SARCASM IN SOCIAL MEDIA: A FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE ANALYSIS OF RYAN REYNOLDS'S YOUTUBE VIDEOS

Thesis

Submitted as partial Fulfillment of the Requirement to Obtain Strata One (S1) Degree in English Department

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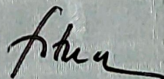**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND ARTS**

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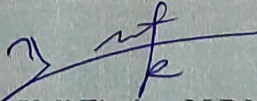Dr. Fitrawati, S.S, M.Pd.
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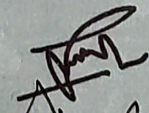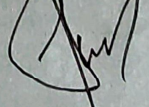**YouTube Videos**

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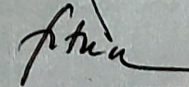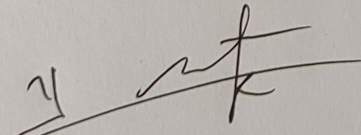
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I realize that this thesis is further from the word perfect, as there are many mistakes that I made in thesis. Therefore, I welcome any suggestion and constructive

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Padang, 6 December 2023

The researcher

Hafizul Azizi

ABSTRACT

Social media has become an integral part of human life. People can communicate, connect, and share their experience as well as their feelings with other people in the world. Some people might used figurative language to convey their emotions when they are using social media. Ryan Reynolds is an example of a people used sarcasm, a figurative language, to be used in his social media that is YouTube. This research aimed to identify types and purposes of sarcasm used in Ryan Reynolds' YouTube videos. This study used the theory of Camp (2011) regarding types of sarcasm and Kreuz (1991) regarding purposes of sarcasm. This study uses descriptive method. The data for this research were 37 sarcastic utterance taken from 15 videos from Ryan Reynolds' YouTube channel. The most prominent type of sarcasm used in Ryan Reynolds' YouTube videos is propositional sarcasm with 23 occurrences and the least used type of sarcasm is lexical sarcasm with zero occurrence. The most prominent purpose of sarcasm is to mock with 15 occurrences and the least used purpose of sarcasm is to show anger with only one occurrence.

Keyword: *Social Media, Figurative Language, Sarcasm, Ryan Reynolds, YouTube*

ABSTRAK

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Media sosial telah menjadi bagian penting dalam kehidupan manusia saat ini. Orang-orang dapat berkomunikasi, terhubung, dan berbagi pengalaman serta perasaan mereka kepada orang-orang lain yang ada di dunia. Beberapa orang menggunakan bahasa majas untuk mengutarakan perasaan mereka ketika menggunakan media sosial. Salah satu contoh orang yang menggunakan majas, yaitu sarkasme dalam menggunakan media sosial YouTube, adalah Ryan Reynolds. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi tipe dan tujuan sarkasme yang digunakan Ryan Reynolds di video YouTube nya. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori Camp (2011) tentang tipe-tipe sarkasme dan teori Kreuz (1991) tentang tujuan sarkasme. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif. Data untuk penelitian ini adalah 37 ujaran sarkasme yang diambil dari 15 video dari channel YouTube ryan Reynolds. Dari analisi ini dapat disimpulkan bahwa tipe sarkasme yang paling menonjol yang digunakan oleh Ryan Reynolds di video YouTube nya adalah sarkasme proposisional dengan 23 kemunculan dan tipe sarkasme yang paling sedikit digunakan adalah sarkasme leksikal yang tidak ada kemunculannya. Tujuan sarkasme yang paling menonjol adalah untuk mengejek dengan 15 kemunculan dan tujuan sarkasme yang paling jarang digunakan adalah untuk menunjukkan kemarahan dengan satu kemunculan.

Kata Kunci: *Media Sosial, Majas, Sarkasme, Ryan Reynolds, YouTube*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In daily life, people converse with each other delivering and acquiring messages from one to the other. This is called communication, as Hoben (1954) explained that communication is the verbal exchange of thought or ideas. The verbal exchange is not limited to information only, but also feelings or thoughts as well as intentions between each other. The act of communication helps us to create a relationship or bond with others. With the use of correct words and phrases, a good relationship will be formed. On the other hand, when the words and phrases used in communication are inappropriate, a bad relationship will be formed. Sometimes to express feelings, there is a need to use words and phrases that seem to deviate from the conventional way of communicating. This kind of language use can be called figurative language.

Figurative language is the use of expressions and sentences that are very in contrast to their literal meaning (Gluksberg, 2011). When people use figurative language, the meaning of the message that they are trying to deliver is different from the utterances that they are producing. This could mean that by using figurative language, people can express themselves in a manner and a way that is not restricted by the rules and thus free to express themselves however they want.

It also can be said that figurative language gives life to the way people use language by leaving the conventional way that is literal language. The use of literal language is restricting us to use language to its full potential. People can express something with exaggeration to show how they feel with the use of hyperbole. Others might use words to describe two different things but have some resemblance or to point out that one of them is better than the other as in metaphor. And some people express anger or irritation to things intending to mock but are presented with its opposite connotation. This kind of figurative language is called sarcasm.

Singh (2012) describes sarcasm as an irony that is predominantly used to mock, ridicule, or insult harshly and it is also used in a destructive way as in criticism. Singh beforehand explains that Irony is the use of words that is opposite of what is said, given that Singh describes sarcasm as an irony that is different in its purpose. Other researchers also have similar definitions of sarcasm in which sarcasm is bitter and caustic (Gibbs, 1986). Sarcasm can be also tied with humor, this use of sarcasm is can be considered an act of humor by criticizing something but still covered in a way that makes people laugh. The humor part of sarcasm comes from the audience or listeners who are present when sarcastic utterances are directed at someone. When that someone seriously responds to a sarcastic utterance or becomes defensive to the utterance, the audience seeing the interaction will be amused by it. This corresponds to an old proverb saying that comedy is a tragedy that happens to someone other than ourselves (Attardo, 2001).

The use of sarcasm itself can be called ubiquitous for it is can be found anywhere in everyday communications, speeches, work environments, and most prominently, social media. The existence of social media has encouraged people to connect with others through online social networks as well as to create contents with the feature of user-generated content which can be accessed by everyone within the system (Obar and Wildman, 2015). At this point, there has been an insurmountable amount of social media produced by many companies with some of the noticeable ones being Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp, TikTok, and YouTube. Through these social media, people can communicate and express themselves as well as create content that then can be accessed by anyone in the world. They can share anything they desire from information or knowledge about something, communicate with people from the other side of the world, or they can express what they feel about it. Social media can also be used as a platform for people to criticize or mock something including governments, particular people or companies, and so on.

Social media allow their users to express themselves and rarely many use them to express their irritation or to mock anyone. People can freely do so because they are connected to a virtual world where they are free from any consequences that can happen when they produce negative comments and criticism through comments or videos. Because social media allow users to be anonymous and keep their personal information to themselves, which in turn protecting them from other users. Such an example can be seen in YouTube,

where people or content creators can create videos freely expressing their irritation or criticism about the things they do not like.

One particular content creator as well as an actor by the name of Ryan Reynolds has caught the researcher's attention for his way of delivering his content by regularly incorporating sarcasm into his videos on his YouTube channel. Ryan Reynolds is a Canadian-American actor, known for his snarky and sarcastic nature due to the use of sarcasm in several of his movies. He was born in Vancouver, British Columbia on October 23, 1976, and has begun acting from 2001 until now. The most famous movies played by Ryan Reynolds are *Deadpool (2016)* and *Deadpool 2 (2018)*. He played a character with the same name as the title of both movies, *Deadpool*, a marvel comic character known also as 'Merc with a Mouth' as he is a mercenary who loves to banter as well as being witty. Ryan portrayed *Deadpool* very well in the movies as many people said that he is born to play *Deadpool*. This is because Ryan's personality and his prominence in sarcasm fit perfectly with the character which resulting him awarded with Critics' Choice Movie Awards and the Golden Globe Awards. Besides *Deadpool*, Ryan had played in several movies portraying characters with a similar sense of humor as *Deadpool*. This can be seen in his movies such as *Hitman's Bodyguard* and its sequel, *Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard*, *Free Guy*, and the most recent one, *Red Notice*.

Ryan does not only carry his sarcastic witty nature to his movies but also to other social media platforms such as YouTube. He began creating videos for YouTube in 2015. In his early years in making videos, it is to promote his movies

that would be released in several months to come such as *Deadpool*, *Detective Pikachu*, *Free Guy*, and many others. Besides promotional videos for his movies, Ryan Reynolds also released videos promoting companies owned by Reynolds such as Aviation Gin and Mint Mobile as well as a football club Wrexham A.F.C. Ryan presented his videos in high quality, as the videos are also called mini-movies by Reynolds, accompanied by Ryan's unique sarcastic and witty nature throughout his videos. Also looking into the comments on Ryan Reynolds' YouTube Videos, many of the commenters are amused by Ryan because of how he presented his videos through sarcastic and witty utterances. Although many of Ryan's utterances in his videos may seem to be funny, but they also may have different purposes besides being funny that people may not have to take into account and thus be left out.

Taking the phenomena into account, the researcher is interested to examine and analyze Ryan Reynolds's videos to find out whether the sarcastic utterances in his videos are truly for comedic purposes or different purposes such as to mock or to show irritation. The people who were amused or entertained by Ryan's sarcastic utterances were because they have the same background information or context to understand Ryan's utterances as explained by Kreuz (2007) in *priciple of inferability*. The principle suggest that for a sarcastic utterance to work both participants must share the common ground or context to which the utterances is produced thus resulting the participants understood the speaker's intention.

Some previous research related to the topic of sarcasm utterances was also conducted by several researchers in different field of studies. In semantics, research on sarcasm is very expansive. Some researchers include sarcasm in the semantic study of meaning under the study of figurative language, such as Kreuz (1993) and Kalandadze (2018). Furthermore in the study of pragmatics, sarcasm also partakes to be discussion topic of researcher. Research on how sarcasm is produced and how people hearing sarcastic utterances react. Such research has been conducted by Attardo (2001) and Kreuz (1989). Other than the field of semantics and pragmatics, another field of study in which sarcasm has become one topic of discussion is computational linguistic. The majority of the research conducted on sarcasm is related to computational linguistics involved in the use of also social media such as Twitter (now known as X), Instagram and many more. Such research is performed mainly in the recent years, such as research by Bamman and Smith (2012). Sarcasm in computational linguistic research mainly aimed at finding or discussing sarcasm detection using a computer system or machines. Sarcasm in computational linguistics is very incompatible with the research being conducted. Nevertheless, there is also research conducted outside of the realm of computational linguistics, such as previously mentioned.

Research on sarcasm was also performed by Christiani (2016) about sarcasm in a TV show titled *Two Broke Girls*. The researcher aims to find out about sarcasm utterances in the TV Show as sarcasm was used for purpose of humor, but it would be complicated if delivered in several ways. Also, another research by Fitriyani (2020) discusses the sarcasm of netizens' comments on Donald

Trump's Instagram account and how it portrayed creative thinking. Another research performed by Cahyani (2017) examined the use of sarcasm in the American sitcom *The Big Bang Theory* which in the paper the writer was connecting the sarcastic utterances with Maxims of Grice. The researcher has a similar interest to the previous research in which analyzing sarcasm. In this research, the researcher would be using semantics study and pragmatics study in order to find types and purposes of sarcastic utterances. The object of research would be different from previous research in which this research analyzed the types and purposes of sarcastic utterances of Ryan Reynolds in his YouTube videos.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Based on the background above, the researcher found that sarcasm can be found in many aspects in everyday life encounter, including social media. Sarcasm could be analyzed in many different aspects, including semantics, pragmatics, and computational science. In Semantics, sarcasm is included in an area discussing about non-literal meaning called Figurative Language. Sarcasm in this aspect is analyzed regarding its non-literal meaning. In Pragmatics, sarcasm is analyzed regarding its contextual meaning that is the situation that causes sarcastic utterance to be produced. Lastly, sarcasm could also be analyzed in computational science, preferably in sentiment analysis that is classification of sarcastic utterance in text documents whether a text positive or negative.

Previous research performed by Fitriyani (2020) and Christiani (2016) also discussing about purposes of sarcasm, but the theory used in both research did not align with the purpose of sarcasm proposed by Kreuz (1991). The theory used by previous researcher is a theory by Attardo (2001) which cover the purposes of sarcasm is related

only to humor and irony. While sarcasm can be used in a form of humor, but the purpose is not only humor but to also to be caustic or bitter as said by Gibbs (2007). Hence, this research discussed the purposes of sarcasm as proposed by Kreuz (1991) because it aligns with what sarcasm is used: that is to show irritation, anger, resentment as well as a form of humor contrary to the theory of Attardo (2001) which only discussing about the humor of sarcasm.

Furthermore, the researcher choose Ryan Reynolds' utterances as the object of research because of the popularity of Ryan Reynolds especially in the recent years when he acted in several movies such as Deadpool, Red Notice, Free Guy, Detective Pikachu and many more. In the big screen, Ryan often performed characters that is snarky and sarcastic as well as humorous; align with his own personality. Ryan also known for his self-deprecating humor mocking himself regarding his role and his old movies which known to flopped or failed in theatre, such as *Green Lantern (2011)* and *X-men Origins: Wolverine (2009)*. Despite being snarky and sarcastic, Ryan is also a nice guy as said by several Hollywood actors as well. Ryan is also a businessman; he had managed several companies such as Mint, Aviation Gin, Maximum Effort as well as a football club, Wrexham. Ryan also promotes his movies and company through his YouTube channel, using his snarky and sarcastic nature to promote movies and company. Therefore, the researcher chooses Ryan Reynolds utterances in his YouTube videos to be analyze in this paper.

1.3 Limitations of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problem above, the research focused on the sarcastic utterance used as a part of figurative language in social media. Therefore,

research was restricted in semantic and pragmatic analysis focusing on types and purposes of sarcasm in Ryan Reynolds YouTube videos.

1.4 Formulation of Problem

Based on the limitation of the problem above, the formulation of the problem can be defined as: what are the types and what are the purposes of sarcasm used by Ryan Reynolds in his YouTube videos?

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the formulation above, the research questions that can be listed are:

1. What are the types of Sarcasm that Ryan Reynolds used in his YouTube videos?

2. What are the purposes of Ryan Reynolds' sarcastic utterances in his YouTube Videos?

1.6 Purpose of Research

Based on the research question above, the purpose of the research is:

1. To classify types of sarcasm uttered by Ryan Reynolds in his YouTube videos

2. To classify purpose of sarcastic utterances of Ryan Reynolds in his YouTube videos

1.7 Significance of Research

In theoretical significance, this research hopefully could help linguistic student and also general public who want to increase their knowledge and

understanding of sarcastic utterances and the intention of the speaker behind those utterances. This research can be a contribution to the student studying linguistics studies, especially in semantic and pragmatic studies. In practical significance, this research is expected to help general public to better understand sarcastic utterances as well as to increase awareness about sarcastic utterances that could occur in their everyday encounters. For researchers, this research can be of help for those who are conducting research with the same interest in sarcasm.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, the author provides several definitions of the term used in this paper.

1. Semantics

   Semantics is a branch of linguistic studies which discuss about meaning of language forms, such as words, phrases, and sentences as well as their relations with each other.

2. Pragmatics

   Pragmatics is another branch in linguistics studies discussing about the meaning of the speaker utterances. In other words, speaker intentions when they are uttered a sentence.

3. Figurative language

   Refer to the use of words and/or phrases that deviate from the conventional use of language.

4. Sarcasm

Figurative language is the use of words and phrases that are contrary to their literal meaning for destructive purposes.

5. Social Media

    Internet-based and mobile services allow users to participate in online exchanges, contribute to user-created content, or join online communities.

6. YouTube

    YouTube is one of the many social medias focusing on sharing videos between registered and non-registered users.