, even when sarcastic, can generate prolonged negative perceptions, affecting social interactions and possibly closing doors to social and professional opportunities [39].

Regarding commentator awareness, opinions were divided. Some respondents suggested that commentators might not fully realize the impact of the words they use, especially in negative contexts that may arise. Meanwhile, others believed that commentators were fully aware of what they were conveying and the potential reactions that could ensue, highlighting the complexity of understanding and intent behind sarcasm on social media.

Overall, this study emphasizes the importance of a deeper understanding of the nuances of communication on social media. Recommendations include the need for improved digital literacy, which not only educates users on how to communicate effectively but also on how to receive and process information in a more critical and reflective manner, thus preventing miscommunication and unnecessary conflicts [40].
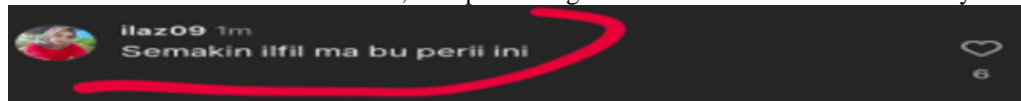
Category	Number of Cases	Details
Identification of Sarcasm	Sarcasm (4)	Some respondents considered the comment to be sarcastic, referring to the use of language that could be perceived as mockery or irony.
	Not Sarcasm (6)	Others viewed it as an expression of feelings or a direct insult rather than sarcasm.
Emotional Reaction	Not Emotional (3)	Some respondents did not feel emotionally affected, viewing the comment as part of normal social media interactions.
	Slightly Emotional (4)	These respondents experienced slight emotions, usually discomfort or mild disturbance from the tone of the comment.
	Emotional (3)	Some felt more emotional, responding to the comment as something rude or offensive.
Impact on Social Life	Influential (6)	The majority believed that such comments could have an impact, especially if received negatively by the targeted individual or by the broader community.
	Slightly or Not Influential (4)	Some respondents viewed the comment as having minimal impact, or believed its effect depended on how the individual received it.
Awareness of Commentators	Awareness Present (5)	Most respondents felt that commentators were aware of what they were saying and possibly the impact of their comments.
	No Awareness (5)	Other respondents felt that commentators might not fully realize the impact of their words or did not consider the potential reactions.

Tabel 5. Analysis of Sarcastic Comments on the @marissyaichareal Account

In the study titled "Analysis of Sarcasm in Social Media Language on Instagram (Case Study of Students from the Faculty of Social Sciences, UINSU)," we examine students' reactions to comments made on the Instagram account @marissyaichareal. The comment "Semakin Ilfeel sama bu peri ini" elicited a range of interpretations and reactions, highlighting the complexity of sarcasm and its impact on individuals within the context of social media. Students showed significant differences in identifying whether the comment was sarcastic or merely an expression of irritation, with nearly half of the respondents viewing it as sarcasm, while others considered it a serious expression of emotion.

From an emotional perspective, some students felt that the comment triggered varying emotional responses, ranging from unaffected to fairly disturbed. Some believed that the use of the term "Ilfeel" in the context of the comment could be interpreted as mockery, evoking emotions because it seemed direct and personal. This indicates that the content used in sarcasm on social media can have strong emotional resonance, depending on the specific words used and their context [41].

Regarding the impact on social life, the majority of students argued that such comments could affect how an individual is perceived within a broader social sphere. However, some contended that the impact depends on how the recipient of the comment perceives it—whether they view it as constructive criticism or as a hurtful personal attack. This highlights the importance of context and personal perception in interpreting messages conveyed through social media [42].

Awareness of commentators was also a significant point of discussion. While some students believed that commentators were aware of the potential impact of their words, others assessed that there might be a lack of understanding regarding how those words could be received by others. This suggests a gap between the commentator's intent and the recipient's interpretation, which can expand the space for misunderstandings and conflicts in digital social interactions.

Overall, this analysis explores how sarcasm is used and received in social dialogue on Instagram, demonstrating that the language employed in comments not only reflects individual norms and values but also influences social interaction dynamics. Through these interview transcripts, it becomes clear that a deep understanding of the nuances of verbal and nonverbal communication on social media is essential for effective navigation within the increasingly complex digital ecosystem [43].
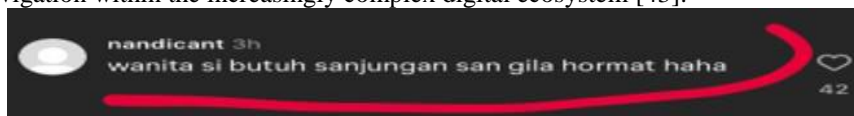
Category	Number of Cases	Details
Identification of Sarcasm	Sarcasm (3)	Some respondents identified the comment as sarcasm, interpreting it as a form of mockery or derision towards stereotypical behavior.
	Not Sarcasm (7)	The majority viewed it as a serious statement or social critique, rather than sarcasm.
Emotional Reaction	Not Emotional (4)	Some respondents were not emotionally affected, perceiving the comment as a typical viewpoint.
	Slightly Emotional (3)	These respondents experienced slight emotions, generally feeling discomfort or objection to the tone of the comment.
	Emotional (3)	Others felt significantly impacted, viewing the comment as painful or offensive.
Impact on Social Life	Influential (7)	Most felt that the comment could affect public perception and social interactions, especially regarding how women are viewed.
	Slightly or Not Influential (3)	Some thought the impact was minimal or dependent on the individual's reception of the comment.
Awareness of Commentators	Awareness Present (4)	Some respondents believed that the commentator was fully aware of the impact of their words, using the platform to express social criticism or personal views.
	No Awareness (6)	Others felt that the commentator might not be aware of the negative impressions or emotional impact their comments might cause.

Table 6. Analysis of Sarcastic Comments on the @marissyaichareal Account

Research on reactions to comments on social media, particularly those containing elements of sarcasm, reveals various interpretations and complex emotional responses. Students from the Faculty of Social

Sciences at UINSU provided their perspectives on the comment "wanita sibutuh sanjungan dan gila hormat haha" found on the Instagram account @marissyaichareal. The analysis shows significant differences in opinion regarding whether the comment is sarcasm or a direct insult. Some students consider it sarcasm containing mild mockery, while others view it as a serious and degrading expression.

From an emotional perspective, student reactions to the comment ranged from non-emotional to highly emotional. The comment, perceived either as sarcasm or an insult, tends to trigger emotional responses due to its touch on sensitive issues concerning gender roles and social expectations of women. Some informants felt that the comment was not only inappropriate but also affected how others perceive women in general, indicating a broader social impact of the words used on social media.

The aspect of commentator awareness was also a point of debate among students. Some argued that the commentator was aware of the effects of their words and might have had a specific intention behind their use, whether to attract attention or as a form of social critique. On the other hand, others suggested that the commentator might not fully realize the negative impact of their comments, possibly due to ignorance or a lack of empathy regarding gender issues.

The impact of the comment on the social life of the targeted individual was also a significant concern. Many students assessed that such comments could affect an individual's reputation on social media, potentially impacting their real-world social interactions. Negative comments, especially when viewed by a wide social network, can damage one's public image and influence how others interact with them.

Overall, this study underscores the importance of understanding the context and consequences of communication on social media. Sarcasm, when used carelessly, can lead to misunderstandings and strong emotional reactions. This highlights the need for better digital literacy, equipping social media users with the ability to understand and navigate the complexities of online interactions more wisely [44].

Category	Number of Cases	Details
Identification of Sarcasm	Sarkasme (5)	Sebagian responden menganggap komentar sebagai sarkasme, biasanya karena penggunaan emotikon tertawa atau konteksnya yang mencakup ejekan ringan.
	Tidak Sarkasme (5)	Sebagian lainnya memandangnya sebagai hujatan atau kritik langsung, bukan sarkasme, menganggapnya serius dan menghina.
Emotional Reaction	Not Emotional (3)	Some respondents are not emotionally affected, seeing the comment as part of normal online interaction dynamics.
	Slight Emotion (4)	These respondents feel slight emotion, usually discomfort or unease with the tone or content of the comment.
	Emotional (3)	Some respondents are significantly affected, perceiving the comment as hurtful or offensive, especially due to body shaming.
Impact on Social Life	Influential (7)	The majority feel that such comments can impact one's reputation and social image, particularly in negative contexts like body shaming.
	Slight or Not Influential (3)	Some believe the impact depends on individual reception and social context, with some viewing it merely as a joke.
Awareness of Commentators	Awareness (6)	Most respondents believe the commenter is fully aware of the impact of their words, using sarcasm or criticism as a communication or expression tool.
	No Awareness (4)	Some respondents feel that the commenter might not fully realize the negative impact of their comments or might not seriously consider the consequences.

Tabel 7. Analysis of Sarcastic Comments on @Fuji_an Account

The study titled "Analysis of Sarcasm Language Use on Instagram Social Media (Case Study of Social Sciences Students at UINSU)" explores student perceptions and reactions to the comment "keteknya item" on the Instagram account @Fuji_an. This comment has triggered various interpretations and emotional reactions, highlighting the complexity of social interactions in digital spaces and their implications for social dynamics and mental health.

Firstly, some respondents perceive the comment as sarcasm, often due to the use of laughing emoticons indicating a playful tone. However, this comment is also viewed as body shaming by most students, indicating a divergent understanding of what constitutes humor versus insult. Respondents who view it as body shaming express discomfort and negative emotions, reflecting the serious psychological impact of seemingly light-hearted words.

Emotionally, many students report that the comment evokes feelings of annoyance and insecurity, particularly among those sensitive to body image issues. The comment not only causes personal distress but is also considered potentially harmful to how others perceive the individual targeted by the comment, which can damage their reputation and social image within the broader community.

Additionally, regarding the commentator's awareness, there is a division in viewpoints; some are convinced that the commentator is fully aware of the impact of their words and uses sarcasm as a tool for criticism or insult. Meanwhile, other respondents feel that the commentator may not fully understand the effects of their words or views it as inconsequential social interaction, indicating a lack of empathy or social awareness [45].

This research underscores the importance of understanding the nuances of communication on social media and the need for better digital literacy education that encourages users to critically consider the consequences of their online language. It also highlights the need for platforms like Instagram to develop more effective tools and policies for managing and moderating potentially harmful or offensive content, thereby creating a safer and more inclusive space for all users [46].

In the context of this study, the analysis of sarcasm language use by students of the Faculty of Social Sciences at UINSU on Instagram reveals the dynamic aspects of communication in the digital era. Manuel Castells' Network Society theory provides a useful framework for understanding how digital networks influence social structures and interpersonal interactions. Students, as part of this networked society, are connected in a vast digital web, with Instagram being a significant field of interaction. Within this network, sarcasm serves as a communicative tool reflecting complex social relationships and often ambiguity [47].

The use of sarcasm on Instagram by students reflects their adaptation to the diverse media ecology, where social media acts as an extension of daily interactions. Neil Postman's concept of media ecology emphasizes how media affects human perception, understanding, and interaction with the world. On Instagram, this visual platform not only conveys messages directly but also the social context in which sarcasm operates. Students use sarcasm to negotiate their social identities, demonstrate intelligence, criticality, or even resistance to dominant norms and values [48].

Sarcasm often appears in text or images containing irony or insinuation, which requires deep contextual understanding for accurate interpretation. In the Network Society, where information moves rapidly and context is often incomplete, the potential for misinterpretation increases. This can lead to tension or misunderstanding among students, as undetected or misinterpreted sarcasm may be perceived as aggressive or negative communication [49].

In this complex media ecology, students learn and continually adjust to new, unwritten communication rules. They develop the ability to 'read' language nuances and interpret sarcasm in relation to their knowledge of the sender and broader context. This ability becomes crucial in building and maintaining harmonious social relationships in a fast-paced digital environment [50].

This study also highlights the crucial role of digital literacy in helping students effectively use Instagram as a communication and expression tool. In the Network Society, the ability to navigate digital media, understand various forms and styles of communication such as sarcasm, and use them appropriately becomes a valuable skill.

Media ecology also brings to light the importance of prudence in language use. In a fast-paced and extensive communication ecosystem, messages conveyed through sarcasm can spread widely and be received in various ways, depending on the recipient's perspective. This demands a higher level of user awareness about how their messages might be received by a heterogeneous audience [51].

The use of sarcastic language on Instagram by students of the Faculty of Social Sciences at UINSU reflects the complex interaction between individuals and technology within the context of network society and media ecology. This study delves into how students navigate and adjust communication codes in the network society to maintain social relevance and influence within the ever-changing media ecosystem.

The novelty of this research lies in its application of Network Society and media ecology theories to understand the use of sarcastic language in the context of Instagram social media by students. Most previous research has focused on the impact of social media on individual behavior from a psychological or pure communication perspective without considering the broader network dynamics and media ecology. This study

enriches that understanding by examining how students, as part of the networked society, actively use sarcasm not only as a form of expression but also as a tool for navigating complex social interactions supported by digital technology. This opens new perspectives in digital communication studies, highlighting how technological and social contexts interact to shape communicative practices.

CONCLUSION

Through the above exposition, the use of sarcastic language on Instagram by students of the Faculty of Social Sciences at UINSU highlights how it impacts communication dynamics and social interactions within the framework of Network Society Theory and Media Ecology. This analysis reveals that digital networks and media, as communicative environments, play a crucial role in how students perceive and respond to sarcasm, often triggering misinterpretations and conflicts due to the absence of nonverbal cues in textual communication. The study underscores the importance of digital literacy, urging students to develop a higher awareness and deeper understanding of the context and intent behind messages to reduce the risk of misunderstandings and enhance the effectiveness of social interactions on social media.

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