

Tetiana Khraban 

National university «Kyiv aviation institute»

Mykhailo Khraban 

Heroes of Kruty Military Institute of Telecommunications and Information Technology



HUMOR AS ARMOR: SARCASTIC COMMUNICATION AND GROUP COHESION IN UKRAINIAN MILITARY ONLINE DISCOURSE

This article analyzes the characteristics of sarcastic discourse in the Ukrainian military environment, focusing on three types of material: visual memes, fairy tale narratives, and online comments. The empirical corpus consists of 627 items collected from the Facebook community “Standarty khotevshykh v NATO” [Standards for those wishing to join NATO], which unites over 41,000 participants. The dataset, which encompasses the period from January 2024 to October 2025, comprises 76 visual posts, 17 “fairy tales”, and 413 comments, all of which contain explicit or implicit markers of irony or sarcasm. The study adopts a multimodal discursive approach, treating verbal, visual, and paralinguistic forms as elements of social practice. Thematic analysis facilitates the identification of recurrent semantic structures and latent meanings. The findings indicate that sarcastic discourse among Ukrainian military personnel functions as a multimodal communicative system. Visual memes create contrasts between official rhetoric and everyday reality; fairy tales articulate institutional critique through allegory while provoking strong affective responses; and comments moderate interaction by transforming aggressive sarcasm into affiliative humor and self-irony. Collectively, these practices operate as an adaptive mechanism that enables Ukrainian soldiers to maintain psychological balance, reinforce group identity, and sustain cohesion under conditions of stress and limited autonomy.

Key words: Ukrainian military discourse; sarcasm; Facebook jokes; non-institutional communication

Tetiana Khraban, National university «Kyiv aviation institute», xraban.tatyana@gmail.com, ORCID 0000-0001-5169-5170; Mykhailo Khraban, Heroes of Kruty Military Institute of Telecommunications and Information Technology, mikhailkhraban@gmail.com, ORCID 0009-0006-7771-2307. This text is licensed under Creative Commons Uznanie autorstwa-Użycie niekomercyjne-Bez utworów zależnych 3.0 Polska (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 PL).

Introduction

Digital technologies and social networks have undergone rapid development, profoundly reshaping the nature of communication in the modern world. The online space has evolved into a multifaceted domain that functions not only as a conduit for information exchange but also as a crucible for the development of cultural practices, social identities, and collective emotions. In the context of wartime circumstances, these processes become notably pronounced and concentrated. War functions as a significant catalyst in the transformation of discursive forms, thereby instigating novel modes of verbal interaction and amplifying particular communicative strategies (Khraban, 2021a). In conditions where military realities permeate the everyday life of society as a whole, it becomes particularly important to study forms of speech representing collective emotions and ways of dealing with extreme situations. In this context, the military subculture is a unique communicative space. It emerges at the intersection of patriotism, professionalism, and social tradition, manifesting chiefly through linguistic expression—that is to say, a system of stable expressions, behavioral patterns, and specific genres of communication (Khraban and Khraban, 2019). In addressing this subject, the Ukrainian military subculture, as a sociolinguistic phenomenon, exhibits distinctive dynamics, which are evident in the transformation of non-institutional military discourse (Khraban, 2021b). In accordance with tradition, Ukrainian non-institutional military discourse combines values, worldviews, communication models, and forms of linguistic expression that are inherent to military personnel. Acquisition of special characteristics by this discourse in wartime is due to extreme circumstances that contribute to the formation of specific modes of speech behavior. In this case, language becomes not only a tool for conveying information, but also a means of psychological adaptation, social identification, and collective reflection (Khraban, 2023). The most vibrant and spontaneous form of military communication materializes in non-institutional online discourse. Contrary to formal, institutional discourse, which adheres to specific norms and strategies, non-institutional discourse maintains a degree of spontaneity and subjectivity (Khraban, 2021b). These include the transformation of familiar genres of communication, the emergence of new forms of linguistic play, the intensification of emotional expression, and the activation of sarcastic and ironic strategies. This phenomenon underscores the capacity of language to adapt to and withstand extreme circumstances, functioning not only as a means of expression but also as a catalyst for the consolidation and articulation of collective experience (Khraban, 2023). The examination of Ukrainian military discourse in online communication during wartime is of particular pertinence, as it facilitates the identification of processes initiated by extreme reality. These processes encompass the redefinition of values and meanings, as well as the

development of new communication norms within the military community. The proposed approach enables the examination of language as a dynamic entity, functioning not merely as an observer of social and cultural phenomena but also actively contributing to their formation (Khraban, 2023).

Sarcasm is classified as a form of verbal irony that is employed to convey a contradictory or contrasting sentiment. The employment of sarcasm entails the praise of certain behaviors, despite the underlying negative judgment they convey (Fanari et al., 2023). The significance of investigating sarcasm within the context of Ukrainian military subculture is rooted in its capacity to elucidate the linguistic and cultural processes initiated by war. Sarcastic discourse is indicative of a particular tension between literal and hidden meanings. In this sense, sarcastic discourse serves to reveal the cognitive and emotional mechanisms that are involved in processing extreme experiences. Furthermore, sarcastic discourse can demonstrate collective communication strategies that emerge in conditions of armed conflict. The significance of sarcastic discourse analysis extends beyond the realm of linguistics, finding relevance in related disciplines as well. This phenomenon contributes to our understanding of how individuals and communities adapt to traumatic circumstances, how mechanisms of social consolidation develop, and how the cultural memory of war evolves in the digital realm. The correlation between sarcasm use and the prevalence of professional stereotypes within the military context is a subject of particular interest. As Pickering et al. (2018) observe, tendencies toward humor, criticism, aggression, insincerity, or, conversely, the maintenance of positive relationships can comprise components of a professional profile that influences the nature of communication. In this sense, the study of sarcasm can facilitate a more nuanced understanding of how speech strategies become markers of professional identity for military personnel and how these markers get reinforced in non-institutional online discourse. Social and cultural status is also a significant factor to be considered. A substantial corpus of research indicates that perceptions and interpretations of sarcasm vary significantly across different social and cultural contexts. A thorough analysis of these dependencies enhances our comprehension of the contextual factors that influence speech behavior. It also facilitates the identification of how status and cultural differences resonate in military communication. Within the Ukrainian context, where the war has impacted all sociocultural strata, the exploration of the function of status and cultural paradigms in the employment of sarcasm is particularly salient. This inquiry offers a valuable opportunity to elucidate the mechanisms that unfold within military subculture in conditions of extreme reality.

The political context that influences the formation and interpretation of the humor under study also assumes added significance. As the war continues, the discrepancy between Ukraine's expectations of military support from NATO

countries and the actual pace of providing weapons, ammunition, and training programs is increasing. The observed delays in the delivery of military assistance, the heterogeneity of the allies' positions, and the reluctance of certain partners to engage with the potential risks of escalation have collectively engendered among Ukrainians a sense of asymmetry and inconsistency between the public rhetoric and the practical cooperation practices. Within the Ukrainian military community, these contradictions manifest as ironic and sarcastic distancing, aimed at critiquing the discursive formulas of "support". From the perspective of Ukrainians, these formulas do not always align with the direct operational experience of military personnel. Without a comprehensive consideration of this political background, the multifaceted nuances of sarcastic Ukrainian discourse may not be fully apparent to audiences outside Ukraine, as its meaning is intricately tied to the collective experiences of disappointment with the dynamics of alliance. Consequently, the employment of sarcasm in Ukrainian military non-institutional online discourse constitutes a significant field of interdisciplinary inquiry, enabling the expansion of our comprehension of the intricacies of military subculture and the identification of overarching patterns of interaction among language, emotions, and society within the context of armed conflict.

Sarcasm as an Interdisciplinary Phenomenon: A Review and Systematization of Research

The subject of sarcasm has been a point of interest for researchers in various fields of the humanities in recent decades. The interdisciplinary foundation of this study integrates approaches from social and cultural theory, linguistics, psycholinguistics, and research on emotional-interpersonal communication, enabling a holistic examination of sarcasm as both a linguistic and sociocultural phenomenon. According to the findings of linguistic and psycholinguistic studies, the phenomenon of sarcasm exhibits multidimensional characteristics, whereby its manifestation results from the interplay of various components, including syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic elements. This interplay contributes to the creation of a distinct communicative effect (Hasana and Subiyanto, 2024; Ramadhan and Setiasari, 2023). Contemporary research emphasizes the importance of analyzing not only the structure of utterances, but also their communicative function, including the softening of criticism, the expression of aggression, and humor. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on differentiating sarcasm from irony, as the comprehension of these phenomena necessitates sophisticated cognitive and socio-pragmatic processing. A substantial contribution to the understanding of the syntax organization of sarcasm is attributed to Hasana and

Subiyanto (2024). The authors emphasize that complex linguistic constructions play a key role in shaping the tone and various nuances of sarcasm (Hasana and Subiyanto, 2024). The study of Hasana and Subiyanto (2024) not only examines syntactic complexity, but also identifies the multifaceted functions of sarcasm in communication. This phenomenon may soften criticism, manifest itself as a tool of aggression, or serve as a means of humor. The study suggests that the comprehension of sarcasm necessitates the integration of syntactic and semantic signals with the social context, thereby enabling the recipient a correct interpretation of the speaker's hidden intentions. Therefore, the syntactic structure and communicative functions of sarcasm are closely interrelated, thereby enhancing the effect of conveying emotions and assessing the situation.

According to the findings of social and cultural studies, sarcasm is a multifaceted phenomenon that is contingent upon gender differences, cultural norms, social status, and individual characteristics of participants. The employment of sarcasm invariably entails a complex interplay between social contexts, cultural norms, and status differences between the speaker and the addressee. This interplay exerts a substantial influence on the interpretation and utilization of sarcasm, as well as on its emotional and communicative impact. Research conducted on the subject of gender and sarcasm reveals a persistent pattern: males utilize sarcasm more frequently than females, and derive greater pleasure from its use when directed towards other males (Gupta, 2024; Colston and Lee, 2004). According to the findings of Lampert and Ervin-Tripp (2006), male communication patterns demonstrate a propensity to utilize sarcasm more frequently when engaging in discourse with other male counterparts. This practice, as indicated in the research, is believed to play a role in fostering and strengthening social bonds. In contrast, male communication behavior tends to exhibit less sarcasm use when engaging with female interlocutors, possibly in an attempt to avoid appearing aggressive or threatening. Conversely, women demonstrated a tendency to utilize sarcasm more frequently in interactions with men than in interactions with women. It is important to note that the role of the individual participant in the conversation—as speaker or addressee—also influences the perception of sarcasm. Specifically, individuals who frequently use sarcasm in their own speech perceive it as less judgmental and more humorous. In contrast, individuals who frequently receive sarcasm as an addressee evaluate it as more aggressive (Bowes and Katz, 2011).

Emotional and interpersonal studies of sarcasm emphasize that sarcasm is an ambivalent phenomenon, posing both risks and potential benefits for interpersonal interaction. On the one hand, it has the potential to increase perceptions of aggression and create fertile ground for conflict (Bowes and Katz, 2011; Du et al., 2024). Conversely, under specific circumstances, the use of sarcasm can serve to mitigate the severity of criticism and promote the maintenance of social

connections (Turcan et al., 2020; Pickering et al., 2018; Huang et al., 2015). A seminal explanation for the positive effect is the Tinge Hypothesis (Dews and Winner, 1995), which posits that sarcasm serves to mitigate the emotional intensity of a statement. Consequently, Jorgensen's (1996) findings demonstrate that recipients of sarcastic insults exhibit a reduced tendency to respond defensively, as compared to their reactions to literal insults. Research by Pickering et al. (2018) corroborates this finding, demonstrating that sarcastic criticism is perceived as less negative and sarcastic compliments as less positive compared to literal ones. Furthermore, sarcastic compliments are more often associated with humor and light irony. However, the employment of sarcasm carries potential consequences. The interpretation of verbal communication is contingent upon various factors, including context, the trust between interlocutors, and the presence of paralinguistic cues such as intonation and facial expressions. In circumstances where such signals are absent—such as in online communication—the absence of irony can result in comments that are interpreted literally, thereby increasing the likelihood of misunderstanding and conflict escalation (Filik et al., 2016). To elaborate, sarcasm functions as a tool that both exacerbates and mitigates emotional tension. While its employment may occasion risks in interpersonal interaction, it concomitantly engenders opportunities for sustaining intimacy, articulating humor, and mitigating adverse perceptions of criticism. This duality renders sarcasm a distinctive communicative resource that necessitates meticulous consideration of the social context and the relationship between interlocutors (Turcan et al., 2020; Pickering et al., 2018; Huang et al., 2015).

The purpose of this article is to identify the characteristics of sarcastic discourse in a military environment, drawing on three types of material for illustration: visual memes, fairy tale narratives, and online comments.

Materials and Methods

The data set is compiled from materials posted by the Facebook community group “Standarty khotevshykh v NATO”¹ [Standards for those wishing to join NATO] (41100 members). The selection of Facebook as the primary platform for analysis is contingent upon the nature of its communication architecture. In contrast to the predominantly closed or restricted dissemination of visual content on WhatsApp and Telegram, accompanied by limited public reaction, Facebook offers a comprehensive system of interactivity. The platform offers a diverse

¹ Standarty khotevshykh v NATO. URL: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/791538464600294>

selection of comments, organized dialogue chains, and reactive formats, which are crucial for investigating the mechanisms of collective understanding and the processing of sarcastic content. The Facebook community group's constituents are individuals engaged in discourse pertaining to military humor and the sharing of personal experiences related to military service. It is important to note that this group holds the distinction of a "representative information hub" for non-institutional military discourse. The data collection period occurred from January 2024 to October 2025 on the social networking platform Facebook. The inclusion criteria for materials in the present study are as follows: the materials must have been published in the specified group during the specified period, and they must contain verbal or visual markers of irony/sarcasm. These markers may include explicit lexical cues, metaphors, hyperbole, satirical plots, and visual signs that are typical of meme culture. Materials not related to military topics or of an explicitly promotional or spam nature are excluded. The total number of materials included in the study is 627. These materials consist of 76 visual posts, including images and memes; 17 text posts containing fairy tale narratives (hereinafter referred to as "fairy tales"); and 413 text comments provided by users under posts. In this study, "fairy tales" is employed as a convenient working term for brief allegorical narratives. These narratives draw on the structural elements of folkloric or fairy tale traditions while delivering a critical and sarcastic commentary. Given that the materials originate from an online community, the following principles guide the study's design and execution. First, all personal identifiers, including names, nicknames, photos, and other information that could identify specific individuals, are systematically removed from the study publications. Second, the analysis is strictly descriptive and interpretative in nature, with no intention to expose or harm participants.

Methodological framework and rationale for the selection of methods

A discursive approach is chosen as the theoretical and methodological basis for this study. This approach considers texts, visual objects, and other semiotic forms as means of social action and tools for constructing meanings in a particular community (Lemke, 2013; Kress and Bezemer, 2023). This approach asserts that discourse is not confined to linguistic structures but encompasses a set of practices, representations, and symbolic resources through which participants establish and sustain social relationships, identities, and value systems (Lemke, 2013; Kress and Bezemer, 2023). The use of a discursive approach to analyzing sarcasm in military communication is justified by the specific nature of the material. Non-institutional military discourse is situational, multilayered, and exists mainly in informal online communication—social networks, chats,

and communities. It is a hybrid and polycoded phenomenon, combining verbal and visual elements, intertextual references, and features of spoken language. Its emotionality, fragmentation, and heterogeneity make it incomparable to traditional linear texts, thus requiring analytical methods beyond conventional linguistics. As discursive studies note, discourse is not only a product but also a process, shaped by social roles, cultural codes, and emotional responses. Military discourse reflects trauma, hierarchy, solidarity, and participants' emotional states. A discursive approach interprets texts as manifestations of social practice, revealing links between language, context, and communicative intent (Khraban, 2021a). Given its multimodal nature, military discourse combines linguistic and visual forms—memes, emojis, graphics—whose interaction generates meaning. Following Kress (2010), a multimodal discursive approach enables understanding sarcasm through the interplay of verbal and visual modalities, reconstructing the communicative act as a whole. This approach also uncovers latent ideological and psychosocial meanings, including sarcasm's role as a veiled critique of hierarchy and bureaucracy and as a marker of emotional resistance (Lemke, 2013). Finally, it highlights the interactive nature of communication, where posts and comments form dialogic chains of responses and remixes. Sarcasm thus emerges not in isolated statements, but through dynamic exchanges that construct collective meaning (Kress and Bezemer, 2023). Therefore, the discursive approach—and more specifically, the multimodal discursive approach—is the most appropriate methodological framework for the examination of non-institutional military discourse. The multimodal discursive approach allows for the consideration of the situational, procedural, and social character of discourse. Furthermore, this methodological framework enables the examination of the intricate interplay of verbal, visual, and paralinguistic modalities (Qadir, 2023). Additionally, it uncovers implicit ideological, sociological, and emotional meanings. Finally, it captures the evolution of meaning in the dynamic environment of online communities. The discursive approach is a methodological instrument of considerable relevance and empirical productivity, as it is instrumental in achieving the objectives of this study. These objectives include the analysis of the functions of sarcasm, its role in the criticism of bureaucratic practices, and its representation of the psychological attitudes of military personnel. In the context of this methodological framework for the analysis of verbal data, thematic analysis (TA) is regarded as one of the most flexible and empirically validated methods of the discursive approach (Braun and Clarke, 2023; Neuendorf, 2018; Fuchs, 2023). TA is a valuable tool for the identification of recurring semantic structures and representations in a corpus of discursive materials. Additionally, it is instrumental in analyzing both explicit and latent themes. This analysis is particularly crucial when studying sarcasm, which is often implicit and ambiguous in nature. The application of TA made it

possible to identify key discursive repertoires through which group members express criticism of bureaucratic practices and articulate their psychological states. The data analysis process encompasses three distinct yet interconnected phases. Stage 1 involves a multimodal analysis of images and memes as discursive units. Each was examined at denotative (content, composition, color) and connotative levels (associations, stereotypes) using multimodal semiotic categories (Kress, 2010; Kress and Bezemer, 2023), focusing on framing, perspective, emotion, and text-image interplay. Stage 2 applies thematic analysis to verbal materials—fairy tales, posts, and captions—to identify recurring motifs and evaluative patterns expressing sarcasm toward bureaucracy and shaping professional identity. Stage 3 analyzes comments as interactive discourse, viewing them as responses that co-construct collective meaning. The analysis revealed sarcastic functions such as mockery, frustration, emotional release, bonding, and critique, emphasizing their role in cohesion, trauma processing, and identity reinforcement.

Limitations

The following limitations of the present study are acknowledged. First, the corpus of material is compiled from texts and visual materials distributed online. Although a significant proportion of the authors self-identify as military personnel, it is impossible to establish with complete certainty the actual composition of this group. The absence of any discernible distinction among participants, whether in terms of their engagement in military operations, the extent of their service experience, their rank, or their position, serves to impede the capacity to extrapolate conclusions to the broader military community. Furthermore, the sample is not stratified according to socio-demographic characteristics, including age, gender, level of education, or cultural background. These factors have the potential to influence the nature of sarcasm perception and the ways in which it is produced. Consequently, ignoring these factors may result in a reduction of the representativeness of the sample. It is also important to note that the analysis is based primarily on qualitative methods—thematic and interpretive analysis—which, by their nature, involve an element of subjectivity. The identification of thematic groups of sarcasm and their functions is largely dependent on the researcher's position and context. The absence of a coding validation procedure may increase the risk of biased interpretations. The study's limitations also include the lack of assessment of the psychological characteristics of the participants. These characteristics include, but are not limited to, the individual's level of stress resistance, emotional burnout, or tendency toward ironic thinking. This limitation restricts the capacity to draw parallels between

the identified communication strategies and the personality traits. Consequently, the findings obtained should be regarded as an analytical model that reflects general trends, rather than as a comprehensive description of the entire spectrum of sarcastic practices in the military environment.

Results and Discussion

Visual motifs as the semiotic foundation of sarcastic discourse

A close examination of the visual imagery reveals that sarcasm is predominantly conveyed through iconic forms rather than verbal expressions. The majority of images are characterized by the presence of fragmentary or uninformative inscriptions, with their semantic core being embedded within visual symbols and compositional structures. This finding suggests a predominance of multimodal iconicity over verbalization. The interpretation of the message is not achieved through the process of reading, but rather through the recognition of cultural codes and emotional connotations inherent within the image. This communicative structure is characteristic of sarcastic discourse, in which meaning is deliberately implied and thus requires a certain degree of cognitive effort from the addressee. This endeavor, in turn, serves to reinforce the individual's sense of belonging to and identification with the group. The following are examples of visual images.

Figure 1. Visual images of sarcastic discourse



I'd love to have a photo of Spider-Man

Source: Standarty khotevshykh v NATO. Retrieved January 27, 2024, from https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1356736668332154&set=g.791538464600294&locale=ru_RU



You've got the uniform, and the boots are size 37—because who cares what size you actually are

Source: Standarty khotevshykh v NATO. Retrieved March 02, 2024, from https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1375592733113214&set=g.791538464600294&locale=ru_RU



The cat that lives at the training center

Source: Standarty khotevshykh v NATO. Retrieved May 20, 2024, from https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1419673475371806&set=g.791538464600294&locale=ru_RU



"Relationship status?"—"Married to the army."

Source: Standarty khotevshykh v NATO. Retrieved June 17, 2025, from https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=723266776987643&set=a.158160343498292&locale=ru_RU



When they send you slippers but forget the manual on how to wear them

Source: Standarty khotevshykh v NATO. Retrieved March 03, 2025, from https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1603136900358795&set=g.791538464600294&locale=bg_BG



Source: Standarty khotevshykh v NATO. Retrieved April 12, 2025, from https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1397936660878821&set=g.791538464600294&locale=ru_RU

The visual codes and their interpretations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Visual codes and their interpretation

Visual motif	Description	Connotation	Type of humor	Functions
Tired/apathetic characters	Minimalist outline, neutral drooping eyelids, flat mouth, monochrome color fill, sometimes contrasting outline	Apathy, irritation, fatigue	Self-deprecating/sad	Reducing anxiety by acknowledging fatigue
Attributes of bureaucracy	Folders, papers, stamps, stationery	Formalism, senseless paperwork, imitation of work	Aggressive/frustrating	Expression of irritation, implicit criticism
Military insignia and uniforms	Chevrons, helmets, uniforms, military silhouettes	Formalism, discipline, pathos	Ironical	Contrast with unstable reality, deconstruction of authority
Symbols of time	Clocks, calendars, and hourglasses	Protracted processes, endless cycles, waiting	Ironical/sad	Expression of fatigue, loss of purpose
Clowns, masks	Masked faces, grotesque expressions	Hypocrisy, pretentiousness, theatricality	Aggressive/exposing	Expression of irritation, implicit criticism
Excessive exertion	Characters lying down/sleeping in standing positions, “broken” poses	Severe overstrain	Affiliative/self-ironic	Collective acknowledgment of fatigue, emotional closeness

Source: own elaboration.

Several recurring motifs can be identified in visual sarcasm that are reproduced in different images and perform various functions. One of the most frequent motifs is characters with blank or tired expressions, often rendered in a minimalist style. These figures serve as visual representations of emotional exhaustion and disengagement. The employment of this technique, which can be conceptualized as a form of “emotional mirroring”, facilitates the evaluation of an individual’s own degree of fatigue. From the perspective of humor psychology, such representations can function as a source of emotional relief by serving as a catalyst in the externalization and normalization of the state of fatigue, thereby helping to reduce anxiety (Khraban, 2023). Another recurring motif is that of bureaucratic attributes—folders, papers, seals, stamps—which, in an ironic context, symbolize an arbitrary, overbearing, and absurd system. These images function as metonyms of institutional structure, serving as objects of sarcastic devaluation. The employment of such expressions serves to convey feelings of frustration and aggressive sarcasm. The aggression undergoes a shift from direct targeting of specific individuals to an abstract symbol of the system.

This shift serves to mitigate the risk of personal conflict and renders criticism more socially acceptable. Military symbols, including chevron patterns, helmet emblems, and soldier silhouettes, in conjunction with elements of uniforms, play an instrumental role in the visual narrative. In sarcastic discourse, they function to establish an ironic contrast between the official pathos of discipline and the chaos of everyday reality. This enables participants in the discourse to deconstruct authority and distance themselves from hierarchical pressure without resorting to direct confrontation, as critical evaluations of the established order are masked through the veil of humor. The motif of clown masks and grotesque characters, which are suggestive of hypocrisy and theatricality, is also significant. These images establish a conceptual framework for the performative nature of reality, challenging the perception of objective truth and inviting viewers to rethink the conventional boundaries between reality and performance. This theatricalization contributes to psychological distancing and reduces the subjective significance of traumatic or frustrating events. In addition, images of temporal symbols (clocks, calendars, hourglasses) embody the experience of endless waiting and stagnation, serving as a visual expression of hopelessness and the loss of meaning.

The employment of visual symbols within the military subculture signifies the elevated degree of codification of sarcastic statements and their integration into quotidian communication practices. This phenomenon functions as a psychological safeguard against emotional exhaustion and a mechanism for preserving symbolic autonomy within a rigidly hierarchical system. This mechanism corresponds to the well-known psychological model of “catharsis through humor” (Oppliger and Shouse, 2020; Martin, 2022), which posits that emotional tension can be alleviated through verbal and visual reinterpretation. Moreover, visual symbols fulfill a pivotal social function in the preservation of group identity. The recurrence of symbols functions as a marker of belonging, thereby engendering a sense of community and “in-group” identification among participants in the discourse. The comprehension of these symbols necessitates an adeptness in a specific cultural code, which enables included participants to differentiate themselves from “outsiders” while affirming their allegiance to the group. In this context, the role of affiliative humor is particularly significant. Affiliative humor is characterized by the portrayal of characters who exhibit signs of fatigue yet maintain an ironic perspective. The incorporation of such visual elements fosters a sense of interpersonal proximity, thereby engendering an emotional atmosphere characterized by amiable mutual understanding. Consequently, visual elements serve a dual function: they both indicate sarcastic intent and function as tools of symbolic group cohesion in contexts of chronic stress. In the analyzed corpus, visual memes emerge as multimodal realizations of sarcasm, where text is either absent or relegated to a supportive

role, and meaning is primarily constructed through recurrent visual codes. These codes fulfill multiple functions concurrently: they serve to mitigate emotional distress by addressing adverse experiences with humor; they facilitate indirect critique of the system without resorting to direct confrontation; they foster group cohesion by recognizing shared cultural motifs; and they provide a psychological distance from traumatic experiences for participants. Taken together, these findings suggest that visual sarcastic memes in the military environment function as a mechanism for collective emotional coping and indirect resistance. This mechanism enables the articulation of criticism and frustration in a manner that is both socially acceptable and humorous.

A thorough examination of captions extracted from images indicates that only a small percentage of visual messages are accompanied by explicit verbal markers of sarcasm. Approximately 20% of images contain text elements that can be classified as sarcastic statements, while about 70% lack sarcastic undertones, and another 10% include no text at all. Consequently, the verbal element in visual memes is minimal and largely auxiliary, while the visual component assumes a predominant role in meaning-making. This minimalism underscores the high degree of iconicity and contextual richness of visual language, where meaning is implied and deciphered by participants through shared cultural signs and knowledge of the intragroup context rather than through direct verbal expression. This particular communication structure enables the audience to engage in ironic discourse without resorting to direct verbal formulations, thereby mitigating the risk of conflict and facilitating the censorship of sarcastic content in the public sphere. Furthermore, the minimality of the verbal layer can be regarded as a psycholinguistic strategy employed to evade responsibility for the content. In the absence of explicit formulations, the interpretation is transferred to the recipient, thereby enabling the author to distance themselves from potentially provocative meanings if they are perceived negatively. Consequently, visual memes establish a milieu of managed ambiguity, wherein sarcasm and critique can manifest in a veiled manner without overtly transgressing social and institutional conventions. The available evidence suggests that sarcasm in visual memes is predominantly implicit and encoded in images rather than in text. Verbal elements contribute only marginally, functioning rather as anchors of attention or amplifiers of context. This discourse structure ensures the stability and reproducibility of sarcastic meanings even under censorship or social restrictions, making visual memes a feasible tool for expressing critical sentiments in environments where open criticism may be limited.

Fairy tales as a form of sarcastic discourse

Apart from visual and memetic forms, narrative texts distributed in the format of so-called “fairy tales” play an important role in non-institutional military discourse. Such texts exemplify a persistent genre phenomenon, characterized by variability in plot and character composition yet shared structural features, including a grotesque logic of events, reduced stylistics, and a dominant sarcastic tone. The regular appearance of this type of narrative suggests that it performs a systemic function in the discursive practice of the military community, rather than an episodic function. In the context of this study, one such tale—“About the Command, the Dragon, and the Enchanted Princess”²—is selected as a representative example. The original text is a fictional narrative written in a colloquial style with active use of jargon, slang expressions, vulgar vocabulary, and conversational interjections. These features have a substantial impact on the perception of the text, creating a distinctive flavor. Nevertheless, these elements introduce complexities that challenge effective translation and formal presentation of the text. The text has been adapted to eliminate slang and colloquial vocabulary in order to make it neutral and comprehensible to a wide range of readers. The syntactic structure has been simplified and logical consistency has been improved, facilitating comprehension and translation. The storyline and comedic effect have been preserved without the use of coarse or obscene expressions. Compliance with the norms of literary language has been ensured, which is important for presenting the text in an academic context. Consequently, the adaptation process has enabled the transformation of the original colloquial text, characterized by its emotional and expressive vocabulary, into a formal literary work that is suitable for publication and intercultural translation. This adaptation process has managed to preserve the fundamental plot and semantic elements of the original text:

There was once a command that really wanted to develop, grow, and advance in service. To achieve its goals, the command was always planning something: arranging secret meetings, organizing competitions for the best base, drinking unusual elixirs, and making subordinate knights write manuscripts. This is how it lived, but one day the command bought about ten liters of strong elixir from a local druid. As a result, they decided to review the map of command's possessions one more time. The elixir was too strong, and, as we know, some potions have no reverse effect. After taking it, the command became overly aggressive, patriotic, and wanted a promotion. Then, the command noticed a note on the map that said “dragon”. The command figured the dragon was already on its last legs. It was urgent to send dragon to another place, and victory over it would surely bring promotion and career advancement. The next day, the command issued an order to recruit

² Standarty khotevshykh v NATO. Retrieved June 03, 2025, from https://www.facebook.com/groups/791538464600294?locale=ru_RU

knights willing to fight the dragon. However, there weren't any volunteers, so they had to appoint someone by force. The command pointed to one knight and decided that he would be sent to fight the dragon. The order was given quickly, and the knight of the battalion, ready for action, was set to carry out the task. The command explained that the knight had to defeat the dragon and drive it out of the cave. He was promised half the kingdom, a beautiful princess, and a month's vacation for successfully completing the task, although it would probably only be ten to fifteen days. He'd also get a medal, a thermos, and, if he lived to retirement age, a ceremonial weapon. The knight wanted to head back to his fortress, but he had no choice but to stay put. The local master thought all the knights were fit and ready for duty. The command tried to calm the knight down, saying that there was no need to worry because the dragon was old and weak. By the time the knight reached it, the dragon would probably have already died on its own. The knight said it was still a dragon, and the command replied that the knight must be brave, since knights always defeat dragons. Then the command gave him some methodological instructions on how to fight them. When the knight asked about getting a horse, the command explained that there were currently issues with horses, but mentioned a man with a mustache who distributes horses to all knights and advised him to ask him for help. The knight went into battle with the dragon. He was defeated and returned, wondering how the command had previously won victories over dragons. He tried a halberd, a sword, and a shield, but the dragon was a tough opponent. Then the knight opened the methodological instructions, hoping to find a battle strategy. There were just general instructions: when a dragon appears, report to your superiors, increase vigilance, let the dragon come closer, and when you hear its breath, boldly come out of hiding and hit it with a decisive blow. The command was not pleased and said the knight would not get the princess or half the kingdom, and that he would only get the orders as they were issued. The knight asked for leave, which surprised the command, but they agreed to think about it. The knight grabbed the thermos, picked up the broken halberd, and went back to his castle, realizing that his vacation was going to be just like the promises he'd heard about the princess and half the kingdom. And the command, continuing to drink the druid's elixir, went in search of another knight—one more capable than this one, because he had failed to defeat the dragon.

A thorough analysis of fairy tales enables a comprehensive understanding of the organization of sarcastic presentation in fairy tale narratives and the communicative tasks it accomplishes. It is imperative to underscore that this text is not an isolated example, but rather a paradigmatic instance of a more extensive corpus of analogous texts that permeate discourse, manifesting as a discernible mode of expression that employs sarcasm to critique institutional norms. In the context of the fairy tales, each element is not merely an independent character or plot component; rather, it functions as a sarcastic carrier. Collectively, these elements coalesce to establish a multifaceted system aimed at mitigating anxiety and fostering critical distancing. This system enables both authors and readers to process the often challenging experiences associated with military service in a secure and playful manner (Pfeifer et al., 2024). The results of the analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Sarcasm in fairy tales

Narrative element	The nature of sarcastic presentation	The function of sarcasm	Expected psychological effect
Command	Hyperbolization of absurd decisions, illogical motivation	Deconstruction of authority, critique of the institutional system	Psychological disengagement from authority due to its reduced perceived significance
Knight (executor of the order)	An ironic portrayal as a victim of absurd tasks	Discursive expression of frustration and perceived helplessness	Reduction of internal tension and facilitation of psychological release
Dragon (abstract enemy)	Demonstration of conventionality accompanied by a deliberate manifestation of banality in the presented threat	Exposing the illusory character of external objectives and threats	Critical re-examination of designated “enemies”
Guides and instructions	Sarcastic mockery as a means of critiquing formalism and paper regulations	Critical analysis of bureaucratic ritualization	Critical re-evaluation of the presumed rationality underpinning the system
Awards and recognitions	Ironic contrast between promises and reality	Unmasking the symbolic hollowness of institutional incentives	Devaluation of external rewards in favor of intrinsic motivational orientations
Speech style (lexis)	Grotesque, reduced slang, and comic register	Transformation of traumatic experiences into a theatricalized narrative structure	Creating psychological distance and achieving catharsis through humor
Overall plot	Illogical sequence of events, the grotesque escalation of absurdity	Demonstration of systemic irrationality	Cognitive catharsis, liberation from the pressure of having to be “convenient” for the system

Source: own elaboration.

The analysis of the fairy tale “About the Command, the Dragon, and the Enchanted Princess” illuminates a comprehensive array of coherent narrative strategies, predicated on the employment of sarcasm as the prevailing communicative technique. It is imperative to acknowledge that the employment of sarcasm in this text does not merely represent a stylistic selection; rather, it constitutes an inherent component embedded within the narrative, thereby influencing both the internal logic of the plot and the dynamics of character interactions. A fundamental aspect of the use of sarcasm in such tales is its capacity to critique the institutional system through the exaggerated depiction of the command structure. The organization is depicted as an abstract bureaucratic apparatus, primarily

concerned with career advancement and ceremonial displays, while simultaneously exhibiting a marked deficiency in empathy and practical judgment. Sarcastic exaggeration serves as a critical tool for deconstructing institutional authority. By undermining the symbolic value of power, the text effectively diminishes its significance, thereby creating an emotional distance from authoritative figures. This strategy aligns with the findings of the research on aggressive humor, which identifies it as an indirect mechanism for expressing frustration and critique without engaging in overt confrontation (Martin et al., 2003; Huang et al., 2015). Furthermore, the employment of sarcasm in fairy tales serves to expose the absurdity and fictitious nature of military rituals, as illustrated by the motif of “fictitious rewards”. The command promises the knight half the kingdom, a princess, leave, and a ceremonial halberd. However, upon completion of the mission, he receives only a thermos and verbal reproaches. The incongruity between the ambitious pledges and the tangible outcomes serves to bolster the perception of the institutional framework as a performative space, wherein the distribution of rewards and disciplinary measures appears to be devoid of any correlation to the rigor of actions. This technique exemplifies a strategy characteristic of military sarcastic discourse, thereby exposing the symbolic emptiness of formal incentives and enabling authors to distance themselves from the values imposed by the system. Additionally significant is the function of verbalizing feelings of meaninglessness and learned helplessness, which is realized through the image of a knight. The knight is a forcibly appointed executor of a deliberately absurd order. The internal protest and awareness of the task’s meaninglessness are conveyed through sarcastic intonation. In this case, sarcasm functions as a psychological coping mechanism, allowing individuals to express traumatic experiences in a playful and grotesque register, thereby reducing their emotional impact (Rothermich et al., 2021). The motif of theatricality is also a salient feature in these texts, achieved through grotesque, deliberately vulgar, and comically exaggerated remarks. In this context, sarcasm functions to alter the perception of events, presenting them not as a tragedy or heroic drama, but as an absurd performance. In this manner, the text engenders a psychological distance between the reader and the institutional structure, thereby enabling the experience of service to be interpreted as something contingent and manageable. This finding aligns with the concept of “catharsis through humor”, a term frequently referenced in the scholarly literature on the effects of humor (Martin, 2022) when negative emotions are processed in a safe, playful way.

Finally, an important function of sarcasm is to create an intra-group cultural code. Finally, an important function of sarcasm is to create an intra-group cultural code. The clichéd characters and motifs—commanders, knights, dragons, manuals, and fictitious awards—allude to well-established patterns of military subculture, which are recognized by readers as “their own”. The sarcastic

presentation of these elements does not destroy collective identity; rather, it confirms it, demonstrating that the absurdity and arbitrariness of the system are a common and shared experience. This function is consistent with observations about the role of sarcasm as a mechanism for maintaining solidarity and social identity under stress (Khraban, 2022; Blasko et al., 2021; Pfeifer et al., 2024). Accordingly, the employment of sarcasm in the context of fairy tales fulfills a multifaceted function. It serves to deconstruct symbols of authoritative power, thereby diminishing their psychological impact. Additionally, it unveils the fictitious nature of institutional incentives, articulating frustration and a perception of the absurdity of the observed events. Furthermore, it mitigates emotional distress through the medium of theatricalization, while concurrently fostering group cohesion by recognizing shared cultural symbols. When considered in their totality, these functions enable the perspective that such tales can exist as a distinct genre of ironic military discourse, wherein sarcasm functions not only as a tool of criticism but also as a mechanism of psychological resilience and collective meaning-making in conditions of chronic stress.

Comments in the system of ironic interaction: from emotional trigger to psychological coping

A significant component of the analysis entails the examination of comments that emerge in response to visual images, memes, and fairy tale texts. Assuming that visual images, memes, and fairy tales function in the communication environment as triggers saturated with aggressive and frustrating sarcasm that initiate statements, then comments represent responses designed to process and neutralize this emotional charge. Consequently, fairy tales and remarks constitute inherently interconnected facets of a unified communication cycle, wherein not merely perspectives are exchanged, but also the collective emotional tone is regulated. From the perspective of psycholinguistics, this model aligns with the mechanism outlined by Kozubal et al. (2023) as “emotional trigger → coping skills”, wherein a potent emotional stimulus engenders the necessity for collective coping mechanisms. Within this system, fairy tales function as a catalyst for emotional disturbances, while comments serve as a mechanism for reestablishing group equilibrium. This phenomenon is evidenced by a discernible shift in tone among the comments, which transition from aggressive forms of sarcasm to milder expressions of affiliation and self-deprecation. This shift enables participants to mitigate the levels of polemics and tension present in the discourse. In other words, comments serve as an emotional buffer, processing destructive energy and transforming it into symbolic solidarity.

Therefore, comments must be considered in relation to other components of the multimodal construct, as each component fulfills its distinct semiotic function. The visual image establishes the prevailing emotional tenor or engenders an antithesis between official pathos and prevailing quotidian chaos. Fairy tales delineate the object of derision, thereby indicating the precise target of the sarcastic critique. Comments fulfill a processing function; that is, they temper the initial emotional impulse, either reinforcing it or engaging in a polemic. In this system, comments represent the final phase of the communication cycle. They serve not only to register the audience's reaction, but also to regulate the tone of the discourse, thereby transforming aggressive energy into forms of self-irony and group affiliation. The nature of this transformation can be traced in the classification of types of sarcasm according to thematic groups and communicative functions. The subsequent table presents the structural classification of the predominant categories of sarcasm identified within the corpus of comments.

A thorough analysis of the sarcasm types present in the comments allows for a reconstruction of the group's general psychological state. The findings suggest that, even under conditions of high emotional stress, the individuals retain their capacity for self-regulation and do not manifest indications of destructive frustration. A discernible tendency can be observed in the shift of tone from aggressive forms to self-irony and affiliative humor. Collectively, these two forms comprise almost half of the corpus. This strategy appears to function within the framework of emotional coping mechanisms: rather than amplifying the aggression embedded in the original texts, the audience reworks it into safe and socially acceptable forms. By engaging in these practices, the comments serve to mitigate tension and promote the restoration of emotional equilibrium within the group. From a psychological perspective, this suggests an innate ability to resist stress and maintain emotional composure in the face of prolonged periods of strain. In addition, the comments unmistakably demonstrate a strong emphasis on preserving group identity. Affiliative sarcasm, defined as humor that accentuates common experiences and fosters a sense of affiliation, performs a pivotal function in mitigating sentiments of exclusion and helplessness. This strategy is indicative of stable groups experiencing stress, in which humor serves as a unifying and reinforcing mechanism for group cohesion (Khraban, 2022). In this case, comments function as a mechanism for maintaining social cohesion and preventing disintegration. Specifically, individuals do not distance themselves from the community; rather, they actively seek emotional responses and confirmation of their inclusion. It is also noteworthy that sarcasm in comments is critical but non-destructive in nature. Participants articulate sentiments of irritation and skepticism, albeit in an indirect, ironic manner, thereby circumventing overt aggression and total devaluation. This finding suggests that the audience

Table 3. Communicative functions of sarcasm in comments

Thematic group	Type of humor	Example comment	Communicative functions	%
Solidarity and in-group humor	Affiliative	<i>Who cares about money? We're in it for the big idea!</i> ^a	Consolidation, creating a sense of belonging	28%
Self-irony and fatigue	Self-deprecating / self-assertive	<i>The warehouse has everything. In two sizes: too small and too big. That's how it's been since the days when spears were on the equipment list and dinosaurs were saddled in the park</i> ^b	Psychological release, preservation of identity	21%
Bureaucratic absurdity	Aggressive/ frustrating	<i>Officially 'well-equipped'—in reality, stripped bare</i> ^c	Reduction of frustration and an indirect critique of the system	19%
Command and its incompetence	Aggressive / ironical	<i>According to my 'personal' plan, I was supposed to be a general. Turns out they only collected those plans just so they could shred them</i> ^d	Indirect critique of the authorities, expression of irritation	16%
Soothing effect during moments of embarrassment	Face-saving	<i>My Jedi Master, the great guru of military wisdom, enlightened me as a fresh recruit. His wisdom was: 'Young Padawan, in the army nothing makes sense—but everything is still considered right</i> ^e	Reduction of tension, avoidance of conflict	11%
Cynicism and devaluation	Sad / self-destructive	<i>Troops pay for brooms, and voilà—the CO's got himself a brand-new plasma TV!</i> ^f	Emotional catharsis, a shield against hopelessness	5%

Source: own elaboration.

^a Standarty khotevshykh v NATO. Retrieved January 18, 2024, from https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1351600182179136&set=g.791538464600294&locale=ru_RU

^b Standarty khotevshykh v NATO. Retrieved March 02, 2024, from https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1375592733113214&set=g.791538464600294&locale=ru_RU

^c Standarty khotevshykh v NATO. Retrieved January 21, 2024, from https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1353584585314029&set=g.791538464600294&locale=ru_RU

^d Standarty khotevshykh v NATO. Retrieved January 27, 2024, from https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1356736668332154&set=g.791538464600294&locale=ru_RU

^e Standarty khotevshykh v NATO. Retrieved February 09, 2024, from https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1364008774271610&set=g.791538464600294&locale=ru_RU

^f Standarty khotevshykh v NATO. Retrieved January 15, 2024, from https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1349992432339911&set=g.791538464600294&locale=ru_RU

is conscious of the problematic aspects of institutional reality, yet retains a commitment to fundamental values and intrinsic motivation. Such non-destructive critique is indicative of the preservation of cognitive control and psychological resistance to frustrating factors. Concurrently, the comments also reveal indications of latent fatigue. The presence of self-deprecating sarcasm and occasional sad remarks indicates accumulated emotional exhaustion, which is masked by a humorous presentation. This phenomenon aligns with the psychological concept of the “psychological mask”, a term used in the field of psychology to describe the tendency of individuals, particularly those in high-pressure environments such as military and first responder teams, to maintain a facade of composure or irony (Khraban, 2022). This strategy, as postulated by psychologists, enables these individuals to mask their emotional vulnerabilities and sustain their functionality in situations characterized by persistent stress. Taken collectively, these observations permit the delineation of the audience as a group that exhibits signs of protracted emotional distress, yet concurrently demonstrates stability, cohesion, and aptitude for critical evaluation. The findings of this study indicate that members of the group exhibit high levels of resilience, a strong sense of camaraderie, and a readiness to address distressing experiences with a sense of humor. However, concurrently, there are indications of latent burnout, which is mitigated by the use of irony and mutual support. In essence, the audience maintains its psychological equilibrium by employing humor as the primary coping strategy and as a means of preserving communal cohesion.

Conclusions

The study demonstrates that visual images, memes, fairy tales, and comments created by Ukrainian military personnel constitute a cohesive multimodal system of sarcastic discourse, exhibiting interconnected psychological, social, and cultural functions. These forms differ in their encoding of sarcasm; however, they function as complementary links within a single communication cycle. This cycle maintains emotional stability and group identity under chronic stress. Visual images and memes represent the most implicit level, conveying sarcasm through iconic imagery rather than text. The juxtaposition of grotesque figures, bureaucratic symbols, and signs of fatigue creates an ironic contrast between official pathos and quotidian reality. Fairy tales, in contrast, offer a more explicit narrative level, where institutional critique is expressed allegorically, enabling frustration to be voiced indirectly. These elements function as emotional catalysts, eliciting robust responses that catalyze collective discourse. Comments serve to complete the cycle, transforming aggressive sarcasm into affiliative humor and self-irony. These activities function as emotional buffers, helping

to process negative experiences, reduce tension, and reaffirm group cohesion. Their criticism is non-destructive in nature, maintaining a healthy skepticism without undermining the fundamental values or motivations that underpin the project. Consequently, these forms coalesce to establish a multi-level adaptive mechanism that fosters cognitive integrity, emotional balance, and unity within the Ukrainian military community. Sarcastic discourse functions not merely as cynicism but as a pivotal component of informal culture, thereby fostering resilience and cohesion under protracted stress.

Further inquiries into the potential for research

Further research may focus on cross-cultural analysis of sarcastic practices in military communities across different nations is crucial for identifying both universal and culturally specific elements. This comprehensive approach will provide a more profound understanding of the role of sarcasm as a mechanism of psychological and social adaptation. When considered as a whole, this enables a comprehensive understanding of sarcastic discourse, which can be defined as both a means of expressing frustration and a crucial element in maintaining the cohesion and resilience of military communities.

References

- Barzy, M., Filik, R., Williams, D., Ferguson, H. J. (2020). Emotional Processing of Ironic versus Literal Criticism in Autistic and Nonautistic Adults: Evidence from Eye-tracking. *Autism Research*, 13(4), 563–578. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aur.2272>
- Blasko, D. G., Kazmerski, V. A., Dawood, S. S. (2021). Saying What You Don't Mean: A Cross-cultural Study of Perceptions of Sarcasm. *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 75(2), 114–119. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cep0000258>
- Bowes, A., Katz, A. (2011). When Sarcasm Stings. *Discourse Processes*, 48(4), 215–236. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0163853X.2010.532757>
- Braun, V., Clarke, V. (2023). Toward Good Practice in Thematic Analysis: Avoiding Common Problems and Be(com)ing a Knowing Researcher. *International Journal of Transgender Health*, 24(1), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2022.2129597>
- Colston, H. L., Lee, S. Y. (2004). Gender Differences in Verbal Irony Use. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 19(4), 289–306. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327868ms1904_3
- Dews, S., Kaplan, J., Winner, E. (1995). Why Not Say It Directly? The Social Functions of Irony. *Discourse Processes*, 19(3), 347–367. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01638539509544922>
- Du, Y., He, H., Chu, Z. (2024). Cross-cultural Nuances in Sarcasm Comprehension: A Comparative Study of Chinese and American Perspectives. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, 1349002. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1349002>

- Fanari, R., Melogno, S., Fadda, R. (2023). An Experimental Study on Sarcasm Comprehension in School Children: The Possible Role of Contextual, Linguistics and Meta-Representative Factors. *Brain Sciences*, 13(6), 863. <https://doi.org/10.3390/brainsci13060863>
- Filik, R., Turcan, A., Ralph-Nearman, C., Pitiot, A. (2019). What Is the Difference between Irony and Sarcasm? An fMRI Study. *Cortex: A Journal Devoted to the Study of the Nervous System and Behavior*, 115, 112–122. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cortex.2019.01.025>
- Filik, R., Turcan, A., Thompson, D., Harvey, N., Davies, H., Turner, A. (2016). Sarcasm and Emoticons: Comprehension and Emotional Impact. *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 69(11), 2130–2146. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17470218.2015.1106566>
- Fu, H., Liu, H., Wang, H., Xu, L., Lin, J., Jiang, D. (2024). Multi-Modal Sarcasm Detection with Sentiment Word Embedding. *Electronics*, 13(5), 855. <https://doi.org/10.3390/electronics13050855>
- Fuchs, K. (2023). A Systematic Guide for Conducting Thematic Analysis in Qualitative Tourism Research. *Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism*, 14(6), 2696–2703. [https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt.v14.6\(70\).17](https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt.v14.6(70).17)
- Gupta, S. (2024). Analyzing the Combined Effects of Sarcasm and Emotion for Gender Prediction. *International journal of advanced research in computer science*, 15, 30–35. <https://doi.org/10.26483/ijarcs.v15i2.7054>
- Hasana, N., Subiyanto, A. (2024). The Complexity of Functional Syntactic Structures of Sarcasm Expressions. *Leksema: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra*, 9, <https://doi.org/10.22515/ljbs.v9i2.8671>
- Hiremath, B., Patil, M. (2021). Sarcasm Detection using Cognitive Features of Visual Data by Learning Model. *Expert Systems with Applications*, 184, 115476. [10.1016/j.eswa.2021.115476](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eswa.2021.115476)
- Huang, L., Gino, F., Galinsky, A. D. (2015). The Highest form of Intelligence: Sarcasm Increases Creativity for Both Expressers and Recipients. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 131, 162–177. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2015.07.001>
- Jiang, T., Li, H., Hou, Y. (2019). Cultural Differences in Humor Perception, Usage, and Implications. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 123. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00123>
- Jorgensen, J. (1996). The Functions of Sarcastic Irony in Speech. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 26(5), 613–634. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166\(95\)00067-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(95)00067-4)
- Khraban, T. (2021a). A Discursive Approach to Modern Ukrainian Non-institutional Military Discourse. *Social Communications: Theory and Practice*, 13(2), 158–169. <https://doi.org/10.51423/2524-0471-2021-13-2-3>
- Khraban, T. (2021b). Archetypical Aspects of the Hero's Image in the Contemporary Ukrainian Non-institutional Military Discourse. *Social Communications: Theory and Practice*, 12(1), 83–97. <https://doi.org/10.51423/2524-0471-2021-12-1-2>

- Khraban, T. E. (2022). Adoption of Coping Strategies by Ukrainian Civilians in the First Fifteen Days after the Outbreak of Military Conflict in 2022. *Insight: The Psychological Dimensions of Society*, 7, 59–74. <https://doi.org/10.32999/2663-970X/2022-7-5>
- Khraban, T., Khraban, I. (2019). Cognitive and Pragmatic Features of the Ukrainian Army Humorous Discourse in Social Media. *East European Journal of Psycholinguistics*, 6(2), 21–31. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3637710>.
- Khraban, T. (2023). Humor as a Resource for Confronting Wartime Challenges. *East European Journal of Psycholinguistics*, 10(2), 47–61. <https://doi.org/10.29038/ee-jpl.2023.10.2.khr>
- Kozubal, M., Szuster, A., Wielgopolan, A. (2023). Emotional Regulation Strategies in Daily Life: The Intensity of Emotions and Regulation Choice. *Frontiers in psychology*, 14, 1218694. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1218694>
- Kress, G. (2010). *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*. Routledge.
- Kress, G. and Bezemer, J. (2023). Multimodal Discourse Analysis. In: M. Handford, P. J. Gee (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (pp. 35–54). Routledge.
- Krishna, M. M., Janarthanan, M., Vankara, J. (2023). Detection of Sarcasm Using Bi-Directional RNN Based Deep Learning Model in Sentiment Analysis. *Journal of Advanced Research in Applied Sciences and Engineering Technology*, 31(2), 352–362. <https://doi.org/10.37934/araset.31.2.352362>
- Lampert, M., Ervin-Tripp, S. (2006). Risky Laughter: Teasing and Self-Directed Joking among Male and Female Friends. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 38, 51–72. [10.1016/j.pragma.2005.06.004](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2005.06.004)
- Lemke, J. (2013). Multimedia and Discourse Analysis. In: J. P. Gee, M. Handford (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (pp. 79–89). Routledge.
- Martin, G. N. (2022). *The Psychology of Comedy*. Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- McAuley, L., Glenwright, M. (2025). Humor Styles Predict Self-Reported Sarcasm Use in Interpersonal Communication. *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(7), 922. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15070922>
- Neuendorf, K. A. (2018). Content Analysis and Thematic Analysis. In: P. Gough (ed.), *Advanced Research Methods for Applied Psychology* (pp. 211–223). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315517971-21>
- Olkonieni, H., Kaakinen, J. K. (2021). Processing of Irony in Text: A Systematic Review of Eye-tracking Studies. *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology = Revue canadienne de psychologie experimentale*, 75(2), 99–106. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cep0000216>
- Oppliger, P. A., Shouse, E. (2020). *The Dark Side of Stand-Up Comedy*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Oprea, S. V., Magdy, W. (2020). The Effect of Sociocultural Variables on Sarcasm Communication Online. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, 4(CSCW1), 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3392834>

- Pfeifer, V. A., Mehl, M. R., Lai, V. T. (2024). That Was Clever of You! Perspectives and Verbal Irony. *Psychology of Language and Communication*, 28(1), Article 14. <https://doi.org/10.58734/plc-2024-0014>
- Pickering, B., Thompson, D., Filik, R. (2018). Examining the Emotional Impact of Sarcasm Using a Virtual Environment. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 33(3), 185–197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926488.2018.1481261>
- Qadir, E. M. (2023). Visual Rhetoric in Election Posters: A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis Approach. *Koya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 6(1), 136–159. <https://doi.org/10.14500/kujhss.v6n1y2023.pp136-159>
- Ramadhan, R. T., Setiasari, W. (2023). A Study of Sarcasm of TV Series Friends. *TRANSFORM: Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, 11(4), 185–197. <https://doi.org/10.24114/tj.v11i4.44037>
- Rothermich, K., Ogunlana, A., Jaworska, N. (2021). Change in Humor and Sarcasm Use Based on Anxiety and Depression Symptom Severity during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, 140, 95–100. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2021.05.027>
- Shibata, M., Toyomura, A., Itoh, H., Abe, J. (2010). Neural Substrates of Irony Comprehension: A Functional MRI Study. *Brain Research*, 1308, 114–123. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brainres.2009.10.030>
- Spotorno, N., Koun, E., Prado, J., Van Der Henst, J. B., Noveck, I. A. (2012). Neural Evidence that Utterance-processing Entails Mentalizing: The Case of Irony. *NeuroImage*, 63(1), 25–39. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroimage.2012.06.046>
- Turcan, A., Howman, H., Filik, R. (2020). Examining the Role of Context in Written Sarcasm Comprehension: Evidence from Eye-tracking during Reading. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 46(10), 1966–1976. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xlm0000910>

