

ANALYSIS OF SARCASM FOUND IN SAMSUNG ADVERTISEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

This research analyzes the types and communicative functions of sarcasm found in Samsung advertisements, particularly in the Samsung Makes Fun of Apple campaign. Using a descriptive qualitative method, it applies discourse analysis based on Gee's (2021) framework, which explores how language constructs meaning, identity, and social relationships. The data were obtained through non-participant observation and documentation of 14 Samsung YouTube videos, identifying 109 sarcastic expressions. Analysis refers to Camp's (2012) classification of sarcasm: propositional, lexical, like-prefixed, and illocutionary. Functions examined include criticizing, entertaining, indirect persuasion, asserting superiority, and emphasizing. Coding was performed manually, based on Saldaña (2021) procedure, which classified each sarcastic unit according to type and function. Results indicate that sarcasm is intentionally employed to mock competitors or to emphasise Samsung's strengths, by means of non-literal meanings obtained from a divergence between the said and the intended message. The paper extends discourse analysis of advertising and yields implications for marketers who seek to create compelling communication.

Keywords: Camp's Theory, Communicative Functions, Figurative Language, Samsung Advertisements, Sarcasm

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1. Introduction

In this digital age, where marketing communication jarred each other in the jostle for space, firms are fast on their heels and not just to win a market race with competitors, but also as having an innovative approach to marketing itself. One such emerging rhetorical move is the employment of sarcasm in advertising. Sarcasm in this essay refers to saying the opposite of what one means in an ironic or humorous way. Sarcasm is used as a rhetorical approach strategy that draws attention, reveals product superiority, and shapes a witty as well as confident brand image. According to Danielyan (2022), modern-day advertising language plays a major role in the perception of messages by consumers.

Samsung's flagship technology also uses sarcastic content in its advertisements. One example of such a campaign is the "Samsung Mocks Apple" ad, in which Samsung parodies and mocks Apple's products, its users, and its marketing practices. Through clever and sarcastic comparisons, Samsung wants you to know that they are not just a brand, but also a tech giant

that approaches life with ease. This is an example of how companies consciously choose language to shape their brand and influence people.

Humor in advertising plays a performative and persuasive role. It provides the possibility to convey criticism indirectly, with better memorability and less confrontation (Pickering et al., 2018). Previous research, including that conducted by Mathur et al. (2022) and others, has shown that humor and sarcasm can attract people's attention and increase memorability of the message. However, as with irony, the power of sarcasm depends on the shared context between the speaker and the listener, assuming that the listener can understand the ironic tone, interpret the speaker's intentions, and understand the meaning intended by the speaker.

To address this gap, the present study investigates sarcasm in Samsung's "Samsung Makes Fun of Apple" advertisements by identifying the types of sarcasm (propositional, lexical, like-prefixed, and illocutionary), analyzing their communicative functions (criticizing, entertaining, indirect persuasion, asserting superiority, and emphasizing), and interpreting their implicit meanings based on Camp's (2012) theory. The study applies a qualitative descriptive method using fourteen YouTube video advertisements released between 2010 and 2025.

This study is relevant from a theory construction and software review standpoint as it provides evidence that contributes to the study of Sarcasm in Pragmatic and Discourse Analysis, where Sarcasm functions as a communicative strategy for persuasive intent (e.g. advertising, branding). It also offers implications for advertisers and marketers in using sarcasm effectively: to 'catch' the consumer's attention, to make an implicit criticism, and to strengthen brand image with less ostensible aggression. The novelty of the research consists in a concentrated analysis of sarcasm as pragmatic means in competitive advertising communication contributing to better realization of semantic and pragmatic interaction at modern marketing communication.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Figurative Language

Figurative language allows speakers to convey a message beyond the words used to produce it. It is composed of metaphors, hyperboles, and rhetorical figures like sarcasm and irony to improve communication's explicative load and persuasive power (Dancygier & Sweetser 2014; Mangen et al., 2023). They work well in advertising, and help consumers remember both the message and the brand. Sarcasm as a sophisticated expression of the indirect speech act involves both irony and humor in order to convey risky criticism in an engaging way. But its meaning is based on cultural awareness and similar experience (Dobrovol'skij & Piirainen, 2021). This study applies figurative language theory to explain how sarcasm supports Samsung's rhetorical and persuasive communication.

2.2 Context

Context determines how sarcasm is understood since its meaning often contradicts literal wording. Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle shows that sarcasm arises when speakers intentionally violate conversational norms to create implicature. Sperber and Wilson's (1986) Relevance Theory adds the notion of echoic utterance, in which speakers mock or reject ideas through irony. Comprehension of sarcasm therefore relies on common cultural and situational knowledge (Clark, 1996). With digital media, multimodal signals like visuals, tone and typography are used to strengthen the sarcastic meaning (Filik et al., 2016; Sykora et al., 2020). Therefore, the current work is conducted under equal consideration of both verbal and visual contexts for interpretation of sarcasm in Samsung commercials.

2.3 Sarcasm

Sarcasm are able to convey the opposite meaning of literal ones, commonly serving as humorous language and/or a critique or social commentary (Riloff et al. It often intersects with irony but is keener and more evaluative. Scholars such as Chimote and

Tandan (2019) view it as a means of expressing dissatisfaction indirectly, while Bouazizi and Otsuki Ohtsuki (2016) describe it as an advanced form of irony common in online discourse. In Samsung's advertising, sarcasm operates as a linguistic and pragmatic strategy to entertain, criticize competitors, and construct a bold brand image.

2.4 Types of Sarcasm

Types of sarcasm different from each other by the structures they involve and how they are used pragmatically. Camp (2012) introduces the four types illocutionary, propositional, like-prefixed and lexical each representing an approach sarcasm takes to meaning via contradictoriness, irony or implicativity. This framework is useful for analyzing sarcasm in structured media such as advertisements, where both verbal and visual delivery express subtle yet pointed criticism. These distinctions serve as the analytical basis for identifying and categorizing sarcasm in Samsung's advertisements. Camp (2012) identifies four types of sarcasm:

1. **Propositional** : Contradiction between literal and intended meaning.
2. **Lexical** : Positive words used ironically.
3. **Like-prefixed** : Signaled by the use of "like" to express disbelief.
4. **Illocutionary** : Conveyed through tone or delivery rather than words.

These forms rely on context and shared understanding to signal irony (Ray et al., 2022; Krašek, 2021). The classification is used in this research to categorize sarcastic patterns in Samsung's advertisements.

2.5 Functions of Sarcasm

Sarcasm serves multiple communicative purposes:

1. **Criticizing** competitors or ideas subtly.
2. **Entertaining** through humor to gain attention.
3. **Indirect persuasion** by letting audiences infer meaning.
4. **Asserting superiority** through wit and confidence.
5. **Emphasizing** ideas by contrasting literal and intended meaning.

These functions make sarcasm a persuasive and strategic device in branding (Pickering et al., 2018; Mathur et al., 2022; Dynel, 2017).

2.6 Sarcasm in Advertising

In ads, sarcasm combines elements of irony and humor to criticize, titillate (and thereby draw in) an audience. It enables brands to subtly and memorably send out their urgent messages (Colston, 2017; Danielyan, 2022). When use appropriately, sarcasm increases consumer involvement, brand personality and message recall. "When one company imitates the marketing methods of its competitor, which in this case pays homage if not outright steals an idea from another one of that other company's successful campaigns, that alone is pretty damn delicious," said Brad Keoun, a reporter for The Street. This combination may provide some entre into a trend around language and tone: Samsung's biting, sarcastic marketing mocking Apple adheres strictly to the power of modern irony to cement points of competition while maintaining entertainment value.

2.7 Previous Studies

In the past, sarcasm has been analyzed from difference angles. Saragih et al. (2023) also examined sarcasm in the Wednesday series, observing that humor and irony contribute to character identity. Sari(2023) explored sarcasm in the Meghan Trainor song Mother and discovered it to be a channel used by the singer to communicate social critique. Khadafi (2024) studied sarcasm in online comments, revealing gender-based differences in sarcastic expression.

While these studies applied Camp's theory of sarcasm, they focused on entertainment and social contexts rather than advertising. Building on these findings, the present research examines how sarcasm in Samsung's "Samsung Makes Fun of Apple"

campaign functions as a persuasive strategy to convey criticism, highlight brand superiority, and influence audience perception.

3. Method

3.1 Kind of Research

This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the use and functions of sarcasm in Samsung's "Samsung Makes Fun of Apple" advertisement campaign. The qualitative methodology of this study was judged to be suitable, as it permits an in-depth investigation of linguistic and pragmatic phenomena to be undertaken within naturalistic communication contexts and media text input in the present case.

The paper aimed at finding and describing sarcasm occurring as types and communicative functions of sarcasm materialised in the form of rhetorical and persuasive devices. Camp's (2012) typology of sarcasm served as the main theoretical model, which categorizes sarcastic utterances into four types: propositional, lexical, like-prefixed and illocutionary sarcasm. To cover this gap, Attardo's (2000) theory on the functions of sarcasm criticizing, entertaining, indirect persuasion, asserting superiority and emphasizing was adopted to explore the purposes of communication motivated by this kind sarcastic utterances.

The integrated perspective thus allowed the study to analyse not only the linguistic representation but also the strategic function of sarcasm in Samsung use, uncovering how irony and ridicule were strategically utilised by Samsung for assertive meaning- and competitive self-presentation in its marketing discourse.

3.2 Data Collection

Data were collected from a number of 14 Samsung Advertisement videos constituting the "Samsung Makes Fun of Apple" campaign and uploaded on the official youtube website of Samsung through time span reaching from 2010 till 2025. The ads were selected purposefully based on their fit with the research questions, specifically their content containing sarcasm that is clearly directed at Apple or its products.

Each advertisement was carefully observed, transcribed, and documented. The researcher took notes on verbal expressions, visual cues, tone, and contextual elements that contribute to the sarcastic meaning. Screenshots and transcripts were used to preserve both linguistic and visual details, ensuring the authenticity and reliability of the data.

A total of 109 expressions of sarcasm were coded for the 14 advertisements. These were collated in a dataset with the utterance, sarcasm type, function, context, and interpretation to further enable systematic analysis.

3.3 Data Analysis

The analysis was based on a qualitative discourse analysis approach, with an overlay of Camp's (2012) typology of sarcasm. This strategy has been adopted here because it enables an elaborate explanation of the way in which sarcastic use of language acts as a rhetorical and communicative device in advertisements.

The analysis process included three major steps. Second, all the spoken sentences from the transcribed ads were firmly word-by-word scrutinized to find out any sarcasm present (linguistic incongruity, tone or context). Second, we classified each identified sarcastic utterance based on Camp's (2012) four types of sarcasm: propositional sarcasm, lexical sarcasm, like-prefixed sarcasm and illocutionary sarcasm. The classification was designed to reflect the pragmatic and structural diversity of sarcasm in our data.

In the third step, each sarcastic was considered with respect to an SFI on CGH whereupon the funny and ironic communicative situations framework (Attardo 2000) was used. Functions, such as criticizing, entertaining, indirect persuasion, asserting superiority and emphasizing were detected to grasp the general rhetorical motivation behind Samsung campaign. The

interpretation task was constructed to control for linguistic (word choice, tone, and subordination) and contextual (visuals, speaker roles, situational context) cues supporting the prosodic meaning of a sarcastic statement.

For analytical validity, the author used iterative coding and cross-referencing between this study and the extant work on sarcasm and advertising discourse (Dynel, 2017; McQuarrie & Phillips, 2005). Data were read and re-read ensuring the coherence between the categories and interpretations. This analysis provided a broad insight into how sarcasm functions in the competitive narrative of Samsung, revealing it to serve as both humorous device and strategic persuasive tool as branding communication.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Result

This study analyzed fourteen Samsung advertisements from the “Samsung Makes Fun of Apple” campaign, uploaded to YouTube between 2010 and 2025. The analysis applied Camp’s (2012) theory of sarcasm, which categorizes sarcastic expressions into four types: propositional, lexical, like-prefixed, and illocutionary. Each utterance was also examined for its communicative function, including criticizing, entertaining, indirect persuasion, asserting superiority, and emphasizing.

A total of 109 sarcastic utterances were identified from the fourteen videos. The results show that illocutionary sarcasm appeared most frequently, followed by propositional, lexical, and like-prefixed sarcasm. Illocutionary sarcasm was often expressed through tone, gesture, and facial expression, while propositional sarcasm directly mocked Apple’s products through ironic statements. Word-based sarcasm was alternating irony using words, and like-added-onto-sarcasm was a sort of casual mockery, “Like that’s new.”

Facial expressions, pauses, background music, and camera angles supplemented nonverbal signals of sarcasm to enhance the sarcastic tone such that individuals found it more engaging. This is a multi-modal feature that stressed the playfulness, dumbness and competitive stance of Samsung’s message which represented the brand as smart, confident and inventive.

In summary, Samsung’s strategic use of sarcasm is rhetoric as a means of critique Apple humorously while strengthening its brand identity. Through the integration of verbal irony and visual delivery, Samsung successfully entertains audiences and promotes product superiority without direct confrontation. The analysis of fourteen advertisements from the “Samsung Makes Fun of Apple” campaign revealed that illocutionary sarcasm was the most dominant, followed by propositional, lexical, and like-prefixed types. Visual and auditory features such as tone, facial expression, and editing rhythm enhanced the sarcastic tone and increased persuasive appeal.

Table 1. Frequency of sarcasm types in Samsung advertisements

Type of Sarcasm	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Illocutionary	39	35.8%
Propositional	32	29.4%
Lexical	24	22.0%
Like-prefixed	14	12.8%
Total	109	100%

4.1 Discussion

The findings reveal that Samsung’s “Makes Fun of Apple” advertisements employ four types of sarcasm propositional, lexical, like-prefixed, and illocutionary (Camp, 2012) serving functions such as criticizing, entertaining, indirect persuasion, asserting superiority, and emphasizing. Illocutionary sarcasm dominated, showing Samsung’s reliance on tone, gesture, and delivery to express irony and criticism subtly.

Sarcasm in these ads was used to mock Apple's product limitations such as lack of multitasking, stylus precision, and charging efficiency while highlighting Samsung's innovations. This reflects Camp's (2012) idea that sarcasm conveys implicit criticism through contrast between literal and intended meaning. The humor and irony make the message more engaging, transforming direct competition into entertainment. These results support previous studies (Batista et al., 2022; Dynel, 2017; McQuarrie & Phillips, 2005), which note that sarcasm strengthens persuasion and enhances brand appeal through subtle humor. By combining verbal irony and visual delivery, Samsung successfully builds a confident, witty, and relatable brand image. However, this study is limited to fourteen advertisements from one campaign. Future research could include other brands or media to explore how sarcasm functions in broader advertising contexts.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the types and functions of sarcasm in Samsung's "Makes Fun of Apple" advertisements. From 109 sarcastic utterances found in 14 YouTube videos (2010-2025), four sarcasm types were identified following Camp's (2012) classification: propositional, lexical, like-prefixed, and illocutionary. These expressions served five main communicative functions: criticizing, entertaining, indirect persuasion, asserting superiority, and emphasizing. Overall, the findings show that Samsung strategically employs sarcasm to highlight its technological advantages while subtly criticizing Apple's shortcomings. This rhetorical approach allows Samsung to deliver persuasive and entertaining messages that enhance brand identity and consumer engagement through humor and wit.

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