

Types and Functions of Sarcasm in Indonesian Political Conversation on ‘X’

Saskia Aliyah Putri^{1*}, Mariska Adinda¹, Syaufah Sabila¹, Fitri Hasibuan¹

¹Universitas Sumatera Utara

saskiaaliyah@students.usu.ac.id*

ABSTRACT

This study investigates how sarcasm is produced and functions within Indonesian political conversations on X (formerly Twitter). Although previous research has examined sarcasm in entertainment, religion, and media contexts, studies focusing on political discourse especially within Indonesia's highly polarized digital environment remain limited. This gap indicates the need to understand not only the types of sarcasm used but also their rhetorical purposes in online political interactions. Therefore, the aim of this study is to classify the forms of sarcasm using Camp's (2011) framework and to reveal how each type functions as a tool for political criticism, identity building, and ideological positioning. Adopting a qualitative descriptive design, this research analyzes 30 sarcastic posts and replies responding to government-related issues on X. The instrument consists of an analytical rubric based on linguistic cues of sarcasm, while the data were collected through purposive sampling of public posts from September to October 2025. The data were processed through transcription, classification, and interpretive analysis. The findings show that propositional and illocutionary sarcasm dominate, indicating a strong preference for indirect yet sharp political critique. Sarcasm also serves as a rhetorical strategy for expressing resistance, mocking authority, and strengthening group affiliation among users. These findings imply that sarcasm is not merely humor in digital communication but a significant form of civic engagement and political meaning-making in Indonesia's online public sphere.

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Political Discourse;
Pragmatics;
Rhetorical Function;
Sarcasm;
X (Twitter)

Article History:

Received: 17 November 2025

Revised: 9 December 2025

Accepted: 7 January 2026

Published: 8 January 2026

How to Cite in APA Style:

Putri, S. A., Sabila, S., Suka, M. A. br. G., & Hasibuan, F. (2026). Types and Functions of Sarcasm in Indonesian Political Conversation on ‘X’. *Lexeme : Journal of Linguistics and Applied Linguistics*, 8(1), 39–48.

<https://doi.org/10.32493/ljlal.v8i1.54793>

This is an open access article under [CC-BY-NC 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) license.



INTRODUCTION

In the current development of digital communication, social media is increasingly being used as the main space for people to interact. Many people use this platform not only to share news, but also as a place to express their opinions or comment on current issues. Fast connectivity allows people to engage in conversations regardless of distance. Castells (2009) argues that this type of network-based communication pattern changes the way people perceive social relationships; users no longer just receive messages, but also play a role in shaping them. Under these conditions, social media has become a place where various groups try to negotiate the identities and values they consider important.

Along with these changes, the way people express their emotions and interpret public events have also changed. The language used on social media is very diverse; some are funny, some are cynical, and some play with ambiguity. Zappavigna (2011) notes that similarities in style

or attitude help users feel that they belong to a group. Irony or sarcasm is often used to signal that someone is aligned with a particular viewpoint. In the Indonesian context, Lim (2017) shows that social media has deepened political polarization and encouraged the emergence of a kind of group nationalism. In other words, online activity is not merely entertainment, but part of a broader identity dynamic.

Sarcasm itself is a fairly complex type of figurative expression. Kreuz and Glucksberg (1989) associate it with verbal irony used to convey criticism or negative sentiments. Gibbs (2000) emphasizes the distance between the literal meaning and the speaker's intention. Meanwhile, Clark and Gerrig (1984) highlight its performative aspect: the speaker appears to be saying something seriously, when in fact the intended meaning is the opposite. Because of this mechanism, sarcasm can function as humor, as an attack, or as a form of protest that is not expressed directly. Dynel (2014) adds that sarcasm can also be a broader rhetorical strategy, for example, to weaken the position of an opponent or strengthen relationships between members of a particular group.

To understand how sarcasm functions in Indonesia's digital environment, it is essential to consider it within a broader socio-political context. Although social media is often viewed as an open platform for expressing opinions and engaging with others, in reality, these platforms can also perpetuate existing social divisions. Several studies demonstrate that online discussions frequently occur within the same circles, creating an echo chamber where users primarily encounter views that align with their own beliefs (Setiawati et al., 2023). Saputra's (2024) research supports this finding; saying that political discourse in Indonesia is increasingly influenced by partisan narratives and buzzer activity. Therefore, digital spaces are not truly neutral, they more often reproduce social tensions that are already deeply rooted outside the virtual world.

This condition is clearly visible on the X platform. Many users tend to stay within communities that share similar political or ideological tendencies, and as a result, cross-group interactions become increasingly rare. When these barriers strengthen, the chances of misunderstandings or open conflict increase. In situations like this, sarcasm is often chosen as a style of communication: it allows someone to mock or criticize without having to express their intentions directly. Therefore, on X, sarcasm often has a deeper function than just humor; it also marks the social position of users and helps form boundaries between groups.

Although there has been considerable research on sarcasm, studies in Indonesia have mostly focused on entertainment or religion. For example, Puri and Baskara (2023) researched sarcasm in comedy, while Azis and Marlina (2020) studied the sarcastic strategies of comedians. There are also studies related to television shows (Lubis and Bahri, 2023), short films (Simarmata and Kusumoriny, 2024), and religious lectures (Anjayuni et al., 2024). In the digital realm, Pasa et al. (2021) discussed sarcastic hate speech on Instagram, while Tarwiyati et al. (2022) discussed sarcasm in news headlines.

From these various studies, many still refer to Camp's (2011) typology, namely propositional sarcasm, lexical sarcasm, "as if" sarcasm, and illocutionary sarcasm (Simarmata and Kusumoriny, 2024; Anjayuni et al., 2024; Azis and Marlina, 2020; Sitanggang and Ningsih, 2022). However, the application of this framework in the Indonesian political context is still limited, especially in digital interactions. Most studies using Camp's framework stop at identifying types or linguistic markers, providing a useful descriptive foundation but leaving unanswered how sarcasm operates rhetorically within political discourse. In Indonesia's online environment, sarcasm often does more than mock; it is used to position oneself politically, point out inconsistencies, or signal group alignment. These rhetorical dimensions remain underexplored, particularly in polarized digital spaces such as X.

This study addresses that gap by examining how each of Camp's sarcastic types appears and works within Indonesian political conversations on X. Rather than focusing solely on classification, this study considers how propositional, lexical, like-prefixed, and illocutionary sarcasm contribute to meaning-making in Indonesian political interactions, whether by

foregrounding irony, expressing disillusionment, or revealing tensions within public discourse.

X plays an important role in political expression in Indonesia because users can combine text, images, memes, emojis, and hashtags to form interrelated meanings. Communication on this platform often produces layered meanings. In such situations, sarcasm is not only a tool for humor or emotional venting, but can also serve as subtle criticism or even a form of resistance against dominant narratives. On that basis, this study is guided by three questions: (1) what types of sarcasm appear in Indonesian political discourse on X and how often each type occurs; (2) how the rhetorical work of each type emerges in Indonesian political interactions; and (3) what broader patterns can be observed from the use of sarcasm in Indonesia's polarized digital political sphere.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Social Media (X)

Social media has become a public communication platform that provides concise and interactive access for the general public. Among various platforms, X has become a medium for expressing opinions and building relationships with other users. Zappavigna's (2011) research shows that Twitter functions as a platform for "ambient affiliation" where people can connect through hashtags and similar styles of speech. X has a unique format where each tweet has a character limit and reply and quote tweet features, creating dense communication filled with irony and sarcasm.

In the political context, X plays a significant role as an arena for public discourse. Recent studies prove that sarcastic, cynical, and aggressive language has become common practice in online interactions, especially when responding to politicians or officials (Saz-Rubio, 2023). In Indonesia, this phenomenon is even more prominent. Lim (2017) found that social media encourages the formation of algorithmic enclaves that reinforce tribal nationalism, resulting in political debates filled with cynical and sarcastic comments. Therefore, X is not only a space for diverse information, but also an important arena where sarcasm functions as a political tool to attack opponents, criticize policies, and strengthen group identity.

Sarcasm

Sarcasm is generally considered a form of verbal irony in which there is a discrepancy between the literal meaning and the speaker's intention. Kreuz and Roberts (1995) emphasize that sarcasm can be recognized through the identification of hyperbole and distinctive intonation, but this theoretical basis is still too general and difficult to apply to short online texts. Attardo (2000) adds that sarcasm can be identified through certain markers, such as the use of hyperbolic words, punctuation, or quotation marks. These are signs that indicate a relevant discrepancy. Although useful for recognizing linguistic features, this theory is more of a list of markers than a systematic classification.

Alternatively, Camp (2011) offers a more comprehensive and operational classification. He distinguishes sarcasm into four categories: (1) propositional sarcasm, when the entire literal meaning of what is said is reversed from what the speaker actually means; (2) lexical sarcasm, when only certain words or phrases are used to convey a sarcastic meaning; (3) sarcasm with the prefix "as if," which uses expressions such as "as if" or "as though" to mark mockery; and (4) illocutionary sarcasm, when the illocutionary force of a speech act is reversed, for example, an expression of gratitude that actually contains a complaint. This classification provides a clear theoretical basis because it maps what is the target of reversal, whether it is a proposition, lexicon, marker, or illocution.

The advantage of Camp's (2011) theoretical framework over previous approaches lies in the clarity of its classification, which allows for consistency in annotation, especially in short texts such as tweets. While Kreuz and Roberts (1995) focused more on acoustic indicators, and Attardo (2000) emphasized linguistic markers, Camp offers a systematic classification system. Therefore, this study adopts Camp's theoretical framework as the basis for classifying forms of sarcasm in

political conversations on X.

The Rhetorical Function of Sarcasm

In addition, sarcasm also has an important rhetorical function in online political interactions. Many studies show that sarcasm is not only used as a humor strategy, but also as a means to attack, criticize, or strengthen solidarity. Saz-Rubio (2023) found that sarcastic responses to the prime minister's posts on X served to challenge authority and undermine the perception of opponents, thus sarcasm was seen as a form of attack. From a different perspective, Dynel (2014) refers to sarcasm as humorous irony, which is a combination of criticism and humor that allows speakers to mock their opponents while eliciting laughter from a sympathetic audience.

The function of sarcasm as a foundation for solidarity is also emphasized in digital linguistics studies. Zappavigna (2011) shows how stylistic strategies on X allow people to build connections based on similar attitudes. In Indonesia, Nugrahani et al. (2019) found that sarcasm in politics has a dual function: to discredit opponents while entertaining the audience. This shows that sarcasm is not only interpreted as a negative statement, but also as a rhetorical strategy to strengthen group identity.

Based on the literature, the rhetorical function of sarcasm in this study will not be explained through a specific theory, but rather identified directly from the data. However, a basic discussion of previous studies provides preliminary information that sarcasm in X can function as criticism, attack, humor, or a bond of political group solidarity.

Sarcasm in Digital Communication

Digital communication is different from face-to-face interaction. In online conversations, speakers cannot use intonation or facial expressions, so other strategies are used to indicate sarcasm. Research shows that emoticons and emojis can function as pragmatic markers. Research shows that emoticons and emojis can function as pragmatic markers. Filik et al. (2016) found that the combination of irony and emoticons increases the likelihood of readers understanding sarcasm. This is in line with the findings of Dresner and Herring (2010), who stated that emoticons in online communication are not only emotional icons, but can also mark illocutionary acts, including sarcastic intent.

In addition, multimodalities such as images and political memes are often used to convey sarcasm. Shifman (2014) asserts that political memes on the internet often rely on irony and sarcasm to create humor while also conveying social criticism. Other research in the field of online pragmatics (Merrison et al., 2012) also highlights how cynical and sarcastic comments are part of accepted impolite practices when audiences share context.

These characteristics of digital communication are highly relevant to this study, which focuses on sarcastic expressions in Indonesian political discourse on X. With character limits, reply and quote tweet features, and the use of emojis and hashtags, X provides an environment conducive to the emergence of sarcasm in a concise but effective manner. Users can combine short texts with visual symbols to mark mockery, so that sarcasm becomes not only a tool for criticism, but also a means of building group solidarity in political conversations. Therefore, the study of sarcasm on X is a logical continuation of a broader study of sarcasm in digital communication.

METHOD

This study applies a qualitative descriptive method to analyze the form and rhetorical function of sarcasm in Indonesian political conversations on X, formerly Twitter. It includes public posts and replies, collected from September to October 2025, specifically those reaction to news tweets about government policies and political issues. The linguistic cues for sarcasm included hyperbole, contradiction, and evaluative reversal. Textual and visual data (including memes and edited images) were considered to capture the multimodal aspects of sarcasm.

Data collection was conducted by reading digital communication tools through the social media platform “X,” which focuses on conversations that occur naturally without researcher intervention. For this paper, each post selected was related to or was a response to tweets discussing government policy. The data was documented and transcribed for analysis. All data consisted of tweets that contained indications of sarcasm. Expressions of sarcasm were then classified based on their form, entered into a table, and selected for analysis based on their rhetorical function. This method allowed the study to reveal how sarcasm functions as a concise but powerful strategy for political commentary and the formation of social alliances in Indonesia's digital public sphere.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher has analyzed a set of political tweets written in Indonesian and provided their English translations for clarity. Each tweet was then examined to identify its type of sarcasm based on Camp (2011) and to interpret its rhetorical function in political discourse. The findings of this analysis are summarized in the table below.

Table 1. Sarcasm Analysis in Indonesian Political Conversations on X

No.	Original Tweet (<i>Bahasa Indonesia</i>)	English Translation	Type of Sarcasm (Camp, 2011)	Rhetorical Function
1	<i>“Kita cari kerja sendiri, digaji dari kerja sendiri, lalu pemerintah datang untuk ambil pajak.”</i>	“We look for jobs ourselves, get paid by our own work... then the government shows up to take the tax.”	Propositional sarcasm	Criticizing government’s economic fairness and taxation.
2	<i>“Anggaran pendidikan tinggi banget, tapi yang diajar cuma cara ngeles pajak.”</i>	“Our education budget is so high — we just need to teach how to avoid taxes.”	Lexical sarcasm	Highlighting moral hypocrisy in public budget management.
3	<i>“Solusi kemiskinan ternyata poster motivasi. Akhirnya tercerahkan.”</i>	“So the solution to poverty is motivation posters — finally, enlightenment.”	Propositional sarcasm	Pointing out symbolic policymaking without real action.
4	<i>“Pemerintah stop subsidi biar rakyat mandiri. Rakyat stop pajak biar pemerintah mandiri.”</i>	“Government STOP subsidy so people become independent. People STOP tax so government becomes independent.”	Propositional sarcasm	Exposing contradiction in economic policy logic.
5	<i>“Akhirnya bisa milih perubahan lagi... untuk keenam kalinya.”</i>	“Finally I can vote for change again... for the 6th time in a row.”	Lexical sarcasm	Expressing political fatigue and public cynicism.
6	<i>“Andai kejujuran dibayar kayak korupsi, pasti semua orang jujur dan kaya.”</i>	“If only honesty paid like corruption — everyone would be rich and honest!”	Propositional sarcasm	Mocking corruption culture and moral decay.
7	<i>Terima kasih media kita yang cuek sama krisis, soalnya kita butuh berita bahagia.</i>	Let’s thank our media for ignoring the crisis — after all, we need happy headlines.	Illocutionary sarcasm	Criticizing media complicity and political distraction.
8	<i>Terima kasih kebijakan baru: bensin jet makin murah, motor makin mahal.</i>	Thank you for the brilliant policy: now petrol is cheaper for jets, more expensive for mopeds.	Illocutionary sarcasm	Criticizing inequality in subsidy policies.
9	<i>Hebat banget pemerintah — banjir datang pas kampanye, timing sempurna.</i>	Great job government — next flood please, but make sure it’s near election time.	Propositional sarcasm	Ridiculing the politicization of natural disasters.
10	<i>Bangga banget, korupsi kita makin tinggi tiap tahun. Minimal konsisten.</i>	So proud that corruption keeps breaking records — at least we’re consistent.	Lexical sarcasm	Mocking normalized corruption through ironic praise.
11	<i>Tambah pajak biar pejabat makin bisa beli mobil baru.</i>	Sure, we need more taxes so officials can finally enjoy	Propositional sarcasm	Expressing anger toward misuse of

12	<i>Bagus banget subsidi dihapus, biar rakyat makin semangat bayar mahal.</i>	better cars. Wonderful that subsidies are removed — because we all clearly wanted to pay more.	Illocutionary sarcasm	public funds. Exposing burdensome and ineffective policy decisions.
13	<i>Transportasi publik makin bagus, sekarang dua jam buat jalan satu kilometer.</i>	Public transport is improving — now you only need two hours to move one kilometer.	Propositional sarcasm	Mocking inefficiency in public infrastructure.
14	<i>Perusahaan negara rugi lagi, tapi yang penting semangat stabil.</i>	Great news! Another state company loss — at least consistency is maintained.	Lexical sarcasm	Highlighting ongoing mismanagement.
15	<i>Janji kampanye lagi? Gak sabar buat kecewa dalam kualitas HD.</i>	Election promises again? Can't wait to be disappointed in HD.	Lexical sarcasm	Expressing disillusionment with repeated empty promises.
16	<i>Itu hoaks... buktinya banyak pejabat rangkap jabatan... datanya nggak sesuai dengan kenyataan.</i>	That's a hoax... the proof is that many officials hold multiple jobs — data doesn't match reality.	Propositional sarcasm	Criticizing unrealistic economic claims.
17	<i>Jangan menyerah. Saya lihat pejabat kalau gagal penuhi janji politiknya, malah kerahkan buzzer di media sosial.</i>	Don't give up — when officials fail their promises, they just deploy buzzers instead.	Illocutionary sarcasm	Mocking avoidance of responsibility.
18	<i>Lebih baik belajar dari warteg, puluhan tahun melayani orang dan jarang ada keracunan.</i>	Better learn from warteg, decades of serving people, almost never poisoning anyone.	Propositional sarcasm	Criticizing wasteful foreign study trips.
19	<i>Lowongan kerja: berpenampilan menarik, lulusan top, pengalaman luas... (meme pejabat)</i>	"Job Vacancy" meme showing officials as applicants.	Propositional sarcasm	Criticizing nepotism and double standards.
20	<i>Pacaran umur 30-an... untung komunikasi kita gak seberantakan kabinet.</i>	Dating in your 30s... at least our communication isn't as messy as the cabinet's.	Like-prefixed sarcasm	Highlighting cabinet disorganization.
21	<i>(Meme) Pria tidur saat isu besar tapi bangun saat logo Trans7 muncul: "Real shit?"</i>	Meme showing selective outrage — calm during scandals, furious over TV shows.	Propositional sarcasm	Criticizing performative morality and selective outrage.
22	<i>Wah bahaya, nanti buzzer bisa ngerti bahasa Inggris kita.</i>	Oh no, buzzers will finally understand our English.	Propositional sarcasm	Mocking online trolls and misinformation culture.
23	<i>Tentu saja TNI yang bakal ngajar bahasa Portugis.</i>	Of course, the army will teach Portuguese.	Propositional sarcasm	Criticizing irrational militarization of civilian roles.
24	<i>Meme gak bikin negara hancur, tapi eksploitasi lingkungan iya... belajar etika lingkungan dulu.</i>	Memes won't destroy the country — but environmental exploitation will.	Illocutionary sarcasm	Criticizing misplaced moral outrage.
25	<i>Yang salah bukan jawabannya, tapi wawancaranya — tanya bos proyek, ya pasti muji.</i>	Not the answer's fault — the interview's fault for asking the project boss.	Propositional sarcasm	Exposing media bias and power collusion.
26	<i>Mungkin nanti pas utang lunas, kita semua udah dikubur, keretanya masuk museum.</i>	By the time the debt is paid, we'll all be buried and the trains in museums.	Propositional sarcasm	Criticizing long-term debt and policy inefficiency.
27	<i>AI bukan buat nyiptain lapangan kerja... Ibu ini Menaker atau Menkomdigi?</i>	AI isn't for creating jobs... is she the Labor Minister or the Digital Minister?	Illocutionary sarcasm	Criticizing flawed logic and overlapping authority.
28	<i>Pantas Indonesia jadi negara paling bahagia.</i>	No wonder Indonesia is the happiest country.	Lexical sarcasm	Criticizing inequality and corruption through ironic praise.

29	<i>Usahnya teriak 'antek asing' akhirnya dibayar lunas juga.</i>	The one yelling 'foreign puppet' finally got paid.	Propositional sarcasm	Exposing political hypocrisy and shifting alliances.
30	<i>Calon pemimpin bakal kirim TNI ke Brasil buat belajar Portugis. Cuan lagi.</i>	Future leader to send army to Brazil to learn Portuguese — more profit.	Propositional sarcasm	Criticizing opportunism in education policy.

Types of Sarcasm in Political Conversations on X

Using Camp's (2011) categories, sarcasm in Indonesian political discussions on X can be grouped into four types: propositional, lexical, like-prefixed, and illocutionary sarcasm. From the 30 samples we examined, propositional sarcasm appeared the most often or more than half of all data. This type usually works by saying something that sounds positive or neutral, but the intended meaning goes in the opposite direction. It often shows up through ironic praise or exaggerated claims that highlight how far official statements are from the public's lived reality.

For instance, the posts "We look for jobs ourselves... then the government shows up to take the tax" and "Better learn from warteg..." clearly expose contradictions in government narratives. These forms of propositional sarcasm let users criticize without sounding openly hostile, so the humor softens the blow but the message remains sharp.

Lexical sarcasm, meanwhile, relies on word choice. Users intentionally pick words like "proud" or "so high" to describe situations that are obviously negative. In "Our education budget is so high — we just need to teach how to avoid taxes" or "So proud that corruption keeps breaking records," the positive vocabulary is used ironically, and that contrast produces sarcasm.

Like-prefixed sarcasm is less frequent, but still present. It typically uses phrases such as "at least," "as if," or other comparative structures. A tweet like "Dating in your 30s... at least our communication isn't as messy as the cabinet's" works because the "at least" signals a humorous contrast, implying something much more critical than the literal wording.

Illocutionary sarcasm reverses the intention behind the speech act. Instead of literal content, the sarcasm comes from performing an act that obviously isn't sincere. For example, "Let's thank our media for ignoring the crisis" appears to express gratitude, but the real purpose is to criticize. Here, politeness becomes a tool for veiling discontent while still making the criticism obvious to readers.

Rhetorical Functions of Sarcasm

Across these four types, sarcasm consistently carries several rhetorical functions: criticizing policies, mocking political actors, encouraging social reflection, and strengthening group affiliation. The most dominant function is political criticism, particularly through propositional sarcasm, which directly pushes back against official discourse. Statements such as "Government STOP subsidy so people become independent" gently poke at flawed policy logic while still using humor to keep the tone manageable.

Lexical and like-prefixed sarcasm lean more toward ridicule. When users post lines like "So proud that corruption keeps breaking records," the exaggerated praise makes the criticism obvious but still humorous. This blend helps users express frustration without sounding aggressive.

Illocutionary sarcasm often serves as indirect criticism disguised as politeness. A sentence like "Let's thank our media for ignoring the crisis" looks polite on the surface but functions as a subtle attack. It allows users to distance themselves from direct conflict while still conveying dissatisfaction.

Sarcasm also builds solidarity. Memes or quote-tweets, such as the "Real Shit?" meme; mix humor with moral commentary, creating a shared understanding among users. This interaction forms a sense of community, which fits Zappavigna's (2011) idea of "ambient affiliation," where people align themselves with others through small, humorous signals.

General Pattern

Overall, sarcasm on X operates as a multi-layered strategy, playful, but also critical. Within Camp's (2011) typology, Indonesian users employ all four types to express disagreement, highlight contradictions, and create collective identity. Propositional and illocutionary sarcasm appear the most often, suggesting a preference for balancing direct critique with polite indirection.

Sarcasm lets users challenge authority without sounding openly confrontational. It exposes inconsistencies in political narratives while keeping the tone humorous. In the Indonesian digital context, sarcasm is therefore not only comedic; it also functions as a gentle form of resistance and civic involvement.

Compared to previous studies, the findings here share similarities with Saz-Rubio's (2023) research on British and Spanish Twitter users, where sarcasm is also used as indirect political criticism. However, Indonesian users tend to phrase their sarcasm more softly and playfully, reflecting cultural expectations around maintaining politeness even when disagreeing.

The dominance of propositional and illocutionary sarcasm also supports Sitanggang and Ningsih's (2022) findings during the Biden–Trump election, where similar meaning-reversal strategies were common. Yet Indonesian sarcasm often adds a moral layer, which aligns with Nugrahani et al.'s (2019) idea of “dual-function sarcasm” that both entertains and critiques.

Finally, compared to Puri and Baskara's (2023) work on stand-up comedy, this study shows that sarcasm in political conversations serves a broader purpose. It is not just about humor; it becomes a way for people to voice concerns, participate in civic discussions, and connect with others who share the same frustrations. In this way, sarcasm becomes a social strategy for expressing resistance and shaping collective identity within Indonesia's online political sphere.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the types and rhetorical functions of sarcasm in Indonesian political conversations on X using Camp's (2011) classification. The analysis of 30 sarcastic posts revealed that propositional and illocutionary sarcasm are the most dominant forms. These types rely on meaning reversal and ironic politeness, enabling users to criticize governmental actions, highlight policy contradictions, and express political frustration subtly yet powerfully. Sarcasm on X also serves broader rhetorical functions: it allows users to resist dominant narratives, mock political actors, and build group solidarity through shared humor and ideological alignment. In a polarized digital environment, sarcasm operates as an alternative mode of civic participation that blends critique, identity expression, and communal bonding.

The findings imply that sarcasm is not merely humorous expression but a strategic linguistic resource for navigating Indonesia's political discourse online. It demonstrates how digital communication reshapes public engagement by enabling users to challenge authority while maintaining indirectness and social acceptability. This contributes to a deeper understanding of political communication in algorithm-driven platforms where brevity and multimodality amplify sarcastic expression.

However, this study has several limitations. The data were collected within a specific two-month period and focused only on posts reacting to government-related issues, which may not represent the full spectrum of sarcasm on X. The analysis also relied on qualitative interpretation; therefore, it did not include computational or large-scale corpus tools that could offer broader generalizability. Additionally, multimodal elements such as images or memes were considered only descriptively, not analyzed using a detailed multimodal framework.

Future research should expand the dataset by including longer timeframes, comparing election versus non-election periods, or analyzing sarcasm across different political communities. Subsequent studies may also incorporate mixed methods, such as computational sarcasm detection, sentiment analysis, or multimodal discourse analysis, to capture the layered nature of online sarcasm more comprehensively. Research that compares Indonesian political sarcasm with that of other countries could further highlight culturally specific patterns. By addressing these

aspects, future studies can deepen our understanding of sarcasm as a dynamic rhetorical force within digital political communication. Overall, sarcasm within online political communication displays how linguistic creativity has become a powerful tool for negotiating ideology, identity, and power in Indonesia's digital public sphere.

REFERENCES

- Anjayuni, E., Malayati, R. M., & Rahmah, S. N. (2024). Sarcasm humor in Habib Ja'far's *Log-In* content on Deddy Corbuzier's YouTube channel. *KOMUNIKE: Jurnal Komunikasi Penyiaran Islam*, 16(2), 169–192. <https://doi.org/10.20414/jurkom.v16i2.11023>
- Attardo, S. (2000). Irony markers and functions: Towards a goal-oriented theory of irony and its processing. *RASK: International Journal of Language and Communication*, 12(1), 3–20.
- Azis, A., & Marlina, L. (2020). Analysis of sarcasm found in Keith Alberstadt's comedy. *English Language and Literature*, 9(2), 215. <https://doi.org/10.24036/ell.v9i2.7805>
- Camp, E. (2011). Sarcasm, pretense, and the semantics/pragmatics distinction. *Noûs*, 46(4), 587–634. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0068.2010.00822.x>
- Castells, M. (2009). *Communication power*. Oxford University Press.
- Clark, H. H., & Gerrig, R. J. (1984). On the pretense theory of irony. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 113(1), 121–126. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0096-3445.113.1.121>
- Dresner, E., & Herring, S. C. (2010). Functions of the nonverbal in CMC: Emoticons and illocutionary force. *Communication Theory*, 20(3), 249–268. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2010.01362.x>
- Dynel, M. (2014). Isn't it ironic? Defining the scope of humorous irony. *Humor*, 27(4), 619–639. <https://doi.org/10.1515/humor-2014-0091>
- Filik, R., Turcan, A., Thompson, D., Harvey, N., Davies, H., & Turner, A. (2016). Sarcasm and emoticons: Comprehension and emotional impact. *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 69(11), 2137–2156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17470218.2015.1106566>
- Gibbs, R. W. (2000). Irony in talk among friends. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 15(1–2), 5–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926488.2000.9678862>
- Kreuz, R. J., & Glucksberg, S. (1989). How to be sarcastic: The echoic reminder theory of verbal irony. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 118(4), 374–386. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0096-3445.118.4.374>
- Kreuz, R. J., & Roberts, R. M. (1995). Two cues for verbal irony: Hyperbole and the ironic tone of voice. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 10(1), 21–31. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327868ms1001_3
- Lim, M. (2017). Freedom to hate: Social media, algorithmic enclaves, and the rise of tribal nationalism in Indonesia. *Critical Asian Studies*, 49(3), 411–427. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2017.1341188>
- Lubis, F. K., & Bahri, S. (2023). Sarcasm in Indonesian television show *Pesbukers*. *Randwick International of Social Science Journal*, 4(1), 91–99. <https://doi.org/10.47175/rissj.v4i1.626>
- Merrison, A. J., Wilson, J. J., Davies, B. L., & Haugh, M. (2012). Getting stuff done: Comparing e-mail requests from students in higher education in Britain and Australia. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 44(9), 1077–1098. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2012.04.002>
- Nugrahani, F., Widayati, M., Darmini, W., Sudiyatmi, T., & Imron AM, A. (2019). Sarcasm in Indonesian political culture. In *Proceedings of the 2nd Workshop on Language, Literature and Society for Education*. <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.21-12-2018.2282775>
- Pasa, T. A., Nuriadi, & Lail, H. (2021). An analysis of sarcasm on hate speech utterances on Just Jared Instagram account. *Journal of English Education Forum (JEEF)*, 1(1), 10–19. <https://jeef.unram.ac.id/index.php/jeef/article/view/94>
- Puri, A. D., & Baskara, G. (2023). Irony and sarcasm in Nigel Ng's stand-up comedy: Analyzing their role in creating humor. In *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Linguistik dan Sastra (SEMNALISA) III* (pp. 218–226). <https://e-journal.unmas.ac.id/index.php/semnalisa/article/view/7096>

- Saputra, A. F. (2024). The role of social media in building political discourse: Political polarization, UU ITE and echo chambers. *IJTIHAD*, 40(1), 68–74. <https://doi.org/10.15548/ijt.v40i1.548>
- Saz-Rubio, M. (2023). Sarcasm, impoliteness, and political communication on Twitter: A comparative study of British and Spanish responses. *Discourse, Context & Media*, 53, 100669. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2023.100669>
- Setiawati, T., Tiara, A., & Mustika, S. (2023). Social media as a negative source of political news in a polarized society? Indonesian and Filipino students' perception. *Jurnal Komunikasi*, 17(2), 243–256. <https://doi.org/10.20885/komunikasi.vol17.iss2.art7>
- Shifman, L. (2014). *Memes in digital culture*. MIT Press. <https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/9429.003.0001>
- Simarmata, N. B., & Kusumoriny, L. A. (2024). Translation of sarcasm found in *Tilik* short movie. *Ethical Lingua: Journal of Language Teaching and Literature*, 11(2). <https://doi.org/10.30605/25409190.779>
- Sitanggang, E. M., & Ningsih, T. (2022). Sarcasm used by netizens on Twitter: Case of election Bidden–Trump era. *ISLLAC: Journal of Intensive Studies on Language, Literature, Art, and Culture*. <https://doi.org/10.17977/um006v6i12022p68-78>
- Tarwiyati, P., Putri, P., Prayitno, H., Huda, M., & Rahmawati, L. (2022). Sarcasm of news headlines on national electronic mass media and its relevance to learning Indonesian. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220503.029>
- Zappavigna, M. (2011). Ambient affiliation: A linguistic perspective on Twitter. *New Media & Society*, 13(5), 788–806. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444810385097>