

Overview

This document provides a comprehensive guide for annotators to accurately identify and classify sarcastic (sarcasm), sincere, and non-sarcastic statements. Sarcasm, as a form of non-literal language, is characterized by a discrepancy between the speaker's literal words and their underlying intent, often carrying a negative tone and targeting a specific subject. The examples in this document illustrate various ways speakers express sarcasm, including verbal expressions, tone, and facial expressions. The following sections define sarcasm, provide examples of both sarcastic and non-sarcastic expressions, and offer test cases for annotation reference.

Part 1: Definition and Key Characteristics of Sarcasm

Basic Definition of Sarcasm

Sarcasm consists of expressions that convey meanings distinct from their literal interpretation. It is often used for self-deprecation, critique, mockery, or humor. Sarcasm can be expressed unimodally or multimodally through words, tone, facial expressions, and body language. Sarcastic remarks can also be conveyed through rhetorical devices such as hyperbole, understatement, and mock imitation.

For example, suppose a person's request is refused by a friend. If they respond with *"You are such a helpful person,"* their underlying intent is dissatisfaction rather than praise. Here, the literal meaning of *"helpful"* contrasts with the speaker's true intention, demonstrating sarcasm.

Essential Features of Sarcasm

- **Discrepancy between literal wording and underlying intent**
 - **Expression of a personal evaluation** (*Purpose: mockery, critique, self-deprecation, humor*)
 - **Can be conveyed through words, tone, or facial expressions**
 - **Use of rhetorical devices such as repetition, imitation, or metaphor**
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Part 2: Modes of Expressing Sarcasm

Speakers convey sarcasm through different methods:

1. Through Literal Meaning

Example 1: "I went to the theater to sign up for a performance, and the boss just glanced at me and signed the contract on the spot. As soon as I finished signing, he had his assistant buy me a 5-million-yuan personal accident insurance policy. This boss is really smart with money; if disaster happens, I'd be in the angel investment round."

For example, in **Example 1**, the phrase *"angel investment"* generally has a positive connotation. However, when paired with *"disaster,"* which has a negative meaning, the listener understands that *"angel investment"* is not being used with its literal positive meaning. Instead, the speaker's underlying intent is negative, making *"angel investment"* a sarcastic expression.

Another example is: *"Great, I really needed this bad luck."* Here, *"great"* does not carry its usual positive meaning. Instead, when combined with *"bad luck,"* it signals sarcasm.

Other examples include commonly sarcastic phrases such as *"Oh, that's not troublesome at all!"* Even without context, such expressions are often immediately understood as sarcasm.

2. Through Tone of Voice

Example 3: "We have four kids in our family: the eldest sister, the second sister, me, and my younger brother. Just by looking at this arrangement, you can tell that our family really loves daughters."

For example, in **Example 3**, the statement *"Our family really values daughters"* could be taken at face value. However, the speaker deliberately slows their speech and uses a flat tone, signaling that the literal meaning is not intended. Instead, the true meaning is different—or even opposite—indicating sarcasm.

3. Through Facial Expressions

For example, in **Example 2**, the speaker states:

"But right now, I'm just getting by, I have nothing, and honestly, I envy those who stayed in my hometown... at least they still have their ex-husbands."

While delivering this statement, the speaker presses their lips together and looks vacant, reinforcing the contrast between the literal words and their true intent—conveying sarcasm.

(The rest of the document describes examples of sarcasm, figurative languages that are not sarcasm, and non-sarcasm (sincere) in the original Chinese version. You can adjust accordingly to the language you are collecting. Ideally presenting at least two example under each term and discussing with annotators can help to clarify the definition.)

Part 3: Examples of Non-Sarcasm

Part 4: Examples of Sincere Expression

Part 5: Test Cases