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A Pragmatic Study of Sarcasm in the TV. Show *Parks and Recreation*

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Abstract

This study examines the topic of sarcasm in the American television show *Parks and Recreation*. This topic has been chosen as the primary focus since it is relevant to modern social discourse. The challenge that this study attempts to address is how to interpret sarcasm in the program using a pragmatic approaches which are Searle's speech acts (1979) and Grice's maxims (1975). It also seeks to determine the type and purpose of sarcasm. As a result, the current study seeks appropriate answers to the following questions: (1) Which types of speech acts are used in the TV show? (2) What types of Gricean maxims are most frequently violated by the participants when producing sarcasm in the chosen TV show? The following aims are described in order to find appropriate solutions to the abovementioned questions: (1) Identifying the types of speech acts used in the TV show and (2) finding Grice's maxims utilized in the data under study. The present study hypothesizes that (1) Assertive speech act is more commonly speech act

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used in this TV Show (2) The quality maxim is flouted most frequently in producing sarcasm in the data under the study. Certain situations from the American TV show are selected to be the data for this study. The data are analysed based on Searle's speech acts (1979) and Grice's maxims (1975). The study has arrived at the following conclusions: (1) Assertive speech acts account for 57.14 % of all speech acts. This popularity implies that characters frequently make utterances that represent their thoughts or opinions, which serve as the foundation for sarcastic dialogue. (2) The quality maxim is most frequently violated (31.25%). This intentional infringement implies that characters frequently say things that are not meant to be taken literally, heightening the sarcastic tone.

Keywords: Sarcasm, Speech act, Grice's maxims, TV show

دراسة تداولية للسخرية في مسلسل كوميديا الموقف الحقائق والمنتزهات

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المستخلص

تُحل هذه الدراسة مفهوم السخرية في المسلسل التلفزيوني الأمريكي "Parks and Recreation" الحقائق والمنتزهات من منظور تداولي. تم اختيار هذا الموضوع نظرًا لأهميته في الخطاب الاجتماعي الحديث، حيث تسعى الدراسة للإجابة عن كيفية تفسير السخرية في هذا المسلسل باستخدام نهج تداولي، ومن هنا، تهدف الدراسة إلى إيجاد حلول مناسبة للأسئلة التالية: (1) ما أنواع أفعال الكلام وفقًا لـ Searle (1979). (2) هل ينتهك المشاركون في المسلسل قواعد Grice (1975) أثناء إنتاج السخرية؟ وعلى ضوء الاجابات توصلنا لتحقيق الأهداف التالية: (1) تحديد وشرح الاستراتيجيات التداولية المستخدمة في المسلسل، مثل نظرية أفعال الكلام لـ Searle (1979)، وقواعد Grice (1975). (2) ماهي اعراف الكلام التي يتم خرقها في البرنامج. استنادًا إلى الأهداف المذكورة، نطرح الفرضيات التالية: (أ) تُعد أفعال الكلام التوكيدية assertives النوع الأكثر استخدامًا من بين افعال الكلام. (ب) ان قاعدة quality maxim هي الأكثر انتهاكًا من بين قواعد كرايس. تعد افعال الكلام وقواعد Grice ظواهر تداولية موجودة في البرنامج التلفزيوني، وتهدف الدراسة لتحديد النوع الأكثر شيوعًا ضمن كل ظاهرة. لتحقيق الأهداف المحددة والتحقق من صحة الفرضيات، تم اتباع الإجراءات التالية: (1) عرض مراجعة شاملة للأدبيات المتعلقة

بالسخرية، بما في ذلك تعريفها وفقاً لعدة لغويين، (2) اختيار نموذج لتحليل البيانات. (3) اختيار مواقف عشوائية من المسلسل التلفزيوني الأمريكي "Parks and Recreation" كبيانات للتحليل. (4) تحليل البيانات المختارة اعتماداً على النموذج المطور بشكل نوعي وإحصائي، لربط نتائج التحليل باستخدام المعادلة الرياضية للنسب المئوية. (5) الوصول إلى استنتاجات بناءً على نتائج الدراسة. عبر الخطوات السابقة فقد أكدت الدراسة النتائج التالية: (1) أظهرت النتائج أن أفعال الكلام *assertive speech acts* هي الأكثر سيطرة في الحوار، حيث شكلت (57.14%) من جميع أفعال الكلام. يشير هذا الانتشار إلى أن الشخصيات غالباً ما تصرح بمعتقداتها أو آرائها كأساس للتبادل الساخر. (2) أظهرت النتائج أن *quality maxim* هي الأكثر انتهاكاً بنسبة (31.25%). يشير هذا الانتهاك المتعمد إلى أن الشخصيات غالباً ما تصرح بعبارات لا يُقصد أخذها حرفياً، مما يعزز النبرة الساخرة المستخدمة في البرنامج.

الكلمات المفتاحية: السخرية، أفعال الكلام، قواعد او مبادئ كرايس وبرنامج تلفزيوني

1. Introduction

According to (Briggs, 1978, p. 685), the word sarcasm' is derived from the Greek verb 'Sarkazein,' which means 'to rip flesh,' a term that appears to resonate with the public. The frequent usage of phrases like 'cutting,' 'biting,' and 'irony' demonstrates this. It has survived as words that signify 'ridicule,' 'derision,' 'mockery,' 'irony,' and 'satire. This mistake is primarily utilised by newcomers, who exclude rarer terms from their lexicon. They believe that the person using sarcasm is harsh, bitter, stinging, contemptuous, disrespectful, and nasty. They believe that someone is cold-hearted, ridiculing, and abusing their authority or expertise to cause emotional anguish and pain by insulting someone with the intention of creating harm. In this study, the researcher attempts to address the following questions. Therefore, the researcher poses the following questions: What speech acts are most commonly used to convey the sarcastic message in the selected TV show? Which of Grice's conversational maxims is most frequently violated in order to communicate on the TV show? Which ones are the most commonly employed speech acts or Gricean maxims? This study tries to discover the most frequent type of speech act that is utilised to convey the sarcastic meaning, as well as the conversational maxims that is infringed by the sarcastic to express sarcasm; the purpose of this study is to find the most common kind within each phenomenon. In light of the aims indicated before.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Sarcasm Definition

Sarcasm has been defined in several ways to emphasise various aspects of this pragmatic phenomenon. The current investigation will provide several theories for how sarcasm expresses its tone. According to (Perrine,1960, p.653), Sarcasm is described as sharp or harsh language used to hurt feelings (derived from a Greek term meaning to rip flesh). According to (Beckson & Ganz, 1983, p. 222), sarcasm is a bitter, sarcastic expression that uses irony to convey the opposite of what is intended. According to (Barbe,1995, p. 28), sarcasm is distinguished by a high level of hostility towards the listener since it entails making the listener the butt of a joke. Sarcasm is defined by Attardo (2000, p.801) as "an overtly aggressive type of irony, with clearer markers/causation and a clear target.". "Sarcasm is a concept used in the language in an indirect way, which means saying something different than what it literally means" (Skalicky & Crossely, 2018, p. 9).

2.2 Pragmatics

pragmatics is defined as the evaluation of real utterances, an analysis of usage rather than meaning (Lyons, 1977,p. 171). It can alternatively be described as the evaluation of a component of meaning that is not primarily based on truth conditions or the examination of performance rather than competence (Levinson, 1983,p. 32). (Yule,1996,p. 3) offered a new definition of pragmatics as the study of the intended meaning of speech acts (SA), or the analysis of the speaker's meaning. Pragmatics is concerned with the intended meaning of a specific spoken utterance produced by a speaker (S) in order to interact with other speakers (Ss). Therefore, pragmatics focuses on interpreting the speaker's intended message. This research will look at how speakers arrange their speeches and the aspects that influence their communication, such as audience, venue, timing, and context. Pragmatics is the study of meaning in context (Yule, 2000,p.3). pragmatics is defined as the study of "invisible" meaning, or how humans interpret intended meaning even when it is not explicitly communicated or written down. As a result, in order to understand the underlying meaning of a speech, the speaker must rely on a variety of common assumptions and topics for efficient communication (ibid). Pragmatics is the systematic study of meaning via language use (Huang, 2007, p. 2).

2.2.1 Speech Acts (1979)

Searle (1969), a language philosopher, developed a speech act theory inspired by Austin. (Levinson,1983,P.283) demonstrates that Searle's model is the major organising

principle of Austin's views, providing an analytical restructuring and organisation of Austin's theory. Searle's argument is based on the idea that when people communicate through language, they are according to norms. This shows that while speaking, the speaker does illocutionary acts such as enquiring, declaring, commanding, promising, and so on. These acts are carried out in accordance with the language's regulations. He contends that correctly analysing speech acts entails understanding language as a whole, not simply individual words. He suggests three independent yet interconnected actions that take place at the same time.

1. **An utterance act:** The production of sounds, words, and phrases in speech.
2. **A propositional act:** Referring to an entity and assigning certain properties to it.
3. **An illocutionary act:** The act of uttering, ordering, promising, etc.

He sometimes refers to them as speech acts, although he considers illocutionary acts to contain propositional content delivered with a specific illocutionary power. He also introduces the concept of an Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) as a tool for the speaker to define the intended illocutionary force of a speech (ibid). IFID addresses word order, stress, intonation, punctuation, verb mood, and the so-called 'performative verbs' described by (Chilton & Schaffner ,2002, p.10-11). Searle's method for determining the illocutionary force of an utterance differs from Austin's. Austin sees it as the speaker's goal being carried out, but Searle sees it as the listener's interpretation. (Warren 2006, p.87). (Searle's 1979, p.12-17) key contribution to speech act theory is the classification of speech acts into five categories, each of which alters meaning by changing the context.

1. Assertives (Representatives) This is the most popular sort of speech act. (Crystal 2008, p.423) defines assertive utterances as speech acts in which a speaker asserts his belief about the intention or actuality of an utterance.

[1]. I state that they are very active students.

This category includes verbs such as "assert, report, complain, state, affirm, describe, conclude...etc. "(Searle, 1979, p.12).

2. Directives As the name implies, these speech acts encourage the listener to execute (or avoid) a certain action. Instructions are composed of action words that communicate instruction, such as "instruct, command, urge, call for, advise, caution, stress, mandate, prohibit, necessitate, entreat... etc." For example, as seen in the following instances:

[2]. Bring me that bag, please. (request)

[3]. The roads are too crowded, and that makes me so depressed. (complain)

[4]. Be careful.

This tool can be harmful (care), because these activities cannot be labelled as true or untrue, but as followed or not followed. (Searle, 1979, p.13).

3. Comissives Incorporate the speaker/writer's commitment to a future course of action into their words. Comissives cannot be classified as true or false; instead, they might be "fulfilled, honoured, or violated." Comissives are verbs that show a sense of dedication, such as pledge, vow, swear, ensure, offer, threaten, commit, etc. For example:

[5]. I will come tomorrow (promise).

[6]. Shall you drink a cup of tea? (offer) (ibid).

4. Expressives are verbal acts that a speaker or writer uses to express their emotions and feelings, such as joy, grief, acceptance, preferences, and aversions. This category includes verbs that express emotions, such as greeting, apologising, congratulating, showing gratitude, conveying condolences, and so on. For example:

[7]. I am so grateful for your endless support. (thanking)

[8]. I am so sorry for being late. (apologising) (Searle, 1979, p.15).

5. Declarations are spoken acts that express a wish to change the world. Words in a utterance can change the world. According to (Searle,1979, p.16), this group includes verbs such as "name, appoint, select, declare, and resign." The examples below demonstrate a change in the world:

[9]. Priest: I now pronounce you husband and wife.

[10]. Referee: You're out."

2.2.2 Grecian Theory (1975)

H. P. Grice, a famous British philosopher and linguist, has made significant contributions to pragmatics. He is well-known for his theory of conversational implicature, as well as his use of the cooperative principle and its associated conversational maxims. This idea has a significant impact on pragmatics research. According to Barron, Gu & Steen 2017, p.298), Grice's theory of conversation seeks to explain how speakers might intend meanings that extend beyond the literal meaning of

their words and how listeners can recognise this. Furthermore, according to (Thomas 1995, p.56), Grice's theory attempts to explain how folks can comprehend the speaker's implicit (unstated) message. It explains how recipients can understand the meaning of the words spoken. According to (Mey 1993, p.99), the term implicature, like the related word implication, is derived from the verb to imply. Implying means merging something into something else, so what is implied is integrated and must be unfolded to be comprehended. Conversational implicature is something implied in conversation or left unstated in real language use. According to (Levinson 1983, p.97), implicature is a synonym for conversational implicature. One of the primary benefits of implicature is that it provides a clear explanation of how it is possible to imply more than what is explicitly stated. For example:

[11] a. Can you tell me the time?

b. Well, the milkman has come.

In terms of semantics, speaker (b)'s response is entirely unconnected to speaker (a)'s query. Speaker (a) asks Speaker (b) to notify him of the time, but (b)'s response does not address (a)'s question. However, speaker (a) is not just enquiring but also requesting, whereas speaker (b) is hinting at more than he says, given they are both aware of the milkman's regular arrival time. Speaker (a) can infer temporal data from Speaker B's response (Levinson, *ibid.*, p. 98). (Levinson, 1983, p.101) emphasises that Grice's theory primarily focuses on how people use language. In his 1995 book, Thomas discusses Grice's four conversational maxims, which are summarised as:

1. Quantity

- Make your contribution as informative as is required.
- Do not make your contribution more or less informative than is required.

2. Quality

- Do not say what you believe to be false.
- Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

3. Relation

- Be relevant.

4. Manner

- Avoid obscurity of expression.
- Avoid ambiguity.
- Be brief.
- Be orderly.

The most uninteresting instance is when a speaker follows all of the maxims, as seen in the example.

[12] a. Husband: Where are the car keys?

b. Wife: They're on the table in the hall.

The wife's response is instructive; she supplies just the right amount of information (quantity), answers honestly (quality), clearly (manner), and directly addresses her husband's purpose for asking the question. She spoke exactly what she intended, nothing more or less, and has produced no repercussions.

(ibid).

2.3. Previous Studies

A study written by Prabowo (2013) *Sarcastic Expressions in the Movie: The Gaurd*. The article investigates the forms and functions of sarcastic expressions found in the movie *The Guard*. He adopts Camp's theory (2011) to classify the sarcastic utterances, and Leech's theory (1983) to investigate the functions of the sarcastic utterances. Among the seventeen occurrences of sarcastic words in the film, only two types of sarcasm were detected: six were propositional sarcasm and eleven were illocutionary sarcasm. Sarcasm was then used in competitive, convivial, and collaborative situations. Sarcasm, according to Prabowo (2013), is more than just a simple meaning inversion; it also requires a suitable context, the speaker's aim, and the hearer's response.

Al-Maialy thesis (2023) has conducted a study entitled *A Pragmatic Study of Sarcasm in English Social Media*. This thesis explores the pragmatic aspects and strategies of sarcasm in English social media. Because sarcasm is used in various aspects of real-life data, such as social, educational, and political contexts, it is necessary to conduct studies and research on sarcasm in the Iraqi academic sphere, as it has not received enough attention pragmatically.

It is determined that: (1) sarcasm is present in English social media using multiple strategies across three stages. The stages include pragma-linguistic, socio-pragmatic, and pragma-rhetorical; (2) sarcasm is mostly found in Trump's comments (53.3%) compared to Biden's (38.7%). This implies that commentators aimed to employ verbal cues to mock Trump with more sarcasm than Biden.

The current study differs from the previous studies in terms of technique (i.e. sarcasm), theory represented by the research model, and data analyzed. A pragmatic analysis of *A Pragmatic Study of Sarcasm in the TV Show Parks and Recreation*. The work will be set using Searle's (1979) taxonomy of the speech act theory, Gricean maxims and implicature (1975). This study is a mixed-method study that aims to (1) Identifying the types of speech acts employed in revealing sarcasm in the TV. show *Parks and Recreation*. (2) Grice's maxims utilized in the data under study.

3. Methodology

In this section, the researcher describes the theoretical framework and methodologies utilised to analyse the study's selected data. This part focuses on the research design, data collection and description, model selection, and data analysis methods.

3.1 Research Design

According to (Kumar, 2011, p.94), a study design is a technique used by researchers to answer questions in an effective, objective, accurate, and cost-effective manner. It enables scholars to develop their own study methodologies and share them with others. The current study employed an exploratory sequential mixed-method approach with two unique stages: qualitative and quantitative, which complement one another and provide a more complete comprehension of the research topic. They are also used to answer research enquiries and confirm or reject theories.

According to (Creswell, 2018, p. 41-2), mixed-method research involves evaluating qualitative and quantitative data, merging the two types of data, and applying a variety of designs that may include philosophical beliefs and theoretical frameworks. He believes that the study's main premise is that integrating qualitative and quantitative data yields more meaningful results than using either sort of data alone. In this study, the qualitative technique is applied first, followed by the quantitative approach. The qualitative method assesses and interprets data using a variety of models which are Searle's (1979) speech

act theory, Gricean maxims, and implicature (1975), while the quantitative method quantifies them. The qualitative method studies language structures, whereas the quantitative method determines their frequency. Finally, the mixed approach was employed to evaluate and quantify the selected extracts, ensuring accurate data and offering a detailed analysis in line with the study's objectives and relevant questions.

3.2 Data Collection and Description

The analysis data includes five videos from the American television show 'Parks and Recreation.' The American mockumentary-style comedy 'Parks and Recreation' was popular and aired on NBC for seven seasons and 125 episodes from 2009 to 2015. Greg Daniels and Michael Schur created the series, which is set in the made-up city of Pawnee, Indiana, and follows the eccentric workers in the Parks and Recreation Department under the supervision of the hopeful and motivated Leslie Knope. The series, recognised for its sharp wit, criticism of local authority, and emphasis on well-developed characters, delves into themes of society, governance, and companionship. Throughout seven seasons, it acquired a devoted fanbase and won praise for its script and performances. The videos are chosen at random from various seasons in order to meet the following goals. (a) To avoid prejudice in choosing. (b) Generalisability; the study's findings on sarcasm are more likely to be applicable across several episodes when the data includes a diverse range of contexts, rather than focussing on specific, purposely chosen ones. The chosen data is pragmatically examined utilising the eclectic model. The primary goal is to identify and analyse sarcastic remarks using the model's components.

3.4 Source of Data

The information for this piece was carefully obtained from the official 'Parks and Recreation' YouTube channel.

<https://youtube.com/@parksandrecreation?si=fY89IQdVhX3JKwr>

Regarding caustic remarks, the current study is based on visual and aural data observation.

3.3 The Model Adopted

The current study employs a range of models to achieve its objectives. This approach draws on Searle's (1979) speech act theory, Gricean maxims, and implicature (1975). As a result, practical aspects are investigated using this paradigm.

4. Analysis

4.1 Qualitative Analysis

Extract (1)

Ann Perkins: How many drinks of alcohol do you consume a week?

Ron Swanson: One

Ann Perkins: That's it . One drink?

Ron Swanson: One shelf

Time(18-24seconds) <https://youtube.com/shorts/Ud12Qcdrkgw?si=4mEYATjlJQjBs34s>

Contextual Hints

Ron Swanson, a character on the television program Parks and Recreation, enjoys meat, whisky, and woodworking. He frequently exaggerates his male demeanour and appreciation of these indulgences, which include alcohol consumption. Ron's persona is noted for his dry humour and sharp one-liners, which frequently make fun of himself and others. As a result, when asked about his alcohol consumption, his response of "one" may be interpreted as him downplaying or mocking his own reputation for drinking excessively. Ron Swanson is a character noted for his love of drink, steak, and overall disregard for health issues. In one episode, a doctor asks him, "How many drinks of alcohol do you consume each week?" Ron's response was memorable: "One." Following a pause, he adds: "*That's a week.*"

a. speech acts

Ron uses assertive speech act and makes a claim about his drinking habits.

b. Gricean Maxims

There is an obvious violation of the quantity maxim because Ron offers misleadingly insufficient information "One." The speaker violates the quality maxim because Ron's original utterance is incorrect: he drinks more than once per week. Ron does not break the relevance principle; his utterance is relevant to the doctor's question. The speaker's remark is purposely ambiguous and deceptive; therefore, it breaches the method maxim.

Extract (2)

Ann Perkins: Do you have any history of mental illness in your family?

Ron Swanson: I have an uncle who does yoga.

Time(29-33seconds) <https://youtube.com/shorts/Ud12Qcdrkgw?si=4mEYATjIJQjBs34s>

Contextual Hints

This utterance is spoken by Ron Swanson, a character on the television show "Parks and Recreation." Ron Swanson is known for his harsh, no-nonsense approach and dislikes anything he considers too soft or unmanly. In this case, the doctor poses a serious inquiry about mental illness, but Ron responds in his usual deadpan and sarcastic tone, comparing his uncle's yoga practice (which he likely considers overly delicate or new-age) to having a mental condition. The sarcasm derives from the absurdity of linking yoga with mental illness, which shows Ron's rigid and inflated ideas about masculinity.

a. Speech Acts

Ron uses assertive speech acts, and he asserts that his uncle does yoga. He states a reality (as he sees it), but the sarcasm is in the suggested analogy to mental disease.

b. Gricean Maxims

Ron Swanson's response to the doctor's question regarding a family history of mental illness, "I have an uncle who does yoga," can be evaluated using Grice's Maxims in the following way: Ron's response technically delivers an answer, but it falls short of the doctor's expectations. The doctor wants essential medical information, not a judgement about a relative's fitness practices. Ron violates the quantity maxim by providing insufficient relevant information while adding a superfluous detail. The speaker violates the quality maxim. On the surface, Ron's statement may be accurate; his uncle may actually practice yoga. However, the underlying assertion that practicing yoga is equivalent to having a mental disease is untrue and intended to be humorous. While the literal actuality of the discourse may be consistent with the principles of quality, the implicature violates them because Ron does not honestly assert that yoga is a mental state. The speaker clearly violates the relevancy principle because Ron's speech is unrelated to the doctor's question, which concerns a major health risk. Instead of explicitly responding to the doctor's request, Ron delivers a tangential factoid that is more of a joke than a useful response. Ron's utterance contains clear and unambiguous content, but the context is perplexing. The lack of clarity here derives from a mismatch between

the expected type of reaction and Ron's statement. While the delivery style is evident, the content's relevance creates a humorous ambiguity.

Extract (3)

Jerry Gergich: okey so now you're Sure that everything is oky, You know, down there?

Dr. Harris : You're perfectly healthy. That man has the largest pains i have ever seen. I actually don't even know if he has mumps. Forgot to look. I was distracted by the largest pains i have ever seen

Time(1 - 20 seconds)

<https://youtube.com/shorts/0r6DalYJ5tY?si=LYiiktdBj7vj-04N>

Contextual Hints

The conversation is between Jerry Gergich and Dr. Harris, the doctor who is examining him. Jerry Gergich is a character on 'Parks and Recreation' who is typically shown as a caring but incompetent employee at the Parks Department. Jerry visits the doctor to ensure that everything is fine "down there," indicating that he is anxious about his health, possibly in a sensitive or private area. The doctor is supposed to be an expert who offers Jerry medical advice and reassurances. However, the doctor's reaction is more caustic, and his disbelief jeopardises his professionalism.

a. Speech acts

Jerry's utterance: *"Okay, so you're sure that everything is fine down there?"* Jerry wants confirmation and reassurance from the doctor, directing the conversation towards a resolution that alleviates his concerns. The doctor responded, "You're perfectly healthy." Sarcasm gains from forceful behaviour. When the doctor notifies Jerry of his sickness, he makes a factual statement. The doctor makes a factual statement by alerting Jerry about his illness. Doctor's Aside: "That man has the worst aches I've ever seen. I'm not even sure if he has the mumps. Forgot to look. I was distracted by the most intense aches I'd ever witnessed." Expressive is also used in the current caustic utterance. Instead of focusing on the medical examination, the doctor expresses his astonishment or surprise and shares his personal opinions.

b. Gricean Maxims

The doctor breaks the quantity maxim by delivering excessive information. Instead of focusing on the critical medical information, he makes a joke about Jerry's body part size. He opposes the quantity principle. The speaker breaks the quality maxim since the doctor's first statement, "You're perfectly healthy," could be seen as a violation of this maxim, as he later admits that he was too distracted to check for mumps. The doctor's comment on Jerry's body part has nothing to do with his health or his chances of acquiring the mumps. This utterance's irrelevance produces irony and opposes this maxim. The speaker violates the Manner Maxim because the doctor's remark is straightforward yet too protracted, adding to the absurdity. The doctor's reassurance, "You're perfectly healthy," suggests Jerry has nothing to worry about. However, when the doctor admits to being distracted, this inference is nullified, implying that his prior speech may not have been entirely accurate.

Extract (4)

Ron Swanson: Tom and April were excellent witnesses in my defense unfortunately every single word out of their mouths was a lie there's only one thing I hate more than lying skim milk which is water that's lying about being milk.

Time(1:8 -1:42)

<https://youtu.be/hA521XgMfdA?si=STmXvdQ-PTw-fn2j>

Contextual Hints

Ron Swanson reflects on a circumstance in which he relied on Tom and April to speak on his behalf, whether formally or seriously. Despite referring to them as "excellent witnesses," he immediately contradicts this by claiming that they lied extensively during their testimony. The sarcasm lies in the stark contrast between calling them "excellent" and the fact that their testimonies were completely untrustworthy, meaning that their "excellence" was assessed by how thoroughly they failed him. Ron's deadpan demeanour and the absurdity of the situation, in which he expects honesty but is met with total fiction, heighten the sardonic tone.

a. Speech acts

The suitable category for this utterance is expressive act. Ron Swanson's utterance, "Tom and April were excellent witnesses in my defence; unfortunately, every single word out of their mouths was a lie," is an expressive act since it communicates his disgust and

contempt. Although he uses sarcasm to describe Tom and April as "excellent witnesses," he is actually expressing his irritation and disgust with their dishonesty.

b. Gricean Maxims

Ron Swanson's utterance can be examined using Grice's maxims as follows: Ron does not violate the quantity maxim. Ron provides sufficient information to convey his argument without overwhelming it. He says that they were "excellent witnesses" before admitting that they lied. This adherence to the Maxim of Quantity ensures that the audience comprehends the irony without additional explication. The speaker violates the quality maxim by stating that Tom and April were "excellent witnesses." He knowingly states something false because they lied throughout their testimony. The irony and sarcasm emerge from this deliberate rejection of the truth. The speech follows and adheres to the Maxim of Relation. Ron's follow-up on their lying is clearly tied to his earlier charge, accentuating the irony and sarcastic tone. Ron adheres to the Manner Maxim. Despite the fact that the remark is brief and to the point, sarcasm pervades his description of the scenario. The sarcastic tone results in a humorous denial of the Maxim of Manner, as clarity stems from grasping the irony rather than the true message. In conclusion, Ron primarily breaks the quality rule in order to convey sarcasm while adhering to the other maxims to emphasise the sarcasm and ensure his message is understood.

Extract (5)

Greg Phillips: Hi guys, thanks for meeting.

April Ludgate: Chit chat what's your pitch kind come on—time is money, money is power, power is pizza, pizza is knowledge. Let's go, ok.

Time(1 – 10 seconds)

<https://youtu.be/geJz16hGu2A?si=HhksIx5ad9dDhWkh>

Contextual Hints

In this interaction, Greg Phillips, a character trying to offer a concept, greets the group with, "Hi guys, thanks for meeting." April Ludgate, known for her caustic and apathetic demeanour, replied mockingly, "Chit chat, what's your pitch?" Time is money. Money is power. Power is pizza. Pizza is knowledge. Let's go, okay? April mocks Greg's greeting, calling it "chit chat" and anxiously asking for his "pitch." She then used ludicrous words

such as "time is money, money is power, power is pizza, pizza is knowledge" to emphasise her disinterest and frustration with being there. April's character is known for her sarcastic humour, apathy towards most things, and ability to see through people's facades. Her sarcastic response to Greg perfectly portrays her typical humour and dislike of small talk, cutting to the chase in her own distinct style.

a. Speech acts

This utterance includes directed speech acts. April's phrase "Chit chat, what's your pitch? Come on" is a command action. By issuing an order in a hurried, dismissive tone, she attempts to inspire Greg Phillips to act quickly and decisively. Despite the sarcasm, the underlying speech act aims to influence the listener's behaviour by persuading him to disregard the niceties. Also, the utterance contains a forceful verbal act. The utterance "time is money, money is power, power is pizza, and pizza is knowledge" could be read as an assertive speech act in which April expresses her belief in the equivalence of these concepts. However, because of the sarcasm, she is actually criticising the overemphasis on production and efficiency in a hilarious way, which contradicts the normal objective of an assertive statement.

b. Gricean Maxim

April violates the Quantity Maxim by disclosing superfluous information. Instead of just urging Greg to hurry up, she begins a nonsensical chain of logic: "time is money, money is power, power is pizza, pizza is knowledge," which is completely irrelevant to the conversation's genuine goal. April breaks the quality maxim by making a clearly inaccurate and exaggerated statement. She doesn't believe that "power is pizza" or "pizza is knowledge," but she says it nevertheless to parody the situation, knowing that the listener will find it ridiculous. The Relevance Maxim is not bound by April. The claim that pizza is similar to knowledge is purposefully irrelevant to the current topic. Her remark detracts from the meeting's main purpose, which is to debate Greg's pitch, and thus violates this rule in order to express her disdain and displeasure with the scenario. April's rapid-fire delivery and the tangled, illogical connections between concepts "time is money, money is power, power is pizza, pizza is knowledge" are purposely unclear and confusing. By breaking this rule, she creates a sense of confusion and absurdity, intensifying the mocking tone. Last April violated the way maxim.

4.2 Quantitative analysis

This section does a quantitative analysis of extracts that show the employment of speech acts and breaching Grice maxims to convey sarcasm in the program under

examination (Parks and Recreation). The analysis will include the frequency and percentage of these characteristics, which are denoted by %.

4.2.1 Frequencies of Speech Acts

The assertive speech act is shown to be the most common, occurring four times (57.14%) in the TV show. In comparison to other forms of speech acts, assertive SA occurs the most frequently. Other speech acts have fewer incidence. Table 4.1 shows that expressive SA is used twice (28.5%), directive SA is used once (14.28%), and two types of SA are not used: commissive and declarative.

Table (4.1) The Rates of Searle’s Speech Acts in The Selected American T.V Show parks and recreation

| Speech Acts | Assertives | Expressives | Commissive | Directives | Declaratives | Total |
|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|--------------|-------|
| Frequency | 4 | 2 | 0 % | 1 | 0 | 7 |
| Percentage | 57.14 % | 28.5 % | 0 % | 14.28 % | 0 % | 100 % |

4.2.2 Frequencies of Gricean Maxims

The performances violate all of the maxims with varying frequencies and percentages. The total number of flouts is 16. The quality maxim is the most frequently violated maxim (5 times, 31.25%). The quantity maxim is the second most frequently violated maxim, with a frequency of 4 times and (25%). The manner maxim is the third most violated maxim, with 4 occurrences and (25%). Finally, the relevance maxim is the least frequently violated. The relevance maxim represents a frequency of 3 times and (18.75%), as indicated in Table 4.2.

Table (4.2) The Rates of Violation of Gricean Maxims in The Selected American T.V Show parks and recreation

| Gricean | Quantity | Quality | Relevance | Manner | Total |
|---------|----------|---------|-----------|--------|-------|
|---------|----------|---------|-----------|--------|-------|

| Maxims | Maxim | Maxim | Maxim | Maxim | |
|------------|-------|--------|---------|-------|-------|
| Frequency | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 16 |
| Percentage | 25 % | 31.25% | 18.75 % | 25 % | 100 % |

5. Conclusions

Based on the qualitative and statistical findings, the study draws the following conclusions:

1. According to the research findings, assertive speech acts dominate discussion, accounting for (57.14%) of all speech acts. This popularity implies that characters frequently make utterances that represent their thoughts or opinions, which serve as the foundation for sarcastic dialogue. Expressive speech acts are also prevalent, suggesting emotional engagement in conversations, but directive speech acts are less frequently used. Notably, the absence of commissive and declarative speech acts suggests that the authors deliberately chose to focus on assertion, expression, and directive rather than commitments and declarative.

2. The data findings reveal that the quality maxim is most frequently violated five times (31.25%). This intentional infringement implies that characters frequently say things that are not meant to be taken literally, heightening the sarcastic tone. The quantity and manner maxims are also broken, albeit only approximately four times (25%) each, suggesting a sophisticated approach to communication in which characters combine clarity with sarcasm. Relevance maxim is less frequently used, totalling three times (18.75%).

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