



## Netizen's Sharp Satire: Exploring Sarcasm in the Comments Column of the 2024 Presidential Debate on Instagram

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### ABSTRACT

In the ever-evolving digital era, social media has become the main means for people to express their opinions. People can express criticism, views, or sarcasm as a form of dissatisfaction or distrust. One phenomenon that attracts attention is the use of sarcasm in the comment section, especially in posts related to the 2024 presidential candidate debate on Instagram. This study aims to analyze the use of sarcasm as a sharp satire by netizens in the comments section of the 2024 presidential candidate debate on Instagram. The research method used is descriptive qualitative method, with data collection techniques through observation of comments on Instagram related to the presidential candidate debate and literature study. The collected data were analyzed through three stages, namely data filtering, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results show that sarcasm is used as a tool to express dissatisfaction or belittle the opposing party. Netizens often use sarcasm to satirize presidential candidates or their supporters, with the aim of mocking, ridiculing, or indirectly showing public disapproval. This shows the role of social media in shaping public opinion and how netizens participate in the political process through digital platforms.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The rapid development of social media has made this platform now an integral part of people's daily lives. Social media plays a crucial role in various aspects of life, such as interacting with friends, sharing information, and accessing information at an increasingly rapid pace. Therefore, social media has become one of the main needs for many people (Praditia & Yuliana, 2023). In addition to its communication function, social media has also developed into an important forum for expressing opinions. Millennials now tend to get involved in politics through social media, thanks to the ease of access and dissemination of political information it offers, as well as the convenience of using this platform just by having a social media account. The high number of social media users causes a variety of political content, both positive and negative, to be widespread (Pratama & Yahya, 2023).

Then one of the social media platforms that is now widely used by the public is the Instagram application. Instagram is a social media that is very popular among the younger generation, especially in Indonesia. The app is easy to access and helps users to get information, as well as capture and share important moments of their users. In addition, Instagram facilitates users to like and comment on posts from others. Language serves as a tool for users to comment on the post. In written comments, users use a specific language style to express their ideas, feelings, and thoughts about the posts they see (Syafendra et al., 2023).

One of them is in the phenomenon that attracts public attention, namely during the 2024 general election, especially at the presidential candidate debate stage. The presidential debate is an important moment in which presidential candidates compete to convey the excellence of each candidate's vision, mission, and program (Rahayu et al., 2024). In addition to being an opportunity for candidates to communicate directly with voters, this debate is also an assessment material for the public to evaluate the integrity, capabilities, and policies of each candidate. This debate attracted the interest of many people, triggering various reactions from the public.

In various forms of expression, comments with sarcasm or sarcasm often dominate the comment column on posts related to presidential debates. Sarcasm is the use of language to satirize or mock in a subtle way. In sarcasm, words or expressions are used with the opposite meaning of the actual meaning to create an effect of insult or sarcasm. Netizens often use sarcasm immodesty strategies in their comments by hiding their true intentions directly (Irawati et al., 2023).

This style of sarcasm is characterized by ridicule, meanings that are contrary to what is said, and the impression of bitterness and unpleasant reproach. This style of language is usually used to express anger, provide an invitation, or convey information (Syafendra et al., 2023). The identification of problems in this study focuses on the style of sarcasm language that appears in the Instagram comment column related to the 2024 presidential candidate debate. A search of sarcasm in the comment column shows how netizens use critical sarcasm as a tool to criticize, influence public opinion, and convey political messages effectively.

Previous research by (Putri et al., 2022), discussed satirical criticism of Indonesian state officials through roasting stand-up comedy by Kiky Saputri on YouTube. The results show that Kiky dares to roast in an open way, mentioning names and relevant cases without hiding information. This courage was driven by his commitment to the truth of the facts. In her criticism, Kiky does not use harsh or sarcastic language, but avoids blasphemy and insults. The satirical criticism presented serves as a tool to assess the performance of officials and also as a method to educate the public about politics.

Another study by (Hariyanti & Yustitia, 2020) analyzed how satirical Instagram accounts @nurhadi\_aldo used political language and expressions to criticize election contests in Indonesia. The findings of the study revealed that the use of language that contains elements of sexuality and satire by @nurhadi\_aldo is a way to honestly express criticism of the loss of substance in elections. The study also noted that the account used unusual communicative techniques, such as hyperbole (exaggeration), contrast (striking differences), and unexpected logic, as a method to provide criticism of existing political phenomena.

This research highlights novelty by focusing on the analysis of sarcasm in comments on Instagram related to the 2024 presidential candidate debate. The results of the study can contribute to understanding how sarcasm affects political communication on digital platforms and how this form of criticism is used to judge candidates as well as political issues. By examining the use of sarcasm in online discussions, this study can provide useful information for politicians, political observers, and the public about how interactions on social media affect public opinion and election outcomes. The ultimate goal of the study was to evaluate how netizens use sarcasm as a tool to convey sharp criticism in comments related to the 2024 presidential debate.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The rise of social media as a primary arena for political discourse has transformed how citizens engage with political events, particularly through the use of sarcasm and satire in online commentary. Sarcasm, often expressed as sharp, ironic remarks intended to mock or criticize, plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and political narratives in the digital sphere. Prior studies highlight that satire and sarcasm serve not only as tools for humor but also as subtle forms of political participation and resistance, allowing users to critique authority and express dissent without overt confrontation. Platforms like Instagram, with their interactive comment sections, have become vibrant spaces where netizens respond to events such as presidential debates with witty, satirical remarks that reflect public sentiment, reveal ideological divides, and influence broader discussions. Research also suggests that such sarcastic commentary can deepen political engagement among digital natives while simultaneously contributing to polarization and misinformation. Therefore, examining sarcasm in Instagram comment sections during the 2024 presidential debate offers valuable insights into contemporary political communication, public opinion formation, and the evolving nature of digital civic expression.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method, which aims to provide an in-depth and detailed understanding of the phenomenon or problem being researched. This approach focuses not only on the description of the data, but also on the analysis and interpretation of the meaning of the data (Kim et al., 2017). Data is collected through two main techniques. First, through direct observation in the comment column on Instagram that displays the 2024 Presidential debate, thus helping researchers to see and understand the dynamics that occur on the platform. Second, a literature study is conducted, which involves reviewing literature in the library and collecting various written materials and references relevant to the research topic. The data analysis process is carried out through three main stages. First, the data that has been collected is filtered, which is to simplify and focus relevant data according to the research objectives. Second, the data that has been filtered is presented in an organized format, so it is easy to understand and interpret. Finally, the researcher draws conclusions from the data that has been analyzed, provides answers to the research questions, and produces conclusions that are relevant to the study conducted.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Language is a means of communication that humans use effectively. There are many types of languages that can be used, so there are various grammars to improve the way of writing related to language. Language also has various binding rules in grammar (Febriyanto & Savitri, 2022). Humans as social beings do have a need to communicate, and language is one of the main tools used to convey information, ideas, feelings, and needs. This communication is important for building relationships, sharing knowledge, and collaborating in different aspects of life. Without effective communication, humans will find it difficult to live in harmony in society (Kamalia et al., 2024). When communicating, a person who speaks can use a variety of language styles. There are four types of language styles, namely the various language styles of comparing, affirming, satirizing, and opposing. Anyone can use language style in expressing their opinions. In fact, there are many different language styles that are often used but often speakers are not aware of them (Gunawan & Hertita, 2024).

In the era of rapid globalization development like today, various media have become a means of political communication. Digitalization is part of the development of technology that brings opportunities for the birth of the internet network (Indrawan et al., 2020). The presence of the internet encourages communication on various social media. Social media is an online device that can be used by its users to communicate and interact with anyone and anywhere. The development that brings the virtual world to be used as a means of communication has caused a shift in habits in the social environment of the community (Harianja, 2024). Social media has changed the way humans communicate by allowing interactions to happen instantly without being limited by distance and time. With social media, people can share information, discuss, and interact with anyone around the world whenever they want (Prasetya & Marina, 2022).

Social media has its own influence on people's lives, not only positive impacts, but negative impacts also accompany it. On social media, netizens can freely express their opinions. However, often the opinions conveyed contain sarcasm, which means that the content contains spicy innuendo that hurts (Saadillah et al., 2023). Sarcasm is more crude than irony and cynicism. There is a lot of use of sarcasm in the Instagram comment column during the 2024 presidential debate.

The General Election Commission (KPU) as the organizer of the presidential and vice presidential candidate debate events during the campaign period held the debate five times. Campaigning in the election is one of the important things to do because it is to be able to convince voters. As in Law No. 7 of 2017 it is explained that the KPU needs to facilitate various campaign methods, one of which is by debate. The presidential debate in the 2024 election will begin with the first debate in December 2023 (Finaka, 2024). Presidential debates often raise pros and cons among supporters and opponents alike because of their important role in determining public opinion. On the positive side, the debates provide clear information regarding the candidate's vision and policies, allowing voters to make a more informed decision. It also demonstrates the candidate's ability to communicate and handle difficult questions, clarifying the differences between them. On the downside, however, the outcome of a debate is often judged to be subjective and influenced by personal bias, and may focus more on debate strategy than substance. Some candidates may use debate techniques that do not touch on important issues, causing confusion among voters. In addition, debates can exacerbate political polarization, with supporters becoming more segregated and less open to other views. Thus, although presidential debates are an important part of the democratic process, their impact can vary depending on how they are conducted and accepted by the public (Farmida et al., 2021).

The pros and cons related to the results of the 2024 presidential candidate debate have also caused social media to become a ground for sarcasm from netizens. When supporters and opponents of a candidate have opposing views, tensions often spill over into social platforms, where sarcasm becomes a tool to express dissatisfaction or belittle an opponent. Netizens use sarcasm to satirize presidential candidates or opponents' supporters, often with the intent to mock, mock, or show their disapproval in a less direct way. This phenomenon not only reflects dissatisfaction with the performance of the debate, but also exacerbates political polarization by reinforcing divisions and conflicts between different groups. Such as some examples of sarcasm comments in the comment column on the 2024 presidential presidential social media account below.



**Figure 1. Sarkarme's Sentence in the 2024 Presidential Presidential Instagram Comment Column**

The image above shows some netizens' comments on the 2024 presidential debate campaign post on Instagram. Many sarcastic comments appeared, such as from the @wahyu\_restoni account who wrote, "that's right, many people are intimidated by Anis's words that are not moral and ethical," as a satire on the content of Anies Baswedan's speech, one of the presidential candidates. Other comments, such as from @bukan\_izzatt09, who said, "this one is really rubbish," also expressed dissatisfaction with the presidential candidate on @aniesbaswedan's account. In addition, a comment from @arifsnt1800 on the @ganjarpranowo account which read, "Selamat nyungsepp sir, soale njenengan kemlinthi," which means "congratulations sir, because you are arrogant," showed another form of sarcasm towards presidential candidate Ganjar Pranowo. This phenomenon illustrates how political tensions and differences of opinion in presidential debates have led to the emergence of sarcastic comments and sarcasm on social media.

The above sentences fall into the category of sarcasm, where the comments are often sharp and mocking. These sentences thrown at presidential candidates are expressions that are not appropriate to be written or spoken, because they can damage a person's reputation, mental, and even physical. In addition to having

a negative impact on the individuals being targeted, this kind of sarcasm can also worsen the climate of public discussion and trigger further conflicts on social media.

The use of sarcasm language on social media has now become commonplace and is often considered part of online communication habits. Sarcasm often violates ethics and norms of decency that should be held in communicating. In Indonesia, the culture of openness in communication makes the use of sarcasm more common. As a result, social media has unwittingly made the use of harsh language, which often includes sarcasm and ridicule, a new norm in online interaction.

Sarcasm on social media, especially in comments on the 2024 presidential debate, is often used as a form of sharp sarcasm and ridicule against candidates or opponents' supporters. This phenomenon not only reflects dissatisfaction with the outcome of the debate but also exacerbates political polarization by reinforcing divisions among different groups. Sarcastic comments, such as those found in the presidential candidate's Instagram comment column, show how political tensions can spill over into the form of abusive language that damages an individual's reputation and mentality. The use of sarcasm language on social media is now common, often considered a habit of online communication even though it violates ethics and norms of politeness. In Indonesia, an open culture has made the language of sarcasm used more often, accustoming it to the new norm in the form of harsh language and sarcasm in online interactions.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The development of social media, especially Instagram, has led netizens to use sarcasm as a way to satirize presidential candidates or support one of their candidate pairs. Often netizens' sarcasm aims to mock, mock, or express disapproval indirectly. This phenomenon not only shows dissatisfaction with performance in debates, but also exacerbates political polarization by further strengthening divisions and conflicts among various groups. There are many comments from netizens on the 2024 presidential debate campaign post on Instagram that are sarcastic. These comments are often sharp and mocking, and remarks directed at the presidential candidate are often inappropriate, as they can damage the reputation, mental health, and even physique of the individual being targeted. In addition to negatively impacting the individual being attacked, this kind of sarcasm can also worsen the atmosphere of public discussion and trigger further conflicts on social media. The use of sarcasm on social media has now become common and is often considered part of the online communication style. This phenomenon shows the important role of social media in shaping public opinion and illustrates how netizens participate in the political process through digital platforms.

## **ADVANCE RESEARCH**

Future studies should further investigate the broader implications of sarcastic commentary in political discourse on social media, particularly focusing on its psychological, social, and democratic impacts. Research could explore how

exposure to sarcastic remarks influences public perceptions of political candidates, voter behavior, and trust in democratic institutions. Additionally, examining the motivations behind netizens' use of sarcasm – whether as a form of political expression, emotional release, or social belonging – would provide deeper insights into online political engagement. Comparative studies across different social media platforms or electoral contexts could also reveal variations in how sarcasm shapes public opinion and polarization. Finally, future research might consider strategies for mitigating the harmful effects of sarcastic discourse, such as digital literacy initiatives or platform moderation policies, to foster healthier and more constructive political communication online.

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