

## Conversational Implicature and Sarcasm in Football Mock Names Posted By @HaterCentral on X

 <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v11i3.2422>

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### A B S T R A C T

This study examines how sarcasm and conversational implicature are constructed in football mock names posted by @HaterCentral on X. Addressing a gap in previous studies that have not specifically explored the integration of sarcasm and implicature within mock naming practices, this research adopts a qualitative multimodal pragmatic approach. The data consist of 16 football mock names purposively selected from posts published between August 2025 and March 2026, based on their relevance to sarcasm and maxim flouting. The findings show that sarcasm is primarily realized through phonological wordplay, cultural references, and evaluative exaggeration, supported by visual elements and emojis. These expressions systematically involve the flouting of the Maxim of Manner and the Maxim of Quality, enabling indirect criticism through implicature. The study highlights that sarcasm in online discourse operates as a multimodal and structured communication strategy.

**Keywords:** *Sarcasm, Multimodal Pragmatics, Football Mock Names, Conversational Maxims, Online Discourse*

#### Article History:

Received 22<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Accepted 12<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Published 19<sup>th</sup> May 2026



## INTRODUCTION

Football is not just a sport but a global cultural phenomenon that creates strong emotional engagement, rivalry, and active interaction among fans, especially in online spaces (Herd, 2024). With the rapid growth of platforms like X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, Reddit, and YouTube, football communities have turned into dynamic spaces where people share opinions, criticism, humor, and even identity through language (Sabater&Moffo, 2019). Proper names are expressions that refer to specific entities and carry meaning through their reference. However, in contemporary online discourse, proper names are often creatively modified into what can be termed as “mock names,” which function not only to refer but also to convey evaluation and sarcasm (Jamil, 2010). One interesting linguistic practice in this context is the use of football mock names. These are creatively modified names used to express evaluation, often containing criticism, ridicule, and sarcasm (Fatoni et al., 2020).

Social media platforms have become key spaces for these expressions, where fans use language provocatively to demonstrate love, hate, and critical evaluation of football entities (Bajari, 2017). This study aims to analyze how conversational implicature and sarcasm appear in football mock names posted by @HaterCentral on X. By combining Yule’s (1996) theory of implicature with Dynel’s (2017) theory of sarcasm, this study tries to explain how mock names convey implied meanings, criticism, and evaluation through the flouting of the Maxim of Quality and the Maxim of Manner. The study focuses on data from the X account @HaterCentral, as it is recognized as a prominent global account that consistently produces creative and innovative football mock names. While many other accounts repost or circulate similar expressions, @HaterCentral often serves as the original source, making it a significant contributor to the development and dissemination of sarcastic football discourse online.

Therefore, the account provides a relevant and reliable dataset for examining how sarcasm is constructed through linguistic creativity and multimodal elements. This research is expected to contribute to pragmatics by providing a clearer understanding of how digital language reflects the relationship between meaning, humor, and social evaluation in online football communities.

To understand how these expressions carry meaning beyond their literal form, pragmatics offers a useful framework. Pragmatics focuses on how speakers communicate intended meanings that are not directly stated, and how listeners interpret them based on context (Yule, 2014). One important concept here is conversational implicature, which refers to implied meanings that appear when speakers intentionally do not follow conversational maxims. Levinson (1983) explains that implicature is key to understanding indirect communication, especially when speakers rely on shared knowledge and context to express evaluation.

In football mock names, implicature often appears through the deliberate flouting of Grice's (1975) conversational maxims, especially the Maxim of Quality and the Maxim of Manner. The Maxim of Quality is flouted when someone says something that is not literally true, while the Maxim of Manner is flouted when the expression is made unclear, indirect, or ambiguous. Through this, users can deliver criticism, mockery, or evaluation in a more indirect and creative way. However, implicature alone cannot fully explain how football mock names work. Many of these expressions also contain sarcasm. Dynel (2017) defines sarcasm as a form of expression that carries negative evaluation and is often used to mock or criticize someone. It can function as disaffiliative humor, combining humor with ridicule toward a target. Unlike irony, which mainly relies on implicit meaning and untruthfulness, sarcasm focuses more on the speaker's intention to criticize or attack through language.

In addition to these pragmatic features, communication in the digital era has undergone significant changes, shifting from predominantly linguistic forms to multimodal forms that integrate visual, textual, and audiovisual elements. Social media platforms such as X enable users to combine language with images, videos, and emojis, resulting in more complex and layered meanings. Consequently, analyzing meaning in online discourse cannot rely solely on linguistic aspects, but must also consider how various modes interact in communication. From a multimodal pragmatic perspective, meaning is constructed through the simultaneous use of verbal and non-verbal modes, including visual and audiovisual elements, which work together to convey communicative intentions (Haryanti et al., 2023). This shift highlights that pragmatic meaning in digital communication is no longer formed only through words, but through the integration of multiple semiotic resources. Therefore, understanding sarcastic expressions in football mock names requires a multimodal approach that takes into account the interaction between text, visual context, and paralinguistic features, as these elements jointly shape how meaning is interpreted by the audience.

Several studies have discussed football discourse and online interaction. Cook (2024) looks at the connection between trolling and hooliganism, showing how verbal aggression and mockery help build identity in online spaces. Meier-Vieracker (2023) finds that harsh language in football discourse can serve not only as aggression but also as humor and group bonding. Akinmusuyi (2023) also shows that insults in football commentary can function as humor, emotional expression, and part of competition. In addition, Ramadhan (2025) examines conversational discourse in sports media and shows that speakers use lexical cohesion, such as repetition, synonymy, and general words, to strengthen meaning and keep the interaction flowing. Similarly, Maulana (2025) analyzes podcast discourse and finds that grammatical cohesion, like reference and conjunction, helps connect ideas and make spoken communication clearer. These studies mostly focus on general football discourse, cohesion, or verbal interaction, and do not really discuss how sarcasm works in football mock names. They also tend to focus only on linguistic aspects, without looking at how meaning is built through the combination of different modes like text, images, and emojis. The role of these multimodal elements in shaping sarcastic meaning is still rarely explored. Because of this, there is a gap in understanding how implicature and sarcasm are constructed at the same time in football mock

names, especially from a multimodal pragmatic perspective. While implicature helps explain indirect meaning, this study focuses on how sarcasm is realized through the flouting of conversational maxims along with the use of multiple modes in meaning-making.

## METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach to explore and understand the meanings that individuals or groups ascribe to social phenomena. The process involves collecting data in natural settings, analyzing the data inductively to identify patterns or themes, and interpreting the findings through the researcher's perspective. (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This approach fits the study because the focus is on interpreting implicit meaning, sarcasm, and evaluative expressions found in football mock names in online discourse. Instead of dealing with numbers, this study focuses on a deeper analysis of how language is used and how meaning is built in its real context. The qualitative approach also makes it possible to examine how sarcasm is expressed not only through language, but also through the combination of different modes, such as text, visuals, and emojis, in line with a multimodal pragmatic perspective (Das & Clark, 2019).

This study also adopts a multimodal discourse analysis approach to examine how sarcasm is constructed through the interaction of multiple semiotic resources. Multimodality considers not only verbal language but also other meaning-making modes such as images, visual elements, and emojis. As noted in *Research Methods in Linguistics*, multimodal analysis explores "the different modes that people use to make meaning beyond language, such as speech, gesture, gaze, image and writing." (Litosseliti, 2011). From a pragmatic perspective, multimodal is understood as an approach that examines how meaning is constructed through the simultaneous use of linguistic (verbal) and non-linguistic modes, including visual and audiovisual elements, in communication. This perspective emphasizes that meaning in digital communication is not derived from language alone but emerges from the interaction of multiple modes that work together to convey intention and interpretation. Therefore, this study analyzes the interplay between verbal expressions (mock names and captions), visual components (images or video screenshots), and paralinguistic features (emojis) to understand how sarcastic meaning is constructed in online football discourse (Haryanti et al., 2023).

The analysis in this research follows the Interactive Model of Qualitative Data Analysis proposed by Miles and Huberman (2014), which consists of three stages:

### Data Reduction

The researcher observed football-related content on the X platform, particularly from @HaterCentral, identified posts containing football mock names, and captured the data through screenshots. The selected data were then focused and classified based on their relevance to sarcasm and maxim flouting.

### Data Display

The data were organized and presented in tables, including the mock name, sarcasm type, flouted maxim, and contextual meaning, as well as relevant visual elements and emojis.

### Conclusion Drawing and Verification

The researcher interpreted the data using Dynel's (2017) and Grice's (1975) frameworks. The analysis was conducted consistently and cross-checked to ensure credibility.

The data were obtained from posts containing football mock names published by the X account @HaterCentral, which was selected due to its consistent use of sarcastic and satirical expressions in football discourse. The data represent authentic and naturally occurring language, making them suitable for pragmatic analysis. To ensure a focused scope, the study is limited to posts published between August 2025 and March 2026 that contain mock names referring to players, coaches, or football clubs. A total of 16 mock names were selected purposively based on their relevance to sarcasm, the presence of maxim flouting, and their multimodal features, such as images, videos, or emojis, and were specifically chosen because they represent newly emerging mock names in online discourse, ensuring the relevance and contemporaneity of the analysis. The data were collected using documentation and non-

participant observation methods, in which the researcher did not participate in the communication but observed and recorded relevant data (Caldwell & Atwal, 2005).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

This section presents the findings and discussion of the study. It focuses on how sarcasm appears and how conversational maxims are flouted in football mock names posted by @HaterCentral on X. Instead of stating meanings directly, these mock names use creative and non-literal language to deliver criticism, ridicule, and evaluation in an implicit way. In this case, conversational implicature plays a key role because it helps explain how implicit meanings and criticism are conveyed. Through implicature, users can deliver evaluative messages without saying them directly. This strategy is common when people want to express something sensitive or potentially offensive in a less direct way (Vindrariatno et al., 2025). At the same time, indirect speech also has a practical function. It gives speakers space to express meanings that are not fully stated, but can still be understood by the audience through context and shared understanding (Terkourafi, 2014).

Within the context of online football discourse, sarcasm plays an important role in enabling users to express negative evaluation in a humorous and indirect manner. Instead of delivering direct criticism, users often manipulate language creatively through wordplay, name distortion, and cultural references. This strategy allows them to maintain a playful tone while simultaneously conveying strong evaluative meanings. As suggested by Dynel (2017), sarcasm functions as a form of mockery and negative evaluation directed at a target, often realized through creative and non-literal expressions.

From a pragmatic perspective, these sarcastic expressions frequently involve the flouting of conversational maxims, particularly the Maxim of Quality and the Maxim of Manner proposed by Grice (1975). The Maxim of Quality is flouted when statements are not literally true or are exaggerated, while the Maxim of Manner is flouted when expressions are ambiguous, indirect, or intentionally obscure. Through these violations, speakers encourage the audience to interpret meanings beyond the literal level, resulting in sarcastic interpretations.

Before presenting the patterns of sarcasm and maxim flouting, it is necessary to explain how the data were approached at the utterance level. In this study, each football mock name is treated as a unit of analysis, as it represents a complete linguistic expression that carries evaluative meaning. The analysis focuses on how each mock name is constructed and how meaning is derived from its form and context. This approach allows the study to move beyond surface-level interpretation and examine how sarcasm is systematically produced through linguistic creativity.

Table 1. Frequency of Sarcasm Realization Types on Football Mock Names Posted By @HaterCentral on X

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Percentage
Sarcasm Realization	Phonological Wordplay (Name Distortion)	8	50%
	Cultural Reference and Humorous Exaggeration	4	25%
	Evaluative and Exaggerative Expression	4	25%
<b>Total Data</b>		<b>16</b>	

Table 1 shows that sarcasm in football mock names mostly appears through phonological wordplay, especially name distortion. This type has the highest frequency in the data. It shows that users rely a lot on playing with players' names to create sarcastic meaning. Other forms, such as cultural or intertextual references and evaluative or exaggerated expressions, are also used, but not as often. This suggests that sarcasm is built through different kinds of linguistic creativity, allowing users to deliver criticism and mockery in an indirect way.

Table 2. Frequency of Flouted Maxims on Football Mock Names Posted By @HaterCentral on X

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Percentage
	Maxim of Manner	4	25%
Flouted Maxim	Maxim of Quality	0	0%
	Maxim of Manner & Quality	12	75%
Total Data		16	

Table 2 shows that most of the data involve the flouting of both the Maxim of Manner and the Maxim of Quality at the same time. This means sarcasm is usually conveyed through a mix of ambiguity and non-literal or exaggerated meaning. The Maxim of Manner is flouted in all data, which shows that indirectness and ambiguity are key features in sarcastic expressions. At the same time, the Maxim of Quality is flouted through exaggeration or statements that are clearly not true. This strengthens the mocking and evaluative tone of the utterances. Overall, these findings show that sarcasm in football mock names works through the combination of different maxim violations to create implied meaning.

Based on these observations, the analysis further categorizes the data into three main patterns of sarcasm realization in football mock names: (1) Phonological Wordplay (Name Distortion), (2) Cultural and intertextual reference, (3) Evaluative and Exaggerative Expression. Among these patterns, phonological wordplay (name distortion) appears as the most dominant form found in the data.

### Phonological Wordplay (Name Distortion)

One of the most dominant patterns found in the data is Phonological Wordplay. In this pattern, the original names of players or teams are modified into new forms that resemble other words or expressions, creating sarcastic meanings. Some examples include:

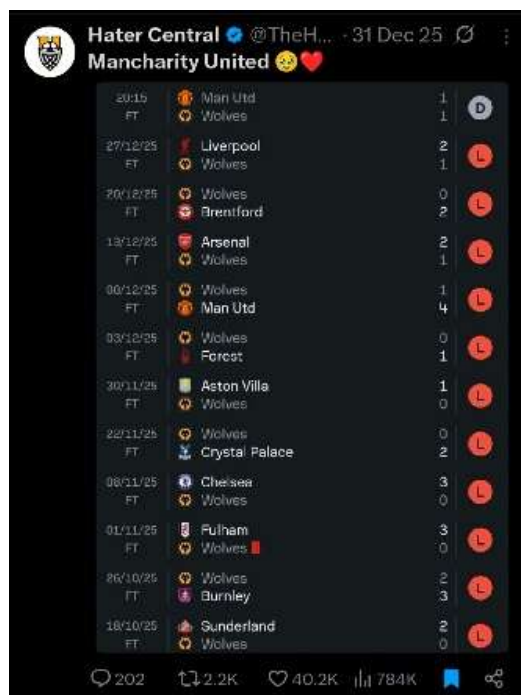


Figure 1. Screenshot of @HaterCentral's Post Mocking Manchester United

From a multimodal point of view, the visual element helps make the meaning clearer and stronger. The sequence of Wolves' results, which shows a series of losses followed by their first point against Manchester United, gives clear context. Without this, "Mancharity United" could be interpreted in different ways. The visual data directs the audience to one main idea: Manchester United becomes the team that stops Wolves' losing streak. This shows how meaning is built not only from language, but also from the combination of different modes. The emojis also add another layer of meaning. The pleading face emoji (🥺), which usually shows sympathy, is used here in an ironic way. It does not express real concern, but instead creates mock sympathy and strengthens the sarcastic tone. The red heart emoji (❤️), which

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normally signals support or affection, is also used ironically. It acts as a form of fake approval, making the criticism feel sharper.

The mock name “Mancharity United” is formed through phonological wordplay, where the lexical item “charity” replaces part of “Manchester,” creating a negative evaluative meaning. From a pragmatic perspective, this utterance flouts the Maxim of Quality, as the club is not literally a charity, and the Maxim of Manner, due to its indirect and non-conventional form. This triggers a conversational implicature in which the audience infers that Manchester United is perceived as frequently allowing weaker teams to gain points. The sarcastic meaning is further reinforced by the visual context showing the opponent’s previous losses, which frames the utterance as mockery rather than factual description.



Figure 2. Screenshot of @HaterCentral’s Post Mocking Real Madrid

The visual element makes this meaning clearer. The image shows a Getafe player getting hit in the face during a match by Antonio Rudiger (Real Madrid player), highlighting physical contact and intensity. This matches the “MMA” reference and supports the idea that the game looks more like a fight than a football match. Without the image, the meaning might feel less clear, but the visual context helps guide the interpretation. In contrast to the previous example, the emojis here function not only as emotional cues but also as ironic markers that reshape the interpretation of the utterance. The praying hands (🙏) and white heart (❤️) usually show support or sympathy, but here they are used in an ironic way. They do not express real concern. Instead, they create a mocking tone while still softening how the criticism is delivered. This makes the sarcasm feel indirect but still strong.

The mock name “Real MMAadrid” shows phonological wordplay, where “Real Madrid” is modified by inserting “MMA” (Mixed Martial Arts). This creates a hybrid form that mixes football with combat sports, which leads to a negative evaluation. On the surface, it sounds funny, but from a pragmatic point of view, it works as a sarcastic comment on the team’s playing style. In terms of Grice’s Cooperative Principle, this utterance flouts both the Maxim of Quality and the Maxim of Manner. The Maxim of Quality is flouted because the statement is clearly not true, Real Madrid is not an MMA team, but the exaggeration signals a non-literal meaning. The Maxim of Manner is also flouted because the expression is indirect and unusual, so the audience has to interpret what it really means. From this, the implicature becomes clear: the team’s style of play is seen as too aggressive, chaotic, or overly physical, more like a fight than a football match.

These findings support Dynel’s (2017) argument that sarcasm involves verbal innovation, where speakers creatively manipulate language to produce ridicule or mockery. As she states, “sarcasm typically does not consist merely in being abrupt but involves some conceptual

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and/or verbal innovation". This indicates that sarcasm is not only conveyed through meaning but also through the creative form of the expression itself. All these elements work together to build the meaning. The wordplay gives the main idea, the image provides context, and the emojis show the speaker's attitude. Together, they create a clear sarcastic message

### Cultural Reference and Humorous Exaggeration

Another pattern identified in the data is the use of cultural references combined with exaggeration to create sarcasm. In this pattern, familiar phrases from popular culture are modified and combined with exaggerated claims to produce humorous yet critical meanings.

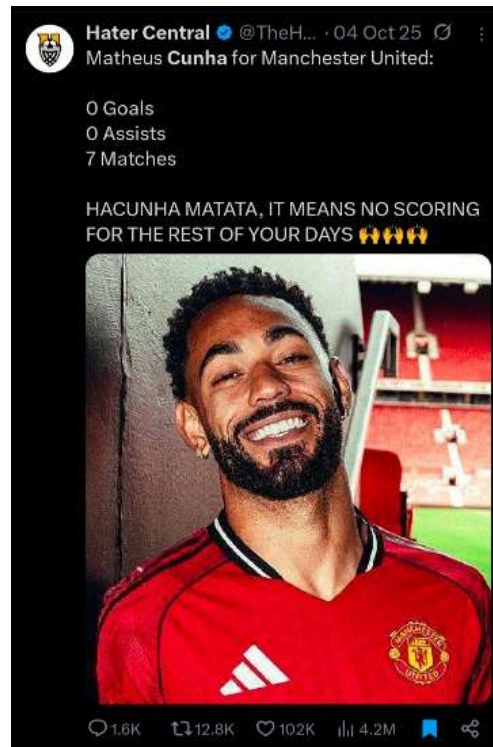


Figure 3. Screenshot of @HaterCentral's Post Mocking Matheus Cunha

The visual element strengthens this interpretation. The image shows the player smiling confidently in a Manchester United jersey, but this is paired with statistics that show "0 Goals, 0 Assists, 7 Matches." This creates a contrast between the positive image and the negative data. Because of this mismatch, the smile does not look like real confidence, but part of the sarcasm, which makes the mockery stronger. The emojis also support the sarcastic tone. The repeated raised hands emojis (🙌🙌🙌🙌), which usually show celebration or excitement, are used in an ironic way. Instead of praising something positive, they "celebrate" the player's failure to score. This adds a layer of humor and makes it clear that the message should not be taken literally.

The mock name "Hacunha Matata" combines cultural reference with exaggeration, where the player's name "Cunha" is inserted into the well-known phrase "Hakuna Matata." This works because most people already know the phrase means "no worries." In this case, it is changed into "it means no scoring for the rest of your days," which turns it into a humorous but critical statement. The exaggeration comes from the phrase "for the rest of your days," which is clearly unrealistic and used to strengthen the negative evaluation of the player's performance. From a pragmatic point of view, this utterance flouts both the Maxim of Quality and the Maxim of Manner. The Maxim of Quality is flouted because the statement is not literally true and is clearly exaggerated to create sarcasm. The Maxim of Manner is also flouted because the meaning is indirect and depends on recognizing the original phrase. The audience needs to connect the reference and interpret it in a football context. From this, the implicature becomes clear: the player is underperforming, especially in terms of scoring goals.



Figure 4. Screenshot of @HaterCentral's Post Mocking Martin Zubimendi

The visual element makes this meaning stronger and more specific. The post shows fail compilation video linked to Mikel Arteta, showing repeated mistakes during the match. Instead of just one moment, the video collects several examples of poor performance. This supports the verbal message "Where are you?" by showing that the player's impact is almost invisible. So, the visual part does more than just illustrate. It gives clear evidence that supports the sarcastic claim. The dog emoji (🐶) also adds to the tone. It connects directly to the "Scooby Doo" reference, since Scooby is a dog. Even though the emoji looks playful, in this context it helps strengthen the joke and the mockery at the same time. It also signals that the message is not meant to be taken literally, but as a humorous and sarcastic comment on the player's performance.

The mock name "Zubi Zubi Doo, Where Are You?" represents a combination of cultural reference and humorous exaggeration, where the player's name "Zubimendi" is embedded into the well-known phrase "Scooby Doo, Where Are You?" This expression draws on shared cultural knowledge, as the original phrase is associated with searching for a missing character. In this context, however, the phrase is reinterpreted to humorously suggest that the player is "missing" during the match. The exaggeration lies in portraying the player as completely absent, which is not literally true but serves to intensify the negative evaluation of his performance.

From a pragmatic perspective, this utterance flouts both the Maxim of Quality and the Maxim of Manner. The Maxim of Quality is violated because the player is not literally absent; instead, the claim exaggerates his lack of visibility or contribution in the game. Meanwhile, the Maxim of Manner is flouted due to the indirect and intertextual nature of the expression, which requires the audience to recognize the cultural reference and reinterpret it within a football context. These violations generate a conversational implicature, leading the audience to infer that the player performed poorly, contributed minimally, or failed to make a noticeable impact.

This pattern demonstrates that sarcasm in football discourse often relies on shared cultural knowledge, allowing users to communicate criticism in a humorous and indirect way. As suggested in pragmatic theory, meaning is constructed through inference rather than explicit statement. This finding is consistent with Dynel's (2017) view that sarcasm serves as a form of mockery and negative evaluation, as it is "sarcasm may induce humorous responses... primarily in those hearers who are not the targets". This is evident in the data, where expressions such as "Hacunha Matata" and "Zubi Zubi Doo" are perceived as entertaining by audiences while simultaneously functioning as criticism toward the targeted player.

### Evaluative and Exaggerative Expression

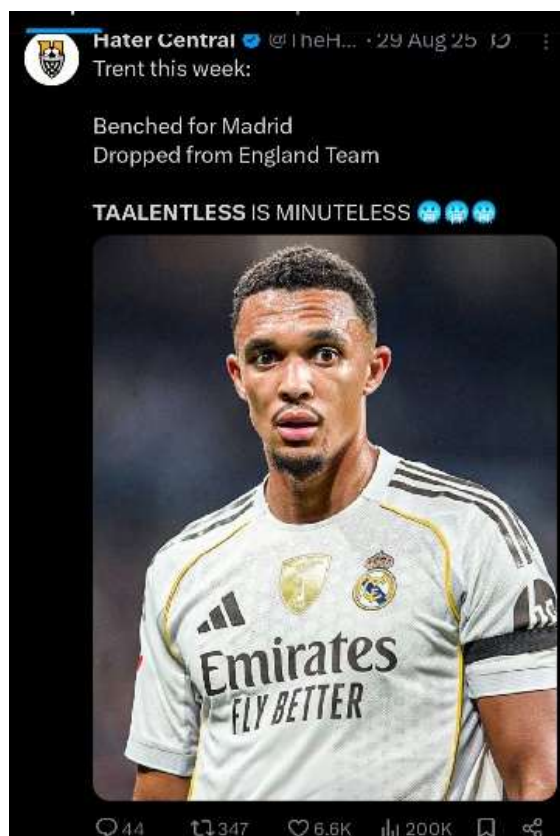


Figure 5. Screenshot of @HaterCentral's Post Mocking Trent Alexander-Arnold

The surrounding text helps guide this interpretation. Phrases like “Benched for Madrid” and “Dropped from England Team” give context about the player’s situation. These details make the exaggeration in “minuteless” feel more grounded. It no longer sounds random, but more like a strong, sarcastic comment on his current form. The visual element also supports the meaning. The image shows the player in a Real Madrid jersey with a neutral or slightly surprised expression. This does not directly show failure, but when combined with the negative text, the expression can be read as uncertainty or lack of confidence. This contrast between image and text makes the sarcasm stronger. The cold-face emojis (🧊🧊🧊) add another layer. These emojis usually suggest something shocking, awkward, or “cold.” In this context, they act as intensifiers. They make the criticism feel harsher but still playful. The repetition also signals that the statement is meant as mockery, not a literal claim.

The mock name “Talentless Is Minuteless” represents a form of evaluative and exaggerative expression, in which the player’s name “Trent Alexander-Arnold” is creatively transformed to embed negative lexical items such as “talentless” and “minuteless.” Unlike cultural reference-based sarcasm, this expression does not rely on intertextual knowledge, but instead constructs meaning through direct negative evaluation intensified by exaggeration. The term “talentless” implies a complete lack of ability, while “minuteless” suggests that the player does not receive any playing time at all. Both claims are clearly hyperbolic and not intended to be interpreted literally.

From a pragmatic perspective, this utterance flouts both the Maxim of Quality and the Maxim of Manner. The Maxim of Quality is violated because the statements are factually untrue and exaggerated to an extreme degree. The player is neither completely without talent nor entirely excluded from matches. At the same time, the Maxim of Manner is flouted due to the unconventional and stylized construction of the expression, which requires interpretation beyond its literal form. These violations generate a conversational implicature, through which the audience infers that the player is currently underperforming and possibly losing his role or importance within the team.

This pattern demonstrates that sarcasm in football discourse can also be realized through evaluative and exaggerative expressions, allowing users to convey criticism in a direct yet non-literal manner. Unlike cultural references, this pattern relies on intensifying negative evaluation through exaggerated lexical choices, which amplify the perceived shortcomings of the target. As suggested in pragmatic theory, such expressions require the audience to interpret meaning beyond the literal level, as exaggeration functions as a trigger for implicature. This finding is consistent with Dynel's (2017) view that sarcasm serves as a form of mockery and negative evaluation, as it is "characterized as cutting and contemptuous" and functions as a "bitter gibe or taunt". This is evident in the data, where expressions such as "Talentless Is Minuteless" exaggerate the player's condition to the point of impossibility, yet are understood by the audience as humorous criticism rather than factual claims. In this way, exaggeration not only strengthens the sarcastic effect but also makes the evaluation more impactful and memorable.

## Discussion

The findings of this study matter because they show that sarcasm in online football discourse is not just for style or humor, but works as a clear communication strategy that can be explained through pragmatics. The dominance of phonological wordplay in Table 1 shows that users actively play with language to create meanings beyond what is said directly. This supports Dynel's (2017) idea that sarcasm involves not only implied meaning but also linguistic creativity, where wordplay becomes central in expressing mockery and evaluation. In this case, mock names are not random changes, but structured expressions that carry social judgment.

From a pragmatic point of view, the frequent flouting of the Maxim of Manner and the Maxim of Quality shows how important Grice's Cooperative Principle is in explaining sarcasm. As seen in Table 2, most data involve both maxims at the same time, which leads to the formation of implicature. This supports the idea from Grice (1975) and Levinson (1983) that meaning is often inferred, not directly stated. The findings show that sarcasm depends on this process, where the audience has to interpret ambiguity from the Maxim of Manner and exaggeration from the Maxim of Quality to understand the intended meaning. So, indirectness here is not a problem in communication, but actually a strategy.

The three main patterns found, phonological wordplay, cultural reference, and evaluative exaggeration, also show that sarcasm is not a single form but a combination of different strategies. Cultural and intertextual references highlight the role of shared knowledge, which supports Yule's (2014) idea that meaning is built together by the speaker and the audience. This is especially important in digital communication, where users depend on shared cultural understanding to make indirect messages work. At the same time, exaggeration shows how non-literal meaning helps trigger implicature, which fits with pragmatic theories about how meaning is interpreted.

These findings also connect to previous studies on football discourse and online interaction. Earlier research, such as Cook et al. (2024), Meier-Vieracker (2023), and Akinmusuyi (2023), shows that mockery and insults can function as entertainment and identity-building. This study goes further by explaining how those functions are actually formed through language. It shows that sarcasm follows certain pragmatic patterns, not just random or emotional expression. This helps connect discourse studies with pragmatic theory, and shows that online football communication can be analyzed in a more systematic way.

Another important point is the multimodal aspect. The data shows that sarcastic meaning is strengthened through the combination of text, images, and emojis. This supports Haryanti et al. (2023), who argue that meaning in digital communication comes from multiple modes, not just language. In this context, emojis act like paralinguistic cues that can change or strengthen meaning, often in ironic ways. This shows that pragmatic analysis today needs to include more than just words, since meaning in digital spaces is built through several elements working together.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that sarcasm in football mock names is mainly built through creative language, especially phonological wordplay, along with cultural references and exaggerated expressions. These forms are not random or just for humor. They rely on the flouting of the Maxim of Manner and the Maxim of Quality to create implicature, so users can deliver criticism in an indirect but clear way. The findings also show that sarcastic meaning in online discourse does not come from text alone, but from the combination of images and emojis that help strengthen and clarify the message. These findings have several implications. For linguistics, this study supports the relevance of pragmatic theories, especially Grice's Cooperative Principle and implicature, in explaining how language works in digital contexts. It shows that indirectness and non-literal meaning are still important in modern communication. For media and communication studies, the results show that online platforms are spaces where people express humor, criticism, and identity through creative and multimodal ways. For online communication, this study highlights the importance of multimodality, since meaning is now often built through the interaction between text and visual elements, not just language alone.

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