Sarcasm in Anthony and Joe Russo's Movie *Avengers: Endgame*

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Abstract. Sarcasm is often used in movies to create humor, but it can also show deeper emotions like anger, disappointment, or hidden criticism. In the movie Avengers: Endgame, sarcasm is used by many characters to express their feelings and relationships in a funny but meaningful way. This research aims to analyze how sarcasm is used in the movie and to identify which types of sarcasm appear the most. The researcher used Elisabeth Camp's theory, which divides sarcasm into four types: propositional, lexical, like prefixed, and illocutionary sarcasm. The method used is descriptive qualitative, by watching the movie, collecting sarcastic dialogues, and analyzing them based on the theory. The result shows that propositional sarcasm is the most used (43%), followed by lexical sarcasm (36%), illocutionary sarcasm (14%), and like-prefixed sarcasm (7%). From these findings, it can be concluded that sarcasm in Avengers: Endgame is not only for jokes but also helps to express the characters' emotions, conflicts, and closeness, making the dialogue more interesting and meaningful for the audience.

Keyword: Sarcasm, Movie, Avengers: Endgame

1. INTRODUCTION

Literature is a form of art that uses written or spoken words to express human experiences, emotions, and ideas. It includes novels, poems, short stories, and other creative texts. In recent years, literature has been understood in new ways to match how the world is changing. According to Jason Ānanda Josephson Storm (2021), literature today is shaped by metamodernism, which combines sincerity and irony, showing that modern writers often feel hopeful while also recognizinglife's uncertainties. Also, according to Brendan Graham Dempsey (2023), metamodern cultural logic means that current literature balances emotion and reason, seriousness and playfulness, in response to both modern and postmodern ways of thinking. Finally, according to Vermeulen and van den Akker (2020), metamodern literature is defined by a constant "oscillation" between opposite feelings like hope and doubt, showing how writers today express the complexity of real life. These theories help us see that literature is not just about telling stories it's also about exploring how people feel in an unpredictable world. In this broader view, poetry and drama are essential parts of literature because they both offer different ways of expressing human experience. Poetry uses rhythm, imagery, and concise language to capture emotions and abstract ideas powerfully, often symbolically. Drama, on the other hand, presents stories through performance and dialogue, making emotions and conflicts more immediate and tangible for the audience. Both forms enrich literature by focusing on different modes of expression: poetry appeals to introspection, while drama engages through

action and interaction. According to Claudia Ross (2021), in her study on intermediality in contemporary literature, poetry, drama, and narrative fiction are increasingly seen as interconnected modes of storytelling, where each form enhances the emotional depth and cultural reflection of literature as a whole. Ross argues that the boundaries between genres are now more fluid, allowing modern literature to blend poetic language, dramatic structures, and narrative storytelling to reflect the layered complexities of modern life

Drama is a type of literature written to be performed on stage or screen, using characters, dialogue, and actions to tell a story and express emotions. Today, drama is studied not just for its artistic value, but also with new methods that help us understand its structure and meaning. According to Magda Romanska (2023), Drametrics is a way to study plays using data and graphs to see how characters interact and when big events happen in the story. This helps scholars understand why a scene feels exciting or emotional. According to Zisis Nikitas (2023), new tools from digital humanities can be used to explore drama more deeply, by tracking patterns in language and stage directions. Also, according to Julie Sanders (2022), modern drama often includes intermediality, which means it mixes different forms like film, music, or digital media to create powerful experiences for the audience. These theories show that drama today is more than just dialogue and it's a mix of words, technology, and performance that connects deeply with modern life.

Sarcasm is a form of speech where someone says the opposite of what they actually mean, often to be funny or to criticize in a clever way. It's often used in conversation, movies, and literature to show personality or express feelings without being direct. According to Elizabeth Camp (2012), sarcasm can be divided into four types: propositional,lexical, like prefixed, and illocutionary, and these types help us understand how sarcasm works in different situations. Even though her theory is older, it's still widely used today. According to Dian Sihotang (2021), who applied Camp's theory in a study of Avengers: Infinity War, most of the sarcasm used by the characters was illocutionary, meaning the sarcasm came from how the words were said, not just the words themselves. Also, according to Riski Ajiroiba (2022), sarcasm is often used in films to show group relationships and emotional tension, especially between characters who are close. These theories help us understand that sarcasm isn't just about being funny it's also a tool for revealing feelings, building character relationships, and adding layers of meaning to dialogue.

Avengers: Endgame is a 2019 superhero movie that brings together many Marvel characters to undo the destruction caused by the villain Thanos. While it is full of action and special effects, the movie also tells a very emotional story about loss, teamwork, and sacrifice. According to the Russo Brothers (2023), the directors of the film, Endgame was made not just as a superhero story, but as a mature and emotional experience, showing how heroes struggle with failure and find hope again. According to Dian Sihotang (2021), the film uses sarcasm and dramatic irony to show emotional depth, helping audiences connect with the characters'and humor. Also, according to Robert Downey Jr. (quoted in 2021 interviews), playing Iron Man in Endgame was the peak of his character's growth, as he gave his life to save others, which added emotional realism to the story. These expert views show that Endgame is more than just a fantasy it uses real emotions and storytelling techniques to make the audience feel deeply connected to the characters and their journeys.

Peter Quill: "You know, Rocket, sometimes I think you just say things to make yourself sound smarter."

Rocket Raccoon: "Well, sometimes I think you just say things."

Peter Quill: "Touché."

Rocket Raccoon: "I know."

This dialogue is from Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2, appearing around minute 45 when Peter Quill (Star-Lord) and Rocket Raccoon are planning their next move against an enemy.In this scene, Peter uses sarcasm to tease Rocket, suggesting he talks only to sound smart, even if what he says isn't important. Rocket quickly throws back a sharper sarcastic comment, implying Peter talks for no reason at all. Their exchange is light-hearted but filled with subtle mockery, showing their competitive yet close friendship. According to Pérez-Sobrino et, sarcasm comes from a clash between literal meaning and what is actually meant, which depends on context and emotional cues; here, their casual tone and friendly relationship make the sarcasm clear. Similarly, Wu et al. (2021) explain through their ConAttSD model that sarcasm is often hidden beneath neutral or friendly-sounding words, while the real message is critical or mocking. This fits perfectly with how Peter and Rocket speak in this scene using simple words with deeper, sarcastic meanings.

To strengthen this research, several other sources already known for their accuracy and prior research validation have been used.. These five articles raise the same theory and issues that are connected to the article were discussing this time, here are the five articles we used: (1*) A study of sarcasm in TV series Friends* by Ryo Tauhid Ramadhan and Winda Setiasari,2022 (2) *Randwick International of Social Sciences (RISS) by* Fauziah Khairani Lubis, Syamsul Bahri, 2023 (3)*The analysis of sarcasm in Wednesday Netflix series by* Sakila Debora Saragih and Tiara K. Pasaribu*, and* Donna Ria Pasaribu, 2023 (4) *Sacrastic utterances in the novel series Nevermoor by* Umi Denta Prastiwi and Aris Munandar, 2024 (5) *Translation of Sarcasm Found in TILIK Short Movie* by Nahoras Bona Simarmata and Laksmy Ady Kusumoriny,2024

2. LITERARTURE REVIEW

Sarcasm is a complex and layered rhetorical strategy used to convey implicit criticism through irony, reversal of meaning, or a sharp contrast between literal expression and actual intent. In both social and artistic interactions, sarcasm allows speakers to express disagreement, dissatisfaction, or rejection in an indirect yet pointed manner. sarcasm in drama functions as a complex rhetorical and communicative strategy. By applying Camp's typology, researchers can uncover the intricate ways in which sarcasm shapes dialogue, conveys critique, and articulates resistance. This review provides a theoretical foundation for analyzing sarcasm in dramatic texts, emphasizing its function not merely as irony or humor, but as a sophisticated literary device embedded within social and relational dynamics. Its ambiguous delivery gives speakers room to distance themselves from their statements while still delivering a sharp critical message, making it a tool for expressing inner tension, social protest, or critical intelligence.

The SHARP model (Sarcasm Helps Activate Recipient Perspective-taking),introduced by Huang and Galinsky (2023), suggests that sarcasm can prompt recipients to better understand the speaker's perspective through deeper cognitive processing and a more open attitude. However, this effect is influenced by factors such as tone of voice, interpersonal relationships, and the recipient's ability to recognize sarcasm.

Elizabeth Camp (2011) developed a deeper understanding of sarcasm by identifying three main types of figurative sarcasm: propositional, lexical, and illocutionary. In the context of literature and drama, this classification is highly relevant because sarcasm not only serves as a stylistic device to enhance narrative or dialogue, but also as a powerful means of conveying social critique, expressing characters' inner conflict, and challenging power structures or dominant norms. Through the careful use of sarcasm, writers or dramatists can communicate sharp subversive messages without having to state them explicitly. Thus, Camp's theoretical

framework not only broadens our understanding of how sarcasm functions in everyday communication, but also affirms its significant role in artistic and cultural discourse as a form of communication that is rich in meaning, complex, and strategic.

1) Propositional sarcasm involves an explicit contradiction between what is said and what is meant, making it the most easily recognizable and direct form of sarcasm. This type typically mocks or criticizes by overtly stating the opposite of the speaker's true intention. In drama, propositional sarcasm often appears in dialogue that sharply expresses a character's frustration, disappointment, or ironic awareness, creating tension between surface language and deeper emotion. For the example in film **"The Devil Wears Prada (2006)"**

Miranda: "**So, you think this is just a magazine?**"
Andy: "Well, it kind of is, right?"
Miranda: "Oh. You have no idea how deeply disturbing that is."
Andy: "Sorry, I didn't mean to offend."

Explanation: Miranda delivered her sentence in a calm and formal tone, but her meaning was clearly sarcastic towards Andy. Literally, "You have no idea how deeply disturbing that is" sounds like an expression of disappointment. But actually, Miranda is belittling Andy's ignorance about the importance of fashion. This is called propositional sarcasm because the sarcasm arises from the seemingly neutral content of the statement, but the actual intent is the opposite.

2) Lexical sarcasm doesn't operate at the level of the entire proposition but instead targets specific words or phrases, inserting sarcastic meaning through linguistic subtlety. This type of sarcasm is more pragmatic and indirect, relying on wordplay connotation, or tone to convey nuanced critique. In theatrical texts, lexical sarcasm allows characters to subtly belittle others or situations without open confrontation. This form is particularly effective in plays that rely on wit and subtext, where much of the dramatic tension lies in what is unsaid or ambiguously implied. For the example in the film **Mean Girls (2004)**

Regina: "Oh my God, I love your bracelet!"
Cady: "Thank you! My mom helped me make it."
Regina: "**So creative. You're basically Picasso**."
Cady: "Haha... yeah, thanks?"

Explanation: Regina calls Cady "creative" and likens her to Picasso, but it's clearly not a genuine compliment. Words like "creative" and "Picasso" are positive, but in this context they're used to denigrate. This is called lexical sarcasm, because the sarcasm arises from the choice of words themselves, not from the overall sentence structure or statement.

3) Like-prefixed sarcasm, in contrast, functions through the strategic use of discourse markers such as "like," "as if," or "yeah right" placed at the beginning of a statement to overtly signal insincerity. Rather than embedding sarcasm within specific word choices, this form sets the tone from the outset, cueing the listener to interpret the following remark as ironic or exaggerated. This technique often creates a distancing effect, allowing the speaker to mock an idea or attitude while pretending to voice it. In theatrical dialogue, like-prefixed sarcasm is especially useful for conveying a character's cynicism, resistance, or disdain with clarity and immediacy. Its overt structure makes it more accessible to the audience, especially in performances where vocal tone and body language further reinforce the sarcasm. For the example in the film **10 Things I Hate About You (1999)**

Bianca: "You could at least pretend to be nice to people."
Kat: "Like, I so enjoy pretending to care."
Bianca: "You don't have to be rude all the time."
Kat: "Like, sorry for having opinions."

Explanation: Kat uses the word "like" at the beginning of her sentence to emphasize sarcasm. Her sentence sounds like a sincere statement, but her tone and posture show that she is actually being sarcastic. This style is called like-prefixed sarcasm, where phrases like "like" or "as if" signal that what is being said is not to be taken literally

4) Illocutionary sarcasm involves a mismatch between the speaker's illocutionary act (what the speaker is doing through their utterance) and the literal content of the utterance. This type heavily depends on context, shared knowledge, and the audience's ability to infer the speaker's true intent. For example, a compliment spoken in a cynical tone may actually serve as a sarcastic insult. In drama, illocutionary sarcasm enriches character interactions by introducing layers of meaning and ambiguity, often revealing hidden power dynamics, resentment, or emotional complexity. For the example like in film **Avengers: Infinity War (2018)**

Peter: "Wow, you upgraded the suit again?"

Tony: "**Yeah, just wanted to spoil you while we're dying out here**."

Peter: "You really didn't have to."

Tony: "Oh no, risking my life isn't enough, right?"

Explanation: Tony pretends like he's giving a gift or attention, even though the situation is very precarious. The act of "giving" itself becomes sarcastic, as it's clear he doesn't really mean to spoil Peter. This is called illocutionary sarcasm, where a form of speech act (such as giving, praising, or apologizing) is used with the opposite intention.

3. METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to examine the use of sarcasm in the movie Avengers: Endgame. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for revealing the hidden meaning behind the characters' speech, the context of the conversation, and the language style used naturally in the film dialog. According to Sugiyono (2021), descriptive qualitative research is a method used to examine natural object conditions, where the researcher acts as the main instrument. The purpose of this approach is to describe in depth and systematically the phenomenon under study, based on data collected from various sources, without manipulation or intervention. The main data source in this research is dialog transcripts from the movie Avengers: Endgame that contains elements of sarcasm. The data were collected through documentation and text observation techniques, namely by rewatching the film, recording relevant dialog, and identifying the form and context of sarcasm in the characters' speech. The data analysis technique used Miles and Huberman's interactive model which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was maintained by cross-checking the scene context and character consistency, and by comparing the results of sarcasmidentification with relevant pragmatic and stylistic theories.Explanation: In this conversation, Tony Stark shows his disappointment toward Steve Rogers using sarcasm. The sentences "Maybe you were too busy being righteous" and "let's pretend we all just 'lost' equally" are sarcastic comments aimed at Steve's idealistic nature, suggesting that Steve doesn't really understand how much Tony has lost. Tony uses sarcasm to hide his emotional pain and to express the tension between them. That's why this kind of dialogue is relevant to be analyzed in language and pragmatics studies

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

To examine sarcasm in the Avengers: Endgame movie, the descriptive qualitative method is applied in this study. It aids in understanding the social environment, according to Sugiyono (2021), descriptive qualitative research is a method used to examine natural object conditions, where the researcher acts as the main instrument. The data is identified, classified, and analyzed based on content analysis by using Elisabeth Camp's theory of sarcasm (2012).

No	*Sarcasm*	*Amount*	*Percentage*
1	Propositional Sarcasm	6	43%
2	Lexical Sarcasm	5	36%
3	Like – Prefixed Sarcasm	1	7%
4	Illocutionary Sarcasm	2	14%
	Total	**14**	**100%**

1. Propositional Sarcasm

Steve: "But that didn't work out, did it?"

Tony: "I said we'd lose, you said we'd do that together, too. Guess what, Cap, we lost, and you weren't there. But that's what we do, right? Our best work after the fact? **We're the "Avengers", not the "Pre-vengers-"**

Rhodey: "Tony, take it easy..."

Tony: "I've got nothing for ya, Cap. No coordinates, no clues, no strategies, no options. Zero, zip, nada. No trust. Here. You take this. You find him, you put this on, and hide. I'm fine!"

There is one example of propositional sarcasm in the dialogue excerpt above, which features an emotionally charged confrontation between Tony Stark and Steve Rogers. In this scene, Tony lashes out after the devastating loss to Thanos, holding Steve accountable for not being there when it mattered. The sarcasm is not hidden behind subtle wording it is explicitly

embedded in the structure of Tony's speech. Tony sarcastically refers to the Avengers' role by saying: *"We're the 'Avengers', not the 'Pre-vengers'"*, clearly mocking the group's failure to prevent the catastrophe.

This play on words highlights the inadequacy of the team's efforts, implying that their actions only come after the damage has already been done. Furthermore, when Tony says, *"I'm fine!"* despite clearly collapsing both physically and emotionally he delivers another layer of sarcasm, contrasting his words with his visible state of breakdown.The dialogue above exemplifies propositional sarcasm, as it communicates directly toward the intended meaning using statements that on the surface appear rational or factual but actually serve as pointed criticism or satire. According to Elizabeth Camp (1994, p. 21), propositional sarcasm is characterized by speech that expresses a proposition which, in context, is clearly not meant to be taken literally, but instead conveys a biting commentary or disapproval. Tony's statements are direct, confrontational, and emotionally laden, serving as a verbal attack masked under seemingly reasoned expressions making this a clear example of propositional sarcasm.

2. Lexical Sarcasm

Clint: "Which means we've got to pick our targets."

Steve: "Exactly. Let's start with the Aether. Thor, what do we know? Everyone looks toward...Thor, slumped over.

Natasha: "Is he asleep?"

Rhodey: "I'm pretty sure he's dead."

The data above is an example of a conversation that occurred in a comedic moment during a serious Avengers meeting, where the team discusses how to retrieve the Infinity Stones. In this situation, when Steve asks Thor to provide information, Thor is shown slumped over, clearly unresponsive. Natasha questions, *"Is he asleep?"*, and Rhodey immediately follows with, *"I'm pretty sure he's dead,"* a line that produces laughter through exaggerated negativity.

The researcher identified the sentence as Lexical Sarcasm based on the use of phrasing that starts off as an observational comment but ends with a highly exaggerated and negative conclusion. Rhodey's statement is sarcastic because it employs a harshly negative lexical choice ("dead") in place of a more neutral or realistic term ("asleep" or "passed out"). The sentence structure draws from a typical humorous pattern taking a mild situation and describing it in an overly dramatic or grim way. The words used might appear objective or factual, but the actual tone and context reveal a mocking or playful jab at Thor's apparent state of uselessness. According to Elisabeth Camp (1994, p. 21), lexical sarcasm involves using words that appear complimentary, neutral, or polite but are intended to mock, insult, or express criticism. In this case, Rhodey's word choice functions as a sarcastic exaggeration, aimed at undermining Thor's reliability in that moment, effectively communicating disappointment and disbelief in a humorous, mocking tone.

3. Like-prefixed Sarcasm

Hulk: "That's a person?"

Rocket: "It's a planet. Quill was a person."

Scott Lang: "Wait, like a planet...in space?"

Rocket: "Aw, look. It's like a puppy, all happy and everything."

The above example is a dialogue from *Avengers: Endgame*, where the characters are preparing for a mission involving time travel and retrieving the Infinity Stones. In this humorous exchange, Scott Lang responds with childlike amazement, saying, *"Wait, like a planet...in space?"* to which Rocket sarcastically follows with, ***"Aw, look. It's like a puppy, all happy and everything.*** *"* The individuals involved often use surface-level flattery or innocent phrasing that turns into sarcasm directed at the person involved, creating a humorous but biting undertone.

The researcher identified the sentence as Like-Prefixed Sarcasm based on the structure of Rocket's remark. The use of "like" in *"It's like a puppy, all happy and everything"* implies mock admiration, but the tone and context show that Rocket is belittling Scott's naivety and childlike wonder. The sarcastic phrase masks ridicule in the form of a seemingly endearing comparison, thus producing a satirical effect.

According to Elisabeth Camp (1994, p. 21), this form of sarcasm utilizes the prefix "like" to signal exaggeration or falseness in a statement. It often serves to subtly ridicule or dismiss someone's words or behavior by presenting it in a deceptively flattering or humorous way. In this case, Rocket uses a false comparison to express his annoyance with Scott in a sarcastic, mocking tone—clearly conveying a message of rejection and satire.

4. Illocutionary Sarcasm

Natasha: "Thanks. Carol, you're still coming our way next month?"

Carol: "Not likely."

Rocket: "Getting another haircut?"

Carol: "Listen, fur-face, I'm covering a lot of territory out here. The things that have been happening on Earth have been happening everywhere else. On thousands of planets. You might not see me for a long time."

This sarcasm depicts someone's speech that leads directly or indirectly to someone whose words contain terms of appreciation or praise. In the dialogue above, during a serious discussion among the Avengers, Rocket interjects with the comment, *"Getting another haircut?"* aimed at Carol Danvers. On the surface, this question might seem like a light or humorous observation, even bordering on a compliment regarding her appearance. However, the real intent behind the statement is to undermine Carol's seriousness and subtly mock her perceived absence and inconsistency as part of the team.

The speaker's statement demonstrates a positive attitude, yet his words are inversely proportional to the actual goal. While it appears as a neutral or even flattering question,

Rocket's tone and the context suggest sarcasm implying that Carol's priorities are superficial or self-centered. This subtle ridicule is not just a jab at her appearance but a veiled criticism of her commitment to their mission, creating a bad impression in a humorous but pointed way. The statement is identified as Illocutionary Sarcasm based on the above expression. This sentence contains illustrative sarcasm because it appears to offer a compliment but is actually laced with condescension. According to Elisabeth Camp (1994, p. 21), this form of sarcasm uses utterances that outwardly express praise, admiration, or politeness, while the intended meaning is critical or mocking. The goal is to deliver "insinuation," "satire," or "mock admiration" directed toward the target in this case, Carol Danvers by subtly challenging her dedication while maintaining a conversational tone.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This article has discussed how sarcasm is used in the movie Avengers: Endgame to show emotions, express criticism, and add humor. Using Elisabeth Camp's theory, the research identified four types of sarcasm: propositional, lexical, like-prefixed, and illocutionary. The analysis showed that sarcasm is not just a way to be funny, but also helps reveal deeper feelings like disappointment, frustration, and even affection between the characters. Sarcasm also helps build stronger character relationships and adds layers of meaning to their conversations.

SARCASM

- 43% Propositional Sarcasm
- 36% Lexical Sarcasm
- 7% Like-previxed Sarcasm
- 14% Illocutionary Sarcasm
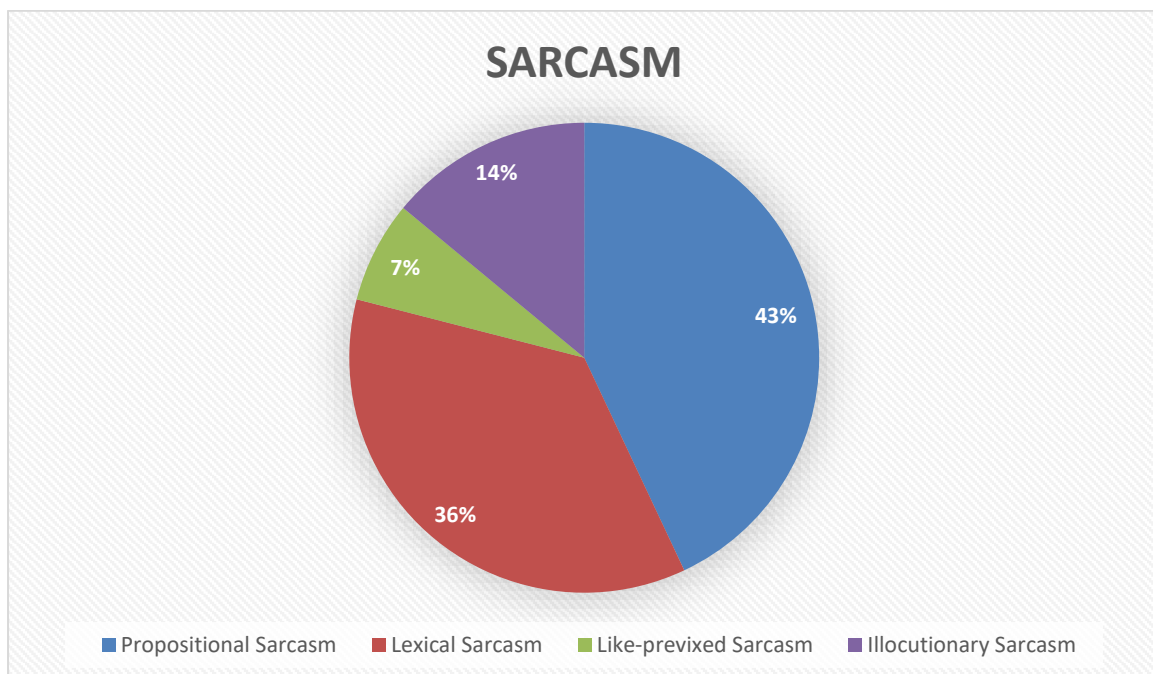
From the research, propositional sarcasm was found to be the most frequently used (43%). This shows that the characters often express their true feelings by saying the opposite of what they mean, especially in emotional or tense situations. Lexical sarcasm came next with

36%, where certain words are used sarcastically to mock or criticize indirectly. Illocutionary sarcasm appeared 14% of the time, where the tone or way of speaking carried the sarcastic meaning, even if the words themselves seemed neutral. Lastly, like-prefixed sarcasm was the least used at 7%, where phrases like "like" or "as if" were used to clearly show insincerity. In conclusion, sarcasm in Avengers: Endgame is more than just a joke it is an important language tool that adds depth to the story and helps the audience feel the emotional struggles of the characters. By understanding how sarcasm is used, we can appreciate the dialogues more and see how these clever lines reflect the characters' personalities, conflicts, and relationships in a fun yet meaningful way.

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