

## **THE ANALYSIS OF SARCASM IN COMEDY FILM ENTITLED “THE DICTATOR”**

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### **Abstract**

This research aims to analyze sarcasm in a comedy film entitled *The Dictator*. The subject of this research is dialogue containing sarcasm in the movie. The research focuses on the analysis of sarcasm in a comedy film entitled *The Dictator* and classifying them into types of sarcasm by explaining the meaning of each word in the dialogue. This study deals with the use of sarcastic comedy analysis by theory: camp (2011). The objective is to find out the types and meanings of sarcastic comedy shown in a film entitled *The Dictator*. Qualitative method is used in this research, with case study as the design of this research, because the research intended to analyze sarcasm in a comedy film entitled *The Dictator*. In analyzing of film entitled *The Dictator*, there are two data sources for analysis namely: the film video and *The Dictator* movie script. The result of data analysis showed that there were 66 sarcastic expressions spoken by the characters entitled *The Dictator* film. In this research, those data are analyzed and classified into different types of sarcasm. There are propositional, illocutionary, “like-prefixed, and lexical sarcasm. This film is mostly about how to satire the style of Muammar Khadafi the Dictator of Libya. They also satirized the American government and the country of Israel about their nuclear arsenals, and the government of America considered to be hypocritical because the American government admitted defending human rights but they are also supporting dictatorial leadership in Middle East.

**Keywords:** *Film, Comedy, Dialogue, Sarcasm, Type of sarcasm.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Sarcasm is a complex form of figurative language in which the intended meaning contrasts sharply with the literal words spoken, often used to mock, criticize, or expose social contradictions. Camp (2011) classifies sarcasm into four distinct types: propositional sarcasm, where a statement expresses the opposite of the speaker’s intended meaning; illocutionary sarcasm, which conveys a sarcastic attitude embedded in the speech act itself; like-prefixed sarcasm, where sarcasm is signalled by phrases such as “like” or “as if”; and lexical sarcasm, where specific word choices carry sarcastic implications despite their seemingly positive form. These categories allow a more precise analysis of sarcastic expression across different contexts. Recent studies support the relevance of these categories in contemporary media: for instance, Fadilah and Wijayanto (2024) found lexical sarcasm dominant in online discourse, while Suhaila (2022) and Setiasari (2023) demonstrated how sarcasm functions as both humour and social commentary. This study applies Camp’s framework to the political satire film *The Dictator*, aiming to classify and interpret the film’s sarcastic expressions in relation to their communicative intent and cultural implications.

Rabiger (2009) Stated that film is a video-shaped media that starts or is generated in a real idea, then in it must support elements of entertainment and meaning. This element of entertainment and meaning in filmmaking is sometimes in the form of comedy or can also be

in the form of history. Basically, the messages conveyed through film media have a serious impact on the audience, such as sarcasm in film media indirectly conveying satire to the intended person or related institution. film is the most complex and powerful form of contemporary art. it has a unique composition and a powerful medium of education and indoctrination citizen (Boogs. J . M Petrie, 2012)

One of the films investigated by the researcher is film entitled "The Dictator", this film was directly inspired by real-world dictators, in this case they are Muammar Gaddafi and Kim Jong Il, whose main cast stars admiral Haffaz Aladeen (Sacha Baron Cohen). Aladeen the main character in this film is a dictator of the oil-rich country of Wadiya. Aladeen also has the same selfish and cruel nature as dictators, who executes anyone who disagrees with him by cutting off the head. Aladeen also has a cadre of female guards all claiming to be virgins, just like the real-life Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi. Generally, this movie has several examples of sarcastic language spoken by Aladeen the player in this movie, examples of some sarcasm in film entitled "The Dictator" a re: Hey sub-saharan, black people, you're having a boy, or abortion?. This one-hour and 42-minute movie is a satirical film about dictatorial countries, which contains a lot of sarcasm.

Several recent studies have explored sarcasm in various media contexts. Melawati (2018) analyzed sarcastic language in *Venom*, highlighting how characters used sarcasm to express humor and personal conflict, Sherin and Sutrisno (2019) examined responses to sarcasm in *Star Trek*, showing how characters interpret and react to sarcastic dialogue. Pitria et al. (2020) analysed sarcasm in *Deadpool*, highlighting its use for both humour and character development. Padmantri and Sutrisno (2020) focused on sarcastic expressions in *The Simpsons Movie*, emphasizing their political and social commentary. Maula & Muhayani (2022) examined sarcasm in films and news coverage, reflecting its role in media criticism. In the digital sphere, Moreno-Ortiz & García-Gómez (2022) investigated sarcasm on Twitter through corpus analysis, uncovering patterns in pop culture discourse.

Building on this, Fadilah & Wijayanto (2024) found that lexical sarcasm is the most dominant form in online discussions involving public figures. Suhaila (2022) explored sarcasm in YouTube comments, identifying its role in expressing tension and critique. Setiasari (2023) analysed sarcasm in the sitcom *Friends*, emphasizing its link to identity and social interaction, while Lubis & Bahri (2023) highlighted how cultural background affects the understanding of sarcasm in Indonesian television. Despite these contributions, few studies have applied Camp's (2011) four-type sarcasm classification—propositional, illocutionary, like-prefixed, and lexical—particularly in film. This study addresses that gap by applying Camp's framework to *The Dictator*, a politically satirical film, offering a fresh perspective on sarcasm in cinematic dialogue.

Although sarcasm has been widely analyzed in films such as *Venom*, *Deadpool*, and *The Simpsons Movie*, most existing studies focus primarily on sarcasm as a form of humor or character development, without applying a consistent classification framework. Few have used Camp's (2011) four-type sarcasm model, especially within politically charged films. Moreover, prior research has rarely examined how sarcasm is used explicitly to critique international politics, media narratives, or Western ideologies through cinematic dialogue. This study addresses that gap by applying Camp's theory to *The Dictator*, a film rich in political and cultural satire. By categorizing sarcastic expressions and interpreting their socio-political meanings, this research provides a structured and linguistically grounded approach

that contributes to both sarcasm theory and media discourse analysis. The relevance lies in its potential to help scholars, educators, and media analysts better understand how sarcasm functions as a rhetorical strategy in film—bridging linguistics, critical discourse, and cinematic studies.

The Researcher chose this sarcastic topic because there are a lot of sarcastic language the characters' talks, alluding to other countries with an interesting language style. In a funny touch of comedy, the sarcastic language criticized the American policies toward countries in the Middle East, and how the American government's inconsistencies in their foreign policies and their policies toward their people. This movie also has a vast number of viewers. Thus, it is taken as the data to be investigated from its sarcasms. There has not been any study examining this topic. This study is significant because it applies a detailed framework to identify and categorize sarcastic expressions in *The Dictator*, a film rich in political and social satire. It contributes to understanding how language, humor, and criticism intersect in media. The findings may benefit linguistic scholars, educators, and media analysts by offering a deeper look into how sarcasm functions as a rhetorical and comedic tool in film dialogue.

### **Literature Review**

Four types and examples of sarcasm according Camp are described below:

**Propositional Sarcasm** that takes the form of a proposition is defined as propositional sarcasm and the most prominent kind of sarcasm. It operates most closely to the conventional paradigm, producing a conclusion opposite of what would have been suggested by a sincere utterance. This particular form of sarcasm directly targets the speaker's "satirical" intent or objectives. The speaker's intention is the opposite of what the propositional statement implies.

**Example:** James must be a real hit with the ladies.

This sentence can be considered a sincere utterance if James is, in fact, famous among the ladies. However, the situation that happened was that James was not popular with the girls. The speaker made his statement saying otherwise with the aim to make fun of him.

**Illocutionary sarcasm** conveys the exact opposite attitude from what a true statement would have conveyed. Sarcasm is viewed in this sort of sarcasm as a complete, comprising other associated speech acts rather than simply as an element of a speech.

**Example:** How old did you say you were?

In this example, a speaker asks the age of his speech partner. However, the speaker does not really ask about it; it is only an insinuation. He uses it as a satire to mock the childish behavior of his speech partner.

**Prefixed sarcasm** is intended for the basic content of the content. Embedded declarations. The sarcasm in front of "like" Similar to propositional sarcasm, sarcasm is prefixed with "like". combin sarcastic statements with declarative sentences if Propositional irony has powerful implications. It is spoken by the speaker and contradicts its meaning. A sarcasm prefixed with 'like' indicates that when it is expressed. The speaker's refusal statement becomes more apparent. So the "Like" prefixed Sarcasm is less likely to cause ambiguity.

**Example:** Like it's a nice excellent day today.

In the example above, the speaker stated that the weather on that day was fantastic, but in fact, it was hot, and the sun was shining brightly. The statement was clearer and easier to

understand for the sarcasm content of the speech partner because it was supported by a contradictory situation.

### **Lexical Sarcasm**

Lexical irony is close to semantics. Lexical sarcasm, types are more closely related to rating scales. The speaker is a type of suggestive irony. in the propositional irony, the speaker's remarks are more practical, Lexical sarcasm is more natural and clear extreme statements in the form of conventional normative scales relationships. lexical sarcasm is a single phrase or phrase in a spoken sentence.

**Example:** If Alice is so brilliant, then she'll be the perfect dupe for our little plan.

In the example above, the statement uses positive words such as "so brilliant." However, this statement was accompanied by a negative effect afterward, namely "the perfect dupe." Speakers didn't praise Alice as being smart.

It can be concluded that sarcasm is a sarcastic language style that uses harsh words that contain bitterness. Sarcasm is expressed through many media, one of which is the movie stage. Sarcasm is not exceptionally verbal or popular medium culture; (in a way) the meta-message that "this is not real"; One of the defining characteristics of artworks, games, rituals, and dramas everywhere. They do occur, but these are certainly not limited to television culture (Haiman, 1998)

### **METHOD**

The type of research method selected by the researcher in this research is qualitative research method. Ary (2018) in his journal stated that Qualitative researchers try to understand a phenomenon by focusing on the big picture rather than breaking it down into variables (Donalt Ary, 2018). with the type of research used to obtain data, namely the descriptive content analysis method. This research aims to analyzed sarcasm in a comedy film entitled *The Dictator*, *The Dictator* was chosen because it contains a high frequency of sarcastic expressions used to critique politics, culture, and global issues. Its rich use of irony and satire makes it suitable for analysis through Camp's (2011) sarcasm framework and relevant for understanding sarcasm in political comedy.

This study is based on efforts to build the views of those studied in detail, formed with words, holistic and complex images. This definition looks more at the perspective of research. That is, it contains an effort to build the views of the research subject. The researchers looks for the sarcasm comedy found in film entitled *The Dictator* And use camp (2011) theory, then describe the types of sarcasm c film entitled *The Dictator* that shown in the dialogue.

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### ***Finding***

The result of data analysis showed that there were 66 sarcastic expressions spoken by the characters in *The Dictator* film. These sarcastic expressions are then classified into four types of sarcasm based on the theory of Camp (2011), there are propositional sarcasm, illocutionary sarcasm, "like-prefixed sarcasm and lexical sarcasm. The table of the types of sarcasm and the number of occurrences presented below. Then The researcher find out the true meaning of each sarcastic expressions spoken by the characters in *The Dictator* film from several sources such as internet and journal.

Table 1. Table The Data Findings of the Types of Sarcasm

Types of Sarcasm	Quantity	Percentage
a. Propositional (P)	31	46.96%
b. Illocutionary (I)	11	16.41%
c. Like-prefixed (L)	2	2.98%
d. Lexical (L)	22	32.83%
Total	66	100%

### Data Analysis

All types of sarcasms are identified in the data source, with the dominance of the propositional (47%). Each of them will be explained more in the following sections.

#### a. Propositional

##### Data 01

Aladeen: *“America! The birthplace of AIDS”*  
 (“The Dictator” Movie, 2012. 17:08-17:10)

Scene: America

In this situation Aladeen said that “America! The birthplace of AIDS”, but America is not the birthplace of aids. It is a developed country. According Mahardini (2022), AIDS is from Africa. This is a type of propositional sarcasm because the aims of the satire and the speaker’s intention is the opposite of what the propositional statement implies.

##### Data 02

Aladeen: “We are two months away from enriching weapons-grade uranium to be used *for peaceful purposes*”

Scene: Aladeen Palace

This statement is not for peaceful purposes but the fact for world domination. Aladeen just satirized people, Wadiya. This a type of propositional sarcasm because the aims and objectives satirized and the speaker’s intention is the opposite of what the propositional statement implies.

##### Data 03

Presenter: Are you developing nuclear weapons?

Aladeen: *“No, I literally can’t hear you”*

Scene: Aladeen Palace

In this situation, Aladeen said that “I literally can’t hear you,” actually Aladeen heard everything he said, but when discussing nuclear Aladeen pretended not to know. He doesn’t want to talk about nuclear. This a type of propositional sarcasm because Aladeen intention is the opposite of what the propositional statement implies.

(“The Dictator” Movie, 2012. 02:10-02:12)

##### Data 04

Aladeen: The flames of the righteous attack the unjust! *“I’ll be back with help!”*

Scene: Hideout



In this situation, Aladeen said he would have helped, but in fact, Aladeen left him. Aladeen just satirized to Mr. Clayton's ask for a help. This is a type of propositional sarcasm because of the fact that he didn't really get back and helped Clayton. Otherwise, he just left him alone, and (let him died).

("The Dictator" Movie, 2012. 22:16-22:20)

#### **Data 05**

Aladeen: Yo! *Average American shopper!*

Scene: America Street

In this situation Aladeen said that American shopper! to American people. He satirized poor American people, but in reality most Americans are rich. This a type a propositional sarcasm because the aims satirized American people.

("The Dictator" Movie, 2012. 22:26-22:28)

#### **b. Illocutionary**

##### **Data 01**

Presenter: General Aladeen was born the only son of the Colonel Aladeen, himself a savage and violent dictator. *"Known for his iconic beard"*

In this situation the presenter said that "Known for his iconic beard", this is an illocutionary sarcasm. because the speaker did not discuss the beard but only satire, because the hair looks like an Arab and beard describes a bearded the middle of eastern person.

("The Dictator" Movie, 2012. 00:50-00:52)

##### **Data 02**

Zoey: "Zoey"

Aladeen: "I've come here to apologize about some of the comments I may have made about *Captain Hook and Blackie*".

Scene: Zoey Garden

In this situation, Aladeen said that "Captain Hook and Blackie", Captain the Hook and Blakie is a satirized on other characters in this film. Which actually comes from Africa not from in middle of east, who has a black body. This a type illocutionary sarcasm because Aladeen conveys the exact opposite attitude from what a true statement would have conveyed.

("The Dictator" Movie, 2012. 40:40-40:42)

##### **Data 03**

Mr. Clayton: *Are you homo sexual?*

Mr Lao: No, no, no its more of a power trip with me

Scene: American building

Satirized the Chinese people, China is a smart country, not homosexual. This a type illocutionary sarcasm because Mr Clayton conveys the exact opposite attitude from what a true statement would have conveyed.

("The Dictator" Movie, 2012. 26:53-26:55)

##### **Data 04**

Aladeen: *"Why are you guys so anti dictators"?*

Scene: American building

Aladeen satirized Americans, because America is not a dictatorship but federal. This a type illocutionary sarcasm because Aladeen conveys the exact opposite attitude from what a true statement would have conveyed.

(“The Dictator” Movie, 2012. 01:23-01:23:24)

#### **Data 05**

Zoey: I'm going to have to take a break for a little bit because I'm pregnant

Aladeen: ***“What? Are you having a boy or an abortion?”***

Scene: Aladeen palace

In this situation, a speaker asks What? Are you having a boy or an abortion. However the speaker does not ask about that, but only an insinuation. According to Syalaby (2022) The countries in the Middle East, when having a daughter had to be killed, This a type of illocutionary sarcasm.

(“The Dictator” Movie, 2012. 01:25:50-01:25:52)

#### **c. “Like”- Prefixed Sarcasm**

##### **Data 01**

Zoey: You seem educated, Yes. I went to Amherst

Aladeen: ***“I love it when women go to school, It's like seeing a monkey on roller skates”***

Scene: Zoey store

In this situation Aladeen said that “I love it when women go to school, It's like seeing a monkey on roller skates”, this a type of like-prefixed sarcasm because prefixed with like. This is a satirized American girls who going to school.

(“The Dictator” Movie, 2012. 29:39-29:31)

##### **Data 02**

Aladeen: ***“I'd love to see the fireworks over the Statue of Liberty”***

Scene: At the plane

In this situation Aladeen said that “And I'd love to see the fireworks over the Statue of Liberty”, this a type of like prefixed sarcasm because prefixed with like or love. Aladeen satirized that like to see wars in over the statue of Liberty.

(“The Dictator” Movie, 2012. 47:00-47:02)

#### **d. Lexical**

##### **Data 01**

Aladeen: ***“Hello, person. Person, Black person”***

Scene: America

In this example above Aladeen said that “Hello, person. Person, Black person”. This a type lexical sarcasm because the context “Black person” is extreme statements, black person is Aladeen satirized black people in African countries.

(“The Dictator” Movie, 2012. 25:54-25:56)

##### **Data 02**

Aladeen: Do you think you could get me 100 child soldiers here by 5:00 p.m ***“Hey, Sub-Saharan”!***

Scene: Zoey store

In this example above Aladeen said that “Hey, Sub-Saharan”

This a type of lexical sarcasm because the context is extreme statements. That means “Sub Saharan”, Aladeen satirized people country of Africa who has black body.

(“The Dictator” Movie, 2012. 30:23-30:25)

### **Data 03**

Aladeen: *“I’m sorry. It’s bad news, It’s a girl, Where’s the trash can”*

Scene: Zoey Store

In the example above Aladeen said that “I’m sorry. It’s bad news, It’s a girl, Where’s the trash can”, this a type of lexical sarcasm because the statement was accompanied by a negative effect is “Where’s the trash can”. The means is This satirized country in the Middle East, when having a daughter had to be killed.

(“The Dictator” Movie, 2012. 01:09:33-01:09:35)

### **Data 04**

Presenter: He is dumping the urine on the Israel delegation

Aladeen: *“Oh, that’s a good one”*.

Scene: America

In this situation Aladeen said that “Oh, that’s a good one”. This a type of lexical sarcasm because the statement was accompanied by a negative effect is “Oh, that’s a good one”. That means is Aladeen is very happy when dumping the urine on the Israel delegation, He hates Israel very much.

(“The Dictator” Movie, 2012. 24:42-24:45)

### **Discussion**

The analysis of 66 sarcastic expressions in *The Dictator* revealed significant patterns in the use of sarcasm within political satire. Applying Camp’s (2011) four-type classification—propositional, illocutionary, like-prefixed, and lexical sarcasm—the study found propositional sarcasm as the most dominant type (46.96%), followed by lexical (32.83%), illocutionary (16.41%), and like-prefixed sarcasm (2.98%).

The high frequency of propositional sarcasm reinforces Camp’s (2011) argument that this type most closely aligns with the traditional notion of sarcasm: saying the opposite of what is meant to criticize. This pattern reflects how *The Dictator* relies on overt contradiction to attack themes like dictatorship, hypocrisy, and foreign policy. This result is consistent with Maula & Muhayani (2022), who observed that sarcasm in news satire also frequently employed propositional irony to challenge dominant narratives.

Lexical sarcasm, the second most common type, often conveyed critiques through subtle word choices embedded in culturally sensitive topics like race and gender. This finding supports Fadilah and Wijayanto (2024), who discovered lexical sarcasm as the most dominant in online public discourse, especially in comment sections targeting political figures or controversial statements. Their research noted how lexical sarcasm works effectively in constrained formats like social media posts—similar to punchlines in a satirical script.

Illocutionary sarcasm, although less frequent, revealed how tone and speech acts contribute to sarcastic meaning. Setiasari (2023) emphasized in her sitcom-based study that this type of sarcasm tends to reflect complex interpersonal interactions. In *The Dictator*,



illocutionary sarcasm surfaces when characters imply criticism through seemingly ordinary statements—thus requiring viewers to interpret based on context and tone. Like-prefixed sarcasm, though rare, appeared in key moments where sarcasm needed to be unmistakably recognized. This aligns with Suhaila (2022), who noted that overt markers such as “like” or “as if” reduce misinterpretation in online comments, especially in emotionally charged topics.

Additionally, Lubis & Bahri (2023) found that cultural background significantly affects the decoding of sarcastic intent in Indonesian TV shows. This complements our study, as *The Dictator*’s heavy use of Middle Eastern and Western political references may be interpreted differently depending on the viewer’s familiarity with global politics.

Moreover, this research adds to the gap identified by Moreno-Ortiz & García-Gámez (2022), who pointed out the lack of structured sarcasm typologies in media analysis, especially in multimodal content like film. By applying Camp’s typology, this study contributes a replicable method for categorizing sarcasm in visual narrative.

In summary, this study supports the notion that sarcasm in *The Dictator* serves a dual function: as entertainment and as political discourse. The sarcastic expressions—especially propositional and lexical—challenge Western interventionism, authoritarian rule, and media manipulation. The findings suggest that Camp’s framework remains highly relevant and adaptable for analyzing sarcasm in diverse media forms. Future studies might expand this analysis to cross-cultural comparisons or viewer reception to assess sarcasm’s effectiveness across demographics.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

This study investigated sarcastic expressions in the film *The Dictator* using Camp’s (2011) theory, which classifies sarcasm into four distinct types: propositional, illocutionary, like-prefixed, and lexical. The research aimed to identify the types of sarcasm used in the film and interpret their meanings within the broader context of political satire and cultural commentary.

A total of 66 sarcastic expressions were identified. Propositional sarcasm was the most frequent, appearing 31 times (46.96%), reflecting the film’s strong use of contradiction and exaggeration to mock political hypocrisy and global power dynamics. Lexical sarcasm, with 22 instances (32.83%), involved ironic word choices that subtly conveyed criticism. Illocutionary sarcasm accounted for 11 cases (16.41%), where tone and context played a key role in communicating sarcasm. Like-prefixed sarcasm was the least frequent with 2 instances (2.98%), yet provided a clearer indication of sarcastic intent due to its linguistic form.

The second objective of the research was to interpret the implied meanings behind these expressions. The study found that the film uses sarcasm not only for comedic effect but also as a tool for socio-political critique, targeting topics such as U.S. foreign policy, Middle Eastern politics, racial and gender stereotypes, and media manipulation. Through exaggerated dialogue and ironic contrast, the character Aladeen satirizes global leadership, war, and Western moral superiority, transforming humor into critical discourse. By applying Camp’s model, this study contributes to a better understanding of sarcasm’s dual function—as both entertainment and rhetorical strategy—in film.

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several recommendations can be made for future research. First, researchers are encouraged to apply Camp’s (2011) sarcasm framework to other films or genres, particularly political satire or social commentary, to

compare how sarcasm functions across different cultural and narrative contexts. Second, audience-based studies could explore how different groups interpret sarcastic content, as sarcasm often depends on cultural background, familiarity with satire, and contextual awareness. Third, future research may benefit from integrating Camp's classification with other linguistic and discourse theories—such as pragmatics or critical discourse analysis—to deepen the exploration of sarcasm's role in power dynamics and identity construction. Additionally, a multimodal approach could be adopted to analyze not only the verbal but also the visual and tonal aspects of sarcasm in film, offering a more comprehensive understanding of how sarcastic meaning is conveyed through body language, facial expressions, and intonation. Lastly, the insights from this research could be applied in educational settings to develop students' critical thinking and media literacy, especially in understanding how irony and sarcasm operate within political or culturally loaded media content.

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