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Sarcasm In Virtual Communication Of Mobile Legends Gameplay On Youtube

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze the use of sarcasm in virtual communication within Mobile Legends gameplay content on YouTube, particularly on the @PascolKintil channel. The development of digital communication through social media platforms enables interaction without face-to-face contact, influencing how individuals express opinions, emotions, and criticism through language. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach based on Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) theory to examine how sarcastic expressions appear in digital gaming interactions. Data were collected through non-participant observation of two selected YouTube videos and documentation of verbal expressions that contain sarcasm. The analysis process involved data reduction, data presentation, and interpretative conclusion drawing. The results show that sarcasm functions not only as a form of criticism and humor but also as a strategy for expressing frustration, reducing tension during gameplay, strengthening team solidarity, and building digital identity within online gaming communities. In virtual communication contexts where non-verbal cues are limited, sarcastic meanings rely heavily on textual and verbal expressions as well as shared contextual understanding among players and audiences. The study concludes that sarcasm represents an adaptive communication strategy that shapes interaction patterns and digital communication culture among online gaming communities on YouTube.

Keywords: *virtual communication, sarcasm, YouTube, Mobile Legends, computer mediated communication.*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has transformed the way people communicate and interact in everyday life. Communication that previously relied on face-to-face interaction has increasingly shifted to digitally mediated platforms such as social media, online forums, and video-sharing platforms. These digital environments enable individuals to communicate without physical presence, creating new patterns of interaction characterized by flexibility, anonymity, and limited non-verbal cues. One communication phenomenon that frequently appears in digital environments is the use of sarcasm, particularly in competitive online gaming communities.

Sarcasm is a form of verbal expression in which the intended meaning differs from the literal meaning of the words being spoken. It is often used to criticize, mock, or express dissatisfaction toward a situation or another individual. In face-to-face communication, sarcasm can be recognized through tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language. However, in digital communication contexts where non-verbal cues are limited, sarcasm can become ambiguous and may be interpreted differently depending on the context of interaction (Drabble & Holloway, 2023).

Online games have become one of the most active spaces for digital communication, where players interact continuously with teammates and opponents. One popular game that encourages intense interaction among players is *Mobile Legends: Bang Bang*. In this competitive environment, players often express emotions such as frustration, humor, or criticism during gameplay. These expressions frequently appear in the form of sarcastic comments directed at teammates or opponents, reflecting the dynamic communication patterns that occur in online gaming communities (Solihin, 2024).

In addition to in-game communication, gaming interactions are also widely shared through digital platforms such as YouTube. YouTube allows content creators to upload gameplay videos accompanied by commentary, reactions, and spontaneous expressions during the game. These commentaries often contain humor, irony, or sarcasm, which serve both as entertainment for audiences and as a reflection of communication culture within gaming communities (Johnson, 2024). The interaction between creators and audiences through comment sections further strengthens virtual communication and creates a social space where sarcasm becomes a common communicative strategy (Casiraghi et al., 2024).

The use of sarcasm in online gaming communication can be understood through the perspective of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) theory. CMC explains how communication occurs through digital media where physical presence and non-verbal cues are limited. In such environments, individuals rely heavily on verbal expressions and contextual understanding to convey meaning and emotions (Walther, 1992). Therefore, sarcasm often becomes a communication strategy used to express criticism, humor, or emotional reactions in digital interactions. Based on this background, the phenomenon of sarcastic communication in gaming content on YouTube becomes an interesting subject to examine. Understanding how sarcasm appears and functions in virtual communication can provide insights into the communication culture that develops within online gaming communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Virtual Communication

Virtual communication refers to the process of exchanging messages, information, or ideas through digital technologies without direct face-to-face interaction. The development of internet technology and digital platforms has enabled individuals to communicate in various forms such as text, audio, video, and multimedia messages. These platforms allow people to interact across geographical boundaries and time differences, creating new patterns of social interaction in the digital environment. Virtual communication commonly occurs through social media platforms, online forums, messaging applications, and digital gaming platforms. In the context of digital interaction, virtual communication often differs from traditional face-to-face communication because it lacks non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language. As a result, individuals must rely more heavily on textual expressions, symbols, or contextual understanding to convey meaning effectively. According to Caspi and Raz (2025), communication mediated by digital platforms often leads to differences in interpretation because the absence of non-verbal signals may create ambiguity in how messages are understood by participants.

Furthermore, virtual communication has become increasingly prominent within online gaming communities. Multiplayer games encourage players to communicate continuously in order to coordinate strategies, respond to dynamic gameplay situations, and interact socially with teammates and opponents. These interactions often produce unique communication styles that reflect the culture and norms of online gaming communities.

Sarcasm in Digital Communication

Sarcasm is a form of verbal expression in which the intended meaning of a statement differs from or contradicts its literal meaning. It is commonly used to express criticism, humor, or mockery toward a particular situation or individual. In everyday communication, sarcasm often relies on vocal tone, facial expressions, and contextual cues to signal the speaker's intention. However, when sarcasm occurs in digital environments, the absence of these non-verbal signals can make sarcastic expressions more difficult to interpret. In digital communication contexts, sarcasm is frequently used as a communicative strategy to convey emotions such as frustration, disappointment, or humor. According to Frenda et al. (2023), sarcasm in online communication often appears through exaggerated statements, ironic comments, or contextual contradictions that reveal the speaker's intended meaning. These expressions can function both as social criticism and as a form of humor that strengthens interaction between participants in digital communities. Sarcasm is particularly common in online gaming environments, where players experience competitive situations that may trigger emotional reactions. In these contexts, sarcastic remarks may appear when players respond to mistakes, unexpected gameplay outcomes, or interactions with other players. While sarcasm can sometimes create tension between players, it can also serve as a coping mechanism that helps reduce frustration and maintain social interaction within gaming communities.

Sarcasm in YouTube Gaming Content

YouTube has become one of the most influential platforms for sharing gaming content and facilitating communication among players and audiences. As a video-sharing platform, YouTube allows creators to upload gameplay recordings, commentary videos, tutorials, and live streaming sessions. These videos often include spontaneous reactions and verbal expressions that reflect the creator's emotions during gameplay. Sarcasm frequently appears in gaming content on YouTube as part of entertainment and commentary. Content creators often use sarcastic remarks to react to unexpected gameplay events, criticize mistakes made by teammates or opponents, or create humorous moments that engage their audiences. According to Johnson (2024), humor and sarcasm in gaming live streams and gameplay commentary can increase audience engagement because they create entertaining narratives around gameplay experiences. In addition to the communication that occurs within the video itself, YouTube also provides a comment section where viewers can interact with creators and other audiences. These interactions often include sarcastic comments, humorous responses, and critiques related to the gameplay content. As a result, YouTube becomes a virtual social space where sarcasm functions not only as entertainment but also as a communication tool that shapes interaction within gaming communities.

Computer Mediated Communication (CMC)

Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) refers to communication processes that occur through digital devices such as computers, smartphones, and internet platforms rather than direct face-to-face interaction. According to Walther (1992), CMC allows individuals to interact through electronic channels where messages are transmitted in the form of text, images, audio, or video.

One important characteristic of CMC is the limited presence of non-verbal cues in communication. Unlike face-to-face interaction, digital communication often lacks facial expressions, gestures, and vocal tone that typically help convey meaning. As a result, participants in digital communication environments rely heavily on language, symbols, and contextual understanding to interpret messages. In the context of online gaming and social media platforms, CMC plays an important role in shaping communication patterns among users. Players and content creators develop unique ways of expressing emotions, humor, and criticism

through verbal and visual expressions. Oprea and Magdy (2020) explain that sarcastic communication in digital environments often emerges as an adaptive strategy to convey complex meanings in the absence of non-verbal signals.

Therefore, the CMC framework provides an important theoretical perspective for understanding how sarcasm functions in virtual communication environments such as online games and video-sharing platforms like YouTube.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to analyze the use of sarcasm in virtual communication within *Mobile Legends* gameplay content on YouTube. A qualitative approach was selected because it allows researchers to explore and interpret communication phenomena that occur in digital environments. Qualitative research focuses on understanding meanings, interactions, and communication patterns rather than measuring variables quantitatively. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is appropriate for examining social interactions and communication practices in their natural context. In this study, the qualitative descriptive approach was used to identify and interpret sarcastic expressions that appear during gameplay commentary.

The object of this research is gaming content from the YouTube channel @PascolKintil, which features *Mobile Legends* gameplay accompanied by spontaneous commentary from the content creator. The data used in this study were obtained from two selected YouTube videos uploaded on the channel. These videos were chosen because they contain clear examples of sarcastic expressions during gameplay interactions. The primary data consist of verbal statements, dialogue, and commentary produced by the content creator while playing the game. Additional contextual information, such as gameplay situations and audience responses, was also considered in order to understand the meaning of sarcastic communication within the digital environment.

Data collection was conducted through non-participant observation and documentation techniques. Non-participant observation was carried out by watching the selected videos and identifying segments that contain sarcastic communication during gameplay. In this process, the researcher observed the communication patterns that occurred in the video without participating directly in the interaction. Documentation was used to record relevant data from the videos, including dialogue transcripts, screenshots, and notes related to sarcastic expressions. These materials were collected to support the analysis and to ensure that the interpretation of sarcastic statements was based on clear contextual evidence. The data analysis process followed the qualitative analysis framework proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, the researcher selected and categorized verbal expressions that contained elements of sarcasm. In the data presentation stage, the selected data were organized and interpreted according to their context and communicative meaning. Finally, conclusions were drawn by analyzing how sarcasm functions as a communication strategy within virtual interactions in gaming content. The analysis was conducted using the perspective of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) theory to explain how sarcastic expressions are used and interpreted in digital communication environments where non-verbal cues are limited.

RESULTS

The results of this study show that sarcastic communication frequently appears in *Mobile Legends* gameplay content on the YouTube channel @PascolKintil. Based on the analysis of two selected videos, several forms of sarcastic expressions were identified in the gameplay commentary. These sarcastic expressions generally appear as reactions to gameplay situations such as mistakes made by players, unexpected outcomes during battles, or emotional

responses to competitive pressure. The sarcasm used by the content creator is delivered through verbal expressions, tone of voice, and contextual commentary related to the gameplay. In the first video analyzed, sarcastic remarks often appear when the player reacts to the behavior of opponents or teammates during the match. One example of sarcastic expression occurs when the creator criticizes a player's behavior by using exaggerated language to mock arrogance or aggressive communication from other players. These expressions serve as a way to express frustration while also creating humorous content for the audience. The sarcasm is not only directed toward other players but also toward the overall gameplay situation, which reflects the emotional dynamics experienced during competitive matches.

Another sarcastic expression appears when the creator comments on actions that seem unrealistic or exaggerated during the game. In these moments, sarcasm is used to question the authenticity of the situation while simultaneously entertaining the audience. This type of sarcasm often takes the form of ironic statements that appear to praise or acknowledge an event but actually function as criticism or mockery. Such expressions demonstrate how sarcasm can be used as a communicative strategy to convey both humor and evaluation of gameplay performance. In the second video analyzed, sarcastic communication appears more intensively as the gameplay becomes more competitive and emotionally charged. The creator frequently uses sarcastic remarks to respond to the actions of teammates or opponents, particularly when players make mistakes or fail to execute strategies effectively. These expressions include ironic praise, exaggerated reactions, and repeated statements intended to mock or criticize gameplay decisions. Despite their critical tone, these sarcastic expressions also function as entertainment that increases audience engagement with the video.

Overall, the results indicate that sarcasm in *Mobile Legends* gameplay content serves multiple communicative functions. First, sarcasm is used as a form of emotional expression when players experience frustration, surprise, or excitement during the match. Second, sarcasm acts as a form of humor that enhances the entertainment value of the gaming content for viewers. Third, sarcastic expressions contribute to the construction of the content creator's digital persona, which is characterized by expressive and humorous reactions to gameplay events. These findings also demonstrate that sarcastic communication plays an important role in shaping interaction within the online gaming community. Through sarcastic commentary, the content creator is able to build a connection with the audience who share similar gaming experiences and interpretations of gameplay situations. As a result, sarcasm becomes an integral part of communication culture within gaming content on digital platforms such as YouTube.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to analyze the use of sarcasm in virtual communication within *Mobile Legends* gameplay content on YouTube, particularly on the channel @PascolKintil. The main objective of the research was to identify how sarcastic expressions appear in gameplay commentary and to understand their communicative functions within digital gaming environments. By examining sarcastic remarks used during gameplay, this study contributes to the understanding of communication patterns that emerge in online gaming communities, especially in the context of video-based digital platforms. The findings of this study reaffirm that sarcasm plays an important role in shaping communication within competitive gaming environments. Sarcastic expressions were frequently used by the content creator as a response to gameplay situations such as player mistakes, unexpected events, or strategic decisions made during the match. These expressions often appear in the form of ironic praise, exaggerated criticism, or humorous commentary directed at teammates or opponents. Such patterns demonstrate that sarcasm functions not only as a means of expressing frustration but

also as a strategy to create entertaining content for audiences who are familiar with the dynamics of online games.

The results of this research are consistent with previous studies that highlight the role of sarcasm in digital communication. Frenda et al. (2023) explain that sarcasm in online communication often appears through exaggerated statements or ironic expressions that convey criticism or humor simultaneously. Similarly, Poeller et al. (2023) found that sarcastic communication frequently occurs in online gaming environments as players react to competitive pressure and gameplay outcomes. In this context, sarcasm becomes a communicative strategy that allows players to express emotions while maintaining interaction with other participants in the digital environment.

From the perspective of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) theory, the findings also demonstrate how sarcasm adapts to communication environments where non-verbal cues are limited. In face-to-face communication, sarcasm is often conveyed through tone of voice, facial expressions, or gestures. However, in digital environments such as YouTube gaming content, sarcasm relies heavily on verbal expressions, contextual references, and audience familiarity with the gameplay situation. Walther (1992) argues that individuals in computer-mediated environments develop alternative strategies to convey emotional meaning, and sarcasm can function as one of these strategies to express complex reactions in digital interaction. An important implication of this study is that sarcasm serves not only as a communication tool among players but also as an element of entertainment within gaming content. The use of sarcastic commentary helps content creators build a distinctive digital persona that attracts audience engagement. Through humorous and expressive reactions to gameplay events, creators can strengthen their relationship with viewers who share similar gaming experiences. As Johnson (2024) suggests, humor and sarcasm in gaming content can increase audience engagement because they transform gameplay into a narrative experience that is entertaining and relatable.

Despite these contributions, this study also has several limitations that should be considered. First, the research focused only on two videos from a single YouTube channel, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Different content creators may use sarcasm in different ways depending on their communication style and audience. Second, the analysis was limited to verbal expressions in gameplay commentary and did not extensively examine audience responses in the comment section. These factors may influence the broader interpretation of sarcastic communication within gaming communities.

Future research could expand the scope of analysis by examining a larger number of videos from multiple gaming channels to identify broader patterns of sarcastic communication in online gaming content. Additionally, further studies could explore how audiences interpret sarcastic remarks in gaming videos and how these interpretations influence viewer engagement. Researchers may also compare sarcasm across different gaming platforms or streaming environments, such as Twitch or TikTok, in order to understand how communication styles vary across digital media platforms. Overall, this study highlights the importance of sarcasm as a communication strategy in virtual gaming environments. Sarcastic expressions allow players and content creators to convey emotional reactions, critique gameplay situations, and create entertaining interactions with audiences. In digital communication spaces where non-verbal cues are limited, sarcasm becomes an adaptive form of expression that contributes to the development of communication culture within online gaming communities.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the use of sarcasm in virtual communication within *Mobile Legends* gameplay content on the YouTube channel **@PascolKintil**. The findings indicate that sarcastic expressions frequently appear in gameplay commentary as reactions to various in-game

situations such as player mistakes, strategic decisions, and unexpected events during matches. These sarcastic remarks are often delivered through ironic statements, exaggerated criticism, or humorous commentary, reflecting the emotional dynamics experienced during competitive gameplay. The study demonstrates that sarcasm in digital gaming communication serves multiple functions. First, sarcasm acts as a medium for expressing emotional reactions such as frustration, surprise, or excitement during gameplay. Second, sarcastic expressions contribute to the entertainment value of gaming content, allowing content creators to engage audiences through humorous and expressive commentary. Third, sarcasm plays a role in shaping the digital identity of the content creator and strengthening interaction between creators and viewers within the online gaming community.

From the perspective of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), the findings highlight how sarcasm functions as an adaptive communication strategy in digital environments where non-verbal cues are limited. In such contexts, verbal expressions and shared understanding of gameplay situations become essential for interpreting sarcastic messages. Consequently, sarcasm becomes an important element of communication culture within online gaming communities on platforms such as YouTube.

Although this study provides insights into sarcastic communication in gaming content, it is limited by the small number of analyzed videos and the focus on a single YouTube channel. Future research could examine a broader range of gaming creators, platforms, and audience responses to better understand how sarcasm influences interaction and engagement within digital gaming communities.

LIMITATION

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the analysis was limited to two selected videos from a single YouTube channel, @PascolKintil, which may restrict the generalizability of the results. Different content creators may use sarcasm in different ways depending on their communication style, personality, and audience characteristics. Therefore, the patterns of sarcastic communication identified in this study may not fully represent sarcasm usage across all gaming content on YouTube. Second, the study focused primarily on the sarcastic expressions delivered by the content creator during gameplay commentary. Audience responses, such as comments and interactions from viewers in the comment section, were not extensively analyzed. These responses could provide additional insights into how sarcasm is interpreted and perceived by audiences within online gaming communities.

Third, the analysis emphasized verbal expressions of sarcasm and did not comprehensively examine non-verbal elements such as tone of voice, facial expressions, or video editing techniques that may also influence how sarcasm is conveyed and interpreted in gaming videos. Since YouTube content involves audiovisual communication, these elements may play an important role in shaping the meaning of sarcastic messages. Future research could address these limitations by examining a larger number of videos from multiple gaming channels, analyzing audience interpretations of sarcastic communication, and incorporating multimodal analysis that includes visual and audio elements. Such approaches would provide a more comprehensive understanding of sarcastic communication within digital gaming environments.

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