

AN ANALYSIS OF SARCASM ON HATE SPEECH UTTERANCES ON *JUST JARED* INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT

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Abstract: This research focuses on how sarcasm on hate speech is used by the followers of Just Jared's account on Instagram. The purposes are to investigate what maxims are violated in the sarcastic comments made by the IG followers, which violation of maxim is the most dominant, and what factors cause hate speech in the comment. There were 50 comments collected as the primary source of data. The comments were those from the October 2019 to May 2020's posts. Grice's theory of maxims that classifies the rules of conversation into the maxims of quality, quantity, manner, and relevance was used to decide whether the comments violated the maxims or not. The results show that the analyzed data were proven to contain violation of the Gricean maxims that included violations of: the maxim of manner (17 comments), the maxim of quality (11 comments), the maxim of relevance (8 comments), and the maxim of quantity (4 comments). Besides single violation, some comments contain mixed violations that included the combinations of: the maxim of quantity and relevance (3 comments), the maxims of manner and relevance (3 comments), the maxim of quality and relevance (2 comments), and the maxim of quality and manner (2 comments). While violation of the maxim of manner records the highest (34%) in the data, combinations of violation of the maxim of quality-relevance and the maxim of quality-manner record the lowest (4.0%). Factors that motivate people to these violations are mostly due to the absence of providing brief, clear, and orderly information in the comments, the cultural value in the western countries that gives people the right and privilege to speak freely, the exaggeration for seeking other people's attention, and the ego that enhances self-importance among individuals while at the same time diminishing others'.

Keywords: Gricean maxims, hate speech, instagram, sarcasm.

Received: Sep 6, 2020

Accepted: Feb 14, 2021

Published: Jun 3, 2021

How to cite (in APA style):

Pasa, T.A., Nuriadi, & Lail, H. (2021). An analysis of sarcasm on hate speech utterances on Just Jared instagram account. *JEEF (Journal of English Education Forum)*, 1 (1), 10-19.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is simply an act to transfer and exchange information with others. The information that is exchanged by the speaker and listener can be misunderstood. The ability to interpret the meaning of what is literally said or written is required to achieve the effectiveness of a conversation. Grice (1975) has identified the rules of conversations known as conversational Maxims, based on people's interpretations on others. Currently, written language may have more influence than spoken language, especially on social networks.

According to Filik *et al* (2016), due to the explosive growth of the internet, social media has become an attractive source of information for research purposes on written communication. There is a strong reason why the researcher conducts this study. There is a great deal of respect on how we produce the language. The fact that the impact of our words on the community, young people and future generations.

The freedom to express our thoughts and speech has almost no limit on a social media platform like Instagram (IG). The researcher chose Instagram because Instagram is a relatively new social media platform but it already has made a big influence on young people,

especially because young people focus on entertainment. Further, the users are still growing and currently are three times bigger than Facebook and Twitter users, respectively.

The researcher focused on an Instagram account named “Just Jared”. “Just Jared” spots hot online sources for pop culture gossip, fabulous celebrity photo galleries and breaking entertainment news. Investigating how people express themselves in social media has attracted the attention of the researchers.

The researchers’ aim is to discover whether there is any violation related to the maxims or rules of conversation as proposed by Grice in the comments of Just Jared Instagram posts and to describe the factors that caused such violations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Grice’s Maxim Theory

Grice (1975) believes that communication is a cooperative activity and cooperative principle: when two people communicate it is in their own best interest to make it go as smoothly as possible. He states, “Make your contribution such as it is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged”. The conversational maxims arise from the pragmatic of natural language. The Gricean Maxim is a way to explain the link between what the utterances and the responses of what the receiver understood from the speaker or writer. This way the conversation will achieve the efficient purposes where the speaker or writer and the receiver accept one another to be understood in a particular way. This cooperative principle based on Grice’s four categories of maxims:

1. The maxim of quantity, where one tries to be as informative as one possibly can, and gives as much information as is needed, and no more.
2. The maxim of quality, where one tries to be truthful, and does not give information that is false or that is not supported by evidence.
3. The maxim of relation, where one tries to be relevant, and says things that are pertinent to the discussion.
4. The maxim of manner, when one tries to be as clear, as brief, and as orderly as one can in what one says, and where one avoids obscurity and ambiguity.

Thomas (1995) defines if Maxim Violation means that the speaker intends to mislead the hearer. There are various ways in which a maxim may go unfulfilled which lead them to the violation of the maxims. Grice (1975) claims that violation takes place when speakers intentionally refrain to apply certain maxims in their conversation to cause misunderstanding on their participants’ part or to achieve some other purposes. People also can choose to ignore the Maxims to get a particular effect, for instance sarcasm. Grice (1989) believes that when the speaker does not fulfill or obey the maxims, the speaker is said to be violate the maxims. The relation of the maxims with sarcasm is that the complexion of how the people show and express their feelings and their behaviors in the internet have become a concerning topic. People on the internet tend to be more aggressive compared to the real life these days. Based on the cases that we see daily on the TV shows or celebrity interviews, they will prefer to talk politely.

Compared to the internet posts, the social media platforms tend to use attracting words that invite people to click on the link which also called as click bait. Click bait is the

words that are used by the content creator to attract people attention whether it is the fact or it is just fake news. People also use sarcasm for jokes and to reinforce the self-esteem of others. Irony is often deemed as a synonym of sarcasm due to the subtle distinction between both terms according to Giora *et al* (2015). Irony is an umbrella that covers sarcasm. Verbal irony is related to the concept of sarcasm (Brown, 1980; Gibbs & O'Brien, 1991; Kreuz & Roberts, 1993 as cited in Farias, 2017).

Sarcasm

Sarcasm is an expression which shows the opposite things of the literal or intended meaning of the speaker. It is used to say the opposite of what is true (Kreuz & Glucksberg, 1989). The words can mean everything for people who heard when someone says “you look beautiful today”, “you are genius”. Those sentences can be a compliment but also a criticism. In the spoken language, the intonation of the voice plays important role to know the real intention of what the speaker saying. Even though the words are beautiful but it can hurt someone because it is not the real situation in some perception. While in the written language it is a little bit different to recognize the real meaning of what the writer intent to say because we do not know the expression and the intonation of the writer who addressed it to reader. The words can become an ambiguity for the reader. For instant, the sentence “You killed it!” can mean more than one intended meaning. It can mean someone has killed or murdered maybe a person or an animal but it also means in this era, someone did something great or no failure.

Those parts of speech are what we called as sarcasm. Sarcasm is intensively used as a joke or it can be a criticism to say as hate speech. The term of sarcasm can be seen from the features of the conversational situation or context and not just on the conventional meanings of the words used (Grice, 1975). According to Leech (1983), context is the background of understanding that is owned by the speaker and the interlocutor so that the interlocutor can make an interpretation of what is meant by the speaker when making certain speeches.

Hate Speech on Social Media

School of Peacemaking and Media Technology in Central Asia (2014) reported that hate speeches are any expressions which humiliate to any race, religious, ethnic, or particular national group through racism, xenophobia, interethnic hostility or intolerance, instigating violence, hatred or discrimination. Brown (2017) asserts a concept of hate speech tends to be linked to the terms such as ‘group defamation’, ‘incitement to hatred’, the circulation of ideas based on inferiority’, ‘racist propaganda’, ‘speech xenophobia, homophobia, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism’, ‘group vilification’, ‘violation of dignity’, discrimination harassment’, ‘racist fighting words’ and ‘Holocaust denial’.

Hate speech has become a part of the daily communication in the social media. Everything that people post in the social media will get easily teased and judged by the other users especially the comments for the celebrities. Hate speech refers to the communicative actions in the form of verbally or symbolically which is intended to against particular communities or groups of people and even an individual who are coming from different ethnicity, sexual orientation or even religion. The relation between hate speech expressions and social media can be seen from the recent issues where many people transformed the

positive benefits of social media into the negative such as hate speech contents on their social media platforms. One of the issues is the gossip account that they can deliberately expose about the entertainment world called “Just Jared”.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research used qualitative approach with descriptive method which commonly refers to a qualitative descriptive method. According to Creswell (1994), qualitative *research* is descriptive in what the researcher is interested in process, meaning, and understanding gained through words or pictures. Thus, the qualitative descriptive method deals with description of the research analysis which including the events, human status, object, condition, and the way of thinking. The object of this study was the conversation in the comment section from “Just Jared”. This research aimed to identify and classify the hate speech utterances in Instagram account called “Just Jared”.

The source of primary data in this research were the comments in “Just Jared” account from October 2019 to May 2020. The data were selected from general topics, mostly entertainment. There were also significant secondary data that were taken from the documents, books, articles, journals, and many others, posted on “Just Jared” Instagram account.

All selected comments from “Just Jared” were thoroughly read to support the content of this *research*. After gathering the data, the researcher classified the comments based on Grice’s theory of logic and conversation. In this method, the researcher also read secondary data mentioned above. This literature supplemented the research work.

The data were analysed using three data analysis steps: reading the comments and updates on every picture, classifying the comments according to Grice’s maxim definitions, and identifying the reasons that cause a comment is categorized a hate speech.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Types of maxims violated in the sarcastic comments on Just Jared account

The results show that the analyzed data are proven to contain some violations of maxims that included violations of: the maxim of manner, the maxim of quality, the maxim of relevance, and the maxim of quantity. Besides containing single violation of maxims, some comments contain mixed violations of maxims that included combinations of: the maxims of quantity and relevance, the maxims of manner and relevance, the maxims of quality and relevance, and the maxims of quality and manner.

The most dominant violation of maxim in the sarcastic comments

Table 1 below shows the number of violations found in the comment of *Just Jared* account that included violations of: the maxim of manner (17 comments), the maxim of quality (11 comments), the maxim of relevance (8 comments), and the maxim of quantity (4 comments). Besides single violations of maxim, some comments also contain combination of violations that included combinations of: the maxims of quantity and relevance (3 comments), the maxims of manner and relevance (3 comments), the maxims of quality and relevance (2 comments), and the maxims of quality and manner (2 comments). While

violation of the maxim of manner records the highest (42.5%) in the data, violation of the maxim of quantity records the lowest (10.0%).

Table 1. The most dominant violation of maxim in the sarcastic comments of *Just Jared* account.

No.	Violation of the maxim	Freq.	Percent.
1	Manner	17	34.0
2	Quality	11	22.0
3	Relevance	8	16.0
4	Quantity	4	8.0
5	Combo of Quantity-Relevance	3	6.0
6	Combo of Manner-Relevance	3	6.0
7	Combo of Quality-Relevance	2	4.0
8	Combo of Quality-Manner	2	4.0
Total		50	100.0

Discussion

This section discusses the selected examples of violations found in the 50 comments of the 24 pictures/posts posted on *Just Jared’s* Instagram account and explaining the factors that prompt people to comment using sarcastic words or hate speech.

Violation of the maxim of quality

Data 6.

Caption: “Nick Jonas in Zegna Official and wife Priyanka Chopra in Ralph and Russo”.

Comment: *Jenniferjuniper254: fire her stylist!*



Figure 1. *Just Jared’s* IG caption on Nick Jonas and Priyanka Chopra’s photo (January 27, 2020).

In Figure 1¹, Priyanka Chopra, together with his husband Nick Jonas, is seen attending an event (<https://www.instagram.com/p/B7zVMhqF0iY/>). Chopra who is wearing a dress designed by Ralph and Russo is criticized by some netizens for wearing an exaggerated and inappropriate dress. The comment made by *Jenniferjuniper254* that says “**fire her stylist!**” literally means Chopra should fire her fashion stylist for dressing her so badly while praising Jonas, Chopra’s husband, for wearing a perfect suit designed by Ermenegildo Zegna.

The comment on Data 6 that blames the fashion stylist for dressing Chopra with unattractive dress violates the maxim of quality based on considerations that the speaker has

¹ The screen capture of the picture of the two celebrities is not shown here due to the immodest dress worn by them.

insufficient data about who has dressed Chopra is. It is not clearly stated in the caption. Yes, the caption does state who the designer of that dress is but there is no information about who has chosen to wear that dress: is it Chopra herself or her stylist or the designer? There is not enough evidence to justify the claim that Chopra’s fashion stylist is the one to blame and that he/she deserve to be fired for dressing Chopra so bad. The comment violates the maxim of quality that rules “Do not say that for which you lack evidence” and “Do not say what you believe to be false.”

Violation of the maxim of quantity

Data 22.

Caption: “Dakota Johnson carries a greenjuice in her hands, heading back to her car after doing a bit of shopping in LA”.

Comment: *Cjm18: In her hands????!! Just like us!!*



Figure 2. *Just Jared*’s IG caption on Dakota Johnson’ photo (March 10, 2020).

The comment (Data 22) of *@cjm18* on Dakota Johnson’s photo carrying a juice that says “**In her hands????!! Just like us!!**” violates the maxim of quantity based on the consideration that he/she assumes that the caption is exaggerated by repeating the words and adding some exclamation and question marks for more than three times to show her sarcastic expression (<https://www.instagram.com/p/B9iwXMIjrp7/?hl=id>).

Violation in maxim of manner

Data 13.

Caption: “Taylor Swift’s full phone call with Kanye West from 2016 has leaked online and it proves her side of the story”.

Comment: *Salvador_celio_01: lil nigga.*

Taylor Swift’s Full Phone Call with Kanye West
Leaks Online, Proves Her Side of the Story



Figure 3. *Just Jared*’s caption on Taylor swift and Kanye West’s photo (March 21, 2020)

Kanye West is a black-American rapper, singer, songwriter, record producer, entrepreneur and fashion designer. He is the husband of Kim Kardashian who makes both of them so famous and super rich.

The comment by *Salvador_celio_01* account on Taylor Swift and Kanye West's photo (<http://bit.ly/2Zbv3xV>) that flicks West with "lil nigga" violates the maxim of manner. According to Urban Dictionary (<https://www.urbandictionary.com>), the most common definition of this phrase is "f**k you". It is an expression or an act of being or giving the youngest and most immature in a group of friends. The expression is often used to insult the tribe of African-American. Using such a rude expression to abuse someone with racial slur violates the maxim of manner that when you talk to or about someone you have to show your attitude.

Violation of the maxim of Relevance

Data 26:

Caption: "There's a video of how at their reunion during the Commonwealth Service this afternoon. Tap this pic in the LINK IN BIO to see the video and see what happened..."

Comment: *Polodelima: I want that lip gloss!*



Figure 4. *Just Jared's* caption on Meghan Markle and Prince Harry's photo (March 10, 2020)

The comment posted by account *Polodelima* in response to the caption by saying "I want that lip gloss!" violates the maxim of relevance. A lip gloss which is a lip product has no relation with the reunion in the Commonwealth Service of the royal family the caption is talking about. Instead of commenting to how Markle and Harry greet other princess and prince, she talks about wanting a lip gloss worn by the princess. The cooperative principle in the maxim of relevance rules that the exchange given by the recipient in responding to the speaker's utterance should be "relevant" to avoid misunderstanding.

Violation of the maxims of quantity and relevance

Data 45:

Caption: Former couple Harry Styles and Kendall Jenner reunited last night for an appearance on Late Late Show. He guest hosted the episode!

Comment: *Vionanastav: THOSE NAILS*



justjared Former couple
@harrystyles and @kendalljenner
reunited last night for an appearance
on @latelateshow. He guest hosted
the episode!
#HarryStyles
#KendallJenner
Photo: Terence Patrick/CBS

Figure 5. *Just Jared*'s caption on Harry Styles and Kendall Jenner's photo.
(December 12, 2019)

The comment “**Those nails**” posted by *Vionanastay* on Data 45 refers to Harry Style’s nails which coloured with the nail polish as seen in the picture. It violates both the maxim of relevance and quantity. First, it is out of topic because the account mentions Styles’s nails which is irrelevant to the caption about the reunion. Second, it violates the maxim of quantity because she is not asking substantial question about the celebrities meeting which is more informative than asking about the nails (<https://www.instagram.com/p/B58FGO8DL1g/>).

Violation of the maxim of quality and relevance

Data 33:

Caption: “Justin Bieber and Hailey Bieber were spotted out with Justin’s manager Scooterbraun for a meeting in LA this week.”

Comment: @rixchell: **Homeless**



Figure 6. *Just Jared*'s caption on Justin Bieber and Hailey Bieber's photo.
(January 16, 2020)

The comment posted by @rixchell that says “**Homeless**” violates both the maxim of quality and relevance. It violates the maxim of quality because @rixchell is not being truthful about Bieber and his wife’s who are living in lavish lifestyle instead of being homeless. There is no evidence whatsoever from the post that he and his wife are homeless. It is obvious that this violation is meant as sarcasm that criticizes Bieber’s appearance for not wearing fashionable clothes as a celebrity. The comment also violates the maxim of relevance because the caption mentions about the two celebrities being without a roof over their head which is irrelevant to the caption that does not show or mention Bieber’s fashion style or cribs.

Violation in maxim of Quality and Manner

Data 27:

Caption: There’s a video of how Duchess Meghan Markle and Prince Harry greeted Duchess Kate Middleton and Prince William at their reunion during the Commonwealth Service this afternoon. Tap this pic in the LINK IN BIO to see the video and see what happened...

Comment: @rosa_kon: *The Royal Grinch*



Figure 7. Just Jared’s caption on Meghan Markle and Prince Harry’s photo.
(March 10, 2020)

The comment “The Royal Grinch” on Data 27 violates both the maxim of quality and manner. It violates the maxim of quality because the speaker uses the word “grinch” to abuse Markle which means a person who is mean-spirited and unfriendly. Media sometimes twist the news to make money and they cooperate with other person or company to seek more attention that people cannot fully trust and rely on some particular news on social media. The utterance “The Royal Grinch” violates the maxim of manner because it can be considered as a designation or slang to call others besides their real names. It is obvious that the utterance violates the cooperative principle of conversation and is meant to be used as sarcasm.

The reasons for hate speech comments

According to the data, the researchers found three reasons why the commentators of the Just Jared’s Instagram posts violated the maxims. First, freedom of speech as a cultural value in western countries that opens the right for people to speak freely is often used to mislead. Second, exaggeration to capture the readers’ attention. Third, the commentators’ ego that enhances their self-importance while diminishing others’.

CONCLUSION

As a final point, there were 40 comments in the data that contained single violations and 10 comments that contained combinations of violation of the maxims. The former included violations of the: maxims of manner (34%), maxims of quality (22%), maxims of relevance (16%), and maxims of quantity (8%); while the latter included the combinations of violations of the: maxims of quantity and relevance (6%), maxims of manner and relevance (6%), maxims of quality and relevance (4%), and maxims of quality and manner (4%). Violation of the maxim of manner records the highest compared to the others with 34%. The main factors that cause hate speech comments on *Just Jared* account are included: (1) freedom of speech on western social media gives rise to the abusive comments without filter despite the fact that there are thousands of comments that have been reported and hidden

from the comment section. However, some of the abusive comments cannot be hidden from the comment section; (2) inflated sense of some narcissistic people who want to be the center of attraction; and (3) the exaggeration of some news outlets on of the social media platforms (e.g. *Just Jared.com*, etc.) that do not always post what they are supposed to post that tend to be misleading, uninformative, provocative, and bias.

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