

Responses to Sarcasm in Three *Star Trek* Movies

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ABSTRACT

Sarcasm has been widely studied in various disciplines such as linguistics, psychology, neurology, sociology, and even cross-cultural studies. Its aggravating nature, however, often elicits various responses by the hearer. This study attempts to investigate responses to sarcasm by the characters of three Star Trek “reboot” version movies. It aims to examine responses to sarcasm and to analyze the patterns of responses to sarcastic remarks in relation to the characters’ interpersonal relationship. The data used in this research were taken from the dialogues of the movies, which were categorized into eight classes of responses: laughter, literal, zero response, smile, nonverbal, sarcasm, topic change, and metalinguistic comment. The results show that the most frequent responses conveyed by the characters were literal responses (29.41%), whereas the least frequent responses are laughter (1.96%). There is no pattern in responding to sarcastic remarks in relation to the interpersonal relationship between the interlocutors. However, strangers tend to respond in literal, zero response, and topic change. Meanwhile, close acquaintance tend to give various responses.

Keywords: *interpersonal relationship; pragmatics; response; sarcasm.*

INTRODUCTION

Sarcasm, often mistakenly understood as verbal irony, is a figure of speech bearing a semantic interpretation exactly opposite to its literal meaning. It differs from lying in that there is no intent to deceive the speaker’s counterpart (Nakassis and Snedeker, 2002). It can be inferred that sarcastic exchange is expressed to convey a stated meaning that contradicts the intended meaning, yet the recipient notices the difference of the meaning between the stated and intended.

Huang, Gino, and Galinsky (2015) argue that sarcasm often induced diverse effects on its hearer. The negative sentiment inserted in it can undermine relationships and harm communication in a relationship (Huang, Gino, & Galinsky, 2015). On the other hand, they argue, the “nuance” of the sarcasm may invite “humorous situation” if the choice of words and the contexts are relevant and

understood by the parties involved. It can be said that if the sarcastic remarks are expressed in appropriate circumstances, sarcastic criticisms, no matter how negative it may cause, may leave positive impacts such as laughter and make the conversation become more memorable to the hearer.

It is interesting to investigate both the sarcasm, and the response of the hearer. Each person has their own understanding and reception towards sarcastic remarks they hear. The differences in responding to sarcasm may be influenced by many factors, such as the speaker’s intonation, their body language, the broader context of a conversation, or even their relationship with the speaker and their knowledge of the speaker’s sarcastic tendencies (Olsen, 2015). In addition, there have not been many research studies conducted to investigate the response of this particular figure of speech. Therefore, this paper will explore more about responses to sarcastic remarks.

This paper aims at investigating the sarcastic remarks and their responses in three *Star Trek* reboot movies: *Star Trek* (2009), *Star Trek: Into Darkness* (2013), and *Star Trek: Beyond* (2016). *Star Trek* itself is an American science fiction entertainment franchise based on the television series created by Gene Roddenberry. The first series of this franchise was released in 1966 under the name *Star Trek: The Original Series*. It is later reproduced several times as both television series and movies. The story tells about the adventure of Captain James T. Kirk and the crews of the starship USS Enterprise, a space exploration vessel, exploring new worlds in the vastness of the universe which takes place in the twenty-third century. The story itself mainly centered on the bridge of the starship, where seven of the crew, including Captain Kirk, do most of their activities. The isolation and tension caused by their continuing mission exploring new life forms in the universe drive them closer without forgetting their position as a crew and goals as space explorers. Yet at the same time, the intimacy between the captain and the crews, especially the captain's close friends, melts the hierarchical rank among them. They only address each other according to their rank in a formal situation, otherwise they address by their names or nicknames. In the movies, there are many sarcastic remarks said by the characters. Some remarks are responded verbally, physically, and the other left unanswered.

The present research attempts to address the following questions:

1. How do the characters of three *Star Trek* movies respond to sarcastic remarks expressed by any other characters in the movies and why do they respond in such ways?
2. Are there similar occurrences in responding to sarcastic remarks conveyed by the characters in connection with the interpersonal relationship between the speaker and the hearer of the sarcasm?

LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of studies have been carried out about sarcasm and its responses. Wulandari (2017),

for example, examined sarcastic expressions in the Movie *Letters to Juliet*. She found that perlocutionary sarcasm was the most frequent type of sarcasm used in the movie, followed by lexical, propositional, and lastly, 'like'-prefixed sarcasm.

Similarly, Prabowo (2013) studied the forms and functions of sarcastic expressions in the Movie *The Guard*. The results show that a sarcastic expression was not just a simple meaning inversion, but also involved adequate context, the intention of the speaker and response from the hearer.

Azmi (2013) investigated mockery and sarcasm in *Bruce Almighty* and *Tropic Thunder*. The aim of this paper was to reveal the significance of the dirty words and how often the word "fuck" and "asshole" used in American movies and its involvement in popular culture in mockery and sarcasm.

Persicke, Tarbox, Ranick, & St. Clair (2012) in their paper entitled "Teaching children with autism to detect and respond to sarcasm" evaluated the effectiveness of a training package, including rules and *in vivo* multiple exemplar training, to teach three children with autism to detect and respond appropriately to sarcastic statements. The children were given four training for them to be able to give appropriate respond to sarcasm by a therapist. The follow-up session result shows that all three children demonstrated correct responding to sarcasm. Compared to the previous papers, this paper is focusing more on the psychological aspect in receiving sarcastic statements.

Woodland and Voyer (2011) investigated the relative contribution of context and tone of voice in the perception of sarcasm in short utterances. They examined 82 participants' statements after hearing short stories read in a monotone voice, reflecting either a positive or negative context, followed by a relevant statement in a sarcastic or sincere tone of voice through a recording. The results show that mid-range ratings and longer reaction times were obtained when the context and tone were incongruent (e.g., positive context with sincere tone) compared to when they were congruent (e.g., positive context with a sarcastic tone).

Similar to the papers mentioned above, this paper investigates the sarcastic expression found in a conversation. However, this paper offers new

insight in regard to sarcasm observation as it also studies about the responses of the sarcastic remarks.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Sarcasm

Sarcasm is the use of words that normally mean one thing to mean just the opposite, usually to hurt someone's feeling or show scorn (Sarcasm, n.d.). Sarcasm is closely related to the concept of irony, in terms of expressing the stated meaning but the intended meaning is exactly the opposite (Gibbs, 1986). However, in transferring the metamessage to the hearer, the speaker usually inserts bitter, caustic, and hurtful criticism that is directed to an individual (Krueger & Glucksberg, 1989; Haiman, 1998; Gibbs, 1986; Huang, Gino, & Galinsky, 2015). For instance, if someone says "*You're a fine friend,*" to a friend who has hurt her feeling in some way, the utterance is sarcastic.

Haiman (1998) argues that someone requires "intention" in expressing his thought sarcastically, whereas in expressing ironical utterances intention is optional (p. 20). Yet, according to Sperber and Wilson (1981), in many cases it is possible for people to mean what they literally say, but still speaking sarcastically. In producing sarcastic remarks, people often involuntarily perform two things at once, which are telling one "ostensible message" yet at the same time constructing contradictory meaning of the message conveyed (Haiman, 1998, p. 12).

The nature of sarcasm, to cause negative effect in conversation is often being embedded when someone conveys criticisms. On the one hand, those attitudes, such as to mock, scorn, contempt, or ridicule, which are inserted in ironical criticisms are aimed to offend or hurt someone's feeling (McDonald, 1999; Krueger and Glucksberg, 1989) – thus, in this case, sarcasm plays a role to intensify the negative tinge of a statement (Colston, 1997). On the other hand, expressing criticism with sarcastic remarks may seem to be more polite than direct criticism due to its indirectness and contradictory meaning (McDonald, 1999; Dews, Kaplan, & Winner, 1995).

Yet, above all that negativity it may cause, sarcastic remarks often evoke humorous situation. When sarcastic utterances are uttered, the speaker most likely shows particular facial expressions that may distinguish it from non-sarcastic utterances. These facial cues, such as smiles, laughs, lip tightens, looks to partner, and slow nods, together with positive comments on negative situation, are effectively proven to elicit laughter from the hearer (Caucci & Kreuz, 2012).

In understanding sarcasm, there are two fundamental factors for both speaker and hearer of sarcastic remarks, namely contextual knowledge and common ground (Sperber & Wilson, 1981; Caucci & Kreuz, 2012). Contextual knowledge provides source of information which are clearly understood by the interlocutors, such as location, relationship, and traits of the interlocutors (Caucci & Kreuz, 2012, p. 2). Meanwhile, common ground is something that people share through a course of time and finally come to a mutual understanding (p. 3).

The likelihood for best friends to recognize each other's sarcasm in a conversation is higher than strangers (Caucci & Kreuz, 2012; Rockwell, 2003). To be as close as can be called 'best friends', two or more people allegedly have gone through a plethora of experiences together. During these spans of times, they involuntarily build their shared common ground. Correspondingly, for them to comprehend the speaker's intention in saying sarcastic remarks will be much less painful compared to strangers (Caucci & Kreuz, 2012).

Standard Pragmatic Model

Standard Pragmatic Model proposes that there are three steps in understanding sarcasm (Gibbs, 1986). The hearer of the sarcasm must understand the thorough literal meaning of the sentence in the first place. When s/he has fully computed the sentence literally, s/he must verify whether the literal meaning is the speaker's intended meaning. If it is irrelevant, the hearer may assume that the speaker's intended meaning is the opposite of the sentence's literal interpretation.

However, Gibbs (1986) states that this model may no longer be accurate in understanding sarcasm. He argues that not all sarcastic intentions

which are hidden behind the reverse meaning of its literal interpretation can be explained by using this model. He notes that “although the sarcastic interpretation is usually assumed to be the opposite of the literal meaning, in many cases the opposite is not clear” (Gibbs, 1986, p. 4). That being said, this model may help in perceiving some sarcasm intention, but at some point, it would not help a lot to explain sarcasm in other cases.

Echoic Mention Theory

According to *Echoic Mention Theory*, irony will easily be comprehended if it is being reminded echoically, both implicitly and explicitly (Jorgensen, Miller, & Sperber, 1984). Most conversations in our daily life can be referred to the past events, whether or not the relationship between the speaker and the hearer is taken into account. Such echoes can be obtained from someone’s utterance, opinions of certain type of person, or popular wisdom (Sperber & Wilson, 1986, p. 239). Henceforth, both the speaker and the hearer in most cases are able to choose the right interpretation of an utterance without even realizing it (Sperber & Wilson, 1981).

There are many types and degrees of echoic mentions, some of which are immediate echoes, and others delayed; some have their sources in actual utterances, others in thoughts or opinion; some have a real source, others an imagined one; some are traceable back to a particular individual, whereas others have a vaguer origin (Sperber & Wilson, 1981). Below are some examples taken from Jorgensen, Miller, & Sperber (1984, p., 114):

- (1) He: Joe is an honest fellow.
She: Oh, sure. Joe is an honest fellow...who just can’t help lying, cheating, and stealing, whenever the occasion arises. (Immediate echo of speech)
- (2) She: Trust the Weather Bureau! See what lovely weather it is: rain, rain, rain. (Delayed echo of speech)
- (3) He: I assume you forgot to buy beer!
She: I forget everything, don’t I? Go look in the refrigerator before making assumptions. (Echo of attributed thought)

Jorgensen, Miller, & Sperber, 1984) argue that unless antecedent echoes, e.g. beliefs, attitudes, and opinions, are mentioned people hardly comprehend utterances as ironic. Echoes here serve as contextual knowledge shared between the speaker and the hearer of ironic and/or sarcastic utterances. In other words, when ironical statement echoes some familiar propositions, the hearer views the statement as being ironic more effortlessly than it does not especially when the speaker puts more stress on the mentioned echo.

Social Norm Model

Echoic mention of a norm in sarcastic and/or ironic sentences is inevitable (Sperber & Wilson, 1981). Similar to belief, social norm is widely apprehended by most people. Hence, when a person makes a sarcastic statement about this norm, this statement should be easier to comprehend.

For instance, people should not say unpleasant words to others (“If you don’t have anything nice to say, don’t say anything”). When the speaker mentions this societal norm for politeness to a hearer who holds on to this norm, their comment may be categorized as sarcastic (Gibbs, 1986).

METHODS

The data used in this research were taken from *Star Trek* reboot movies, namely *Star Trek* (Abrams, 2009), *Star Trek: Into Darkness* (Abrams, 2013), and *Star Trek: Beyond* (Abrams, 2016). The movies used in this study were obtained from original DVDs distributed by Movieline Entertainment (*Star Trek* (2009) and *Star Trek Into Darkness* (2013)) and Paramount Home Media Distribution (*Star Trek Beyond* (2016)). We observed all the three *Star Trek* movies chronologically to grasp the context behind the plot as well as the sarcastic exchanges along with their English subtitles that were downloaded from *Subscene.com*. We collected the data from the dialogues of the three *Star Trek* movies containing sarcasms and their responses.

This paper employed Standard Pragmatic Model (Gibbs, 1986), Echoic Mention Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1981), and Social Norm Model (Gibbs, 1986) in deciding when an utterance is

sarcastic. We noted down the sarcastic utterance, the speaker and the hearer of the sarcastic utterance, a few sentences prior and after the sarcastic utterance, the response of the sarcastic utterance both verbal and nonverbal, and the time when the conversation occurred. Note that the valid responses were only the ones to whom the speaker intended to speak to. Contexts were also given in the dialogues to give background knowledge about the occurrences. The data were later categorized by the speaker's and the hearer's Power-Distance (P-D) relationship based on Brown and Levinson's theory (1987), to detect the most frequent response to sarcasm said by the characters. There would be six combinations of P-D relationship employed in this paper: higher power with great distance (P+, D+); equal power with great distance (P=, D+); lower power with great distance (P-, D+); higher power with small distance (P+, D-); equal power with small distance (P=, D-); and lower power with small distance (P-, D-). These relationships were graded based on the relationship of the speaker to the hearer.

After all the data were collected, they were classified into eight classes of response to irony as proposed by Eisterhold, Attardo and Boxer (2006), which were adapted to the classification of responses to sarcasm. The responses were classified into laughter, literal, zero response, smile, sarcasm, nonverbal, topic change, and metalinguistic comment (p. 1249). Afterward, the data were coded according to (1) the title of the movie in which it occurred: ST for *Star Trek*, STID for *Star Trek: Into Darkness*, and STB for *Star Trek: Beyond*, (2) the classes of responses to sarcasm (e.g. *Laugh* for laughter, *Lit* for literal, *Zero* for zero response, *Smile* for smile, *Sarc* for sarcasm, *NV* for nonverbal, *TC* for topic change, and *Meta* for metalinguistic comments), and (3) the number of occurrences in three movies.

After all the data had been collected, classified, and coded, the next step was to analyze them. If necessary, wider explanations about the circumstances the speaker and the hearer involved were added to provide better understanding about the context. We examined the responses of each sarcastic utterance said by giving explanation that justified the hearer of the sarcasm to said so. Then we noted down the most frequent response to

sarcasm, the addressee of the sarcastic exchange, and the relationship between the addressee and the speaker of sarcasm.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Responses to Sarcasm as Seen in Three *Star Trek* Movies

Based on the analysis of responses to sarcasm found in *Star Trek* (2009), *Star Trek: Into Darkness* (2013), and *Star Trek: Beyond* (2016), there were 50 sarcastic utterances and followed by the responses occurred in three *Star Trek* reboot movies: 1 laughter, 13 literal responses, 10 zero responses, 2 smiles, 6 sarcasms, 7 nonverbal responses, 6 topic changes, and 5 metalinguistic comments. Table 1 below summarizes the data analysis of the finding above.

Table 1. The Frequency of responses to Sarcasm as Seen in Three *Star Trek* Movies

No	Responses	Frequency	%
1.	Laughter	1	1.96
2.	Literal	15	29.41
3.	Zero response	12	23.53
4.	Smile	2	3.92
5.	Sarcasm	6	11.76
6.	Nonverbal	6	11.76
7.	Topic change	6	11.76
8.	Metalinguistic comments	3	5.90
TOTAL		51	100

The table shows the distribution of responses to sarcasm as seen in three *Star Trek* movies, namely *Star Trek* (2009), *Star Trek: Into Darkness* (2013), and *Star Trek: Beyond* (2016). Overall, all responses found in the movies were compatible with the list of responses proposed by Eisterhold, Attardo and Boxer (2006). Half of the responses are comprised of literal responses and zero responses. The most frequent responses are literal responses

with 15 occurrences (29.41%), followed by zero responses with 12 occurrences (23.53%). Nonverbal response, sarcasm, and topic change have the same number of occurrences with 6 occurrences each (11.76%). Metalinguistics comments occurred 3 times in three movies (5.90%). Smiles occurred twice (3.92%). The least frequent response in the movies was laughter, which only occurred once throughout the three movies (1.96%).

People who only perceive the information by its literal meaning are most likely to respond to the sarcastic utterance literally or by its semantic meaning. However, literal responses can also be given when the hearer of sarcastic exchange gets the implied meaning and responds to it in a serious manner. Most literal responses are given by the hearer when he or she sees a more troubling matter than playing along with the speaker's sarcasm.

The second most frequent response to sarcasm was zero response. According to Eisterhold, Attardo and Boxer (2006), the absence of reactions is including all the cases in which the hearers fail to acknowledge or do not show any pertinent reaction to the ironical (sarcastic) turn (p. 1248). In some cases, the hearer successfully acknowledges the sarcastic intention but either chose to ignore the sarcasm entirely or reacted in a way not related to the sarcasm (Eisterhold, Attardo and Boxer, 2006). Some characters in *Star Trek* movies use this particular response either when they do not see any relevance, or they are totally speechless to the sarcasm said by the speaker.

Despite having the same number of occurrences, sarcasm, nonverbal, and topic change, carry their own weight in response to sarcastic exchanges. When the hearer responds to sarcasm in sarcastic manner, or in other words return the sarcasm, he or she may share the same common ground and contextual knowledge with the speaker. Both the interlocutors should be on the same page when it comes to each other's compulsion to be sarcastic, thus he or she replies it with the same manner.

Nonverbal response could somehow be ambiguous in terms of the hearer's sarcastic recognition. By showing nonverbal expression (e.g. dirty looks, raising an eyebrow), the hearer does not give clear indication whether he or she understands

the sarcasm. However, this gesture may show that the hearer notices the speaker's deceitful intention. As for topic change, there are two possible reasons of why the hearer changes the topic after the speaker said something sarcastically. One, the hearer has more urgent matter to be taken care of immediately, or two, the hearer wants to avoid the conversation in which sarcasm occurred. In other words, topic change may indicate that the hearer understands the speaker's real intention.

Metalinguistic comment is conveyed when the hearer notices the wrongness of an utterance and then asks for clarification on the matter (Eisterhold, Attardo and Boxer, 2006; Lyster & Ranta, 1997). This situation often occurs when the speaker and the hearer come from different cultural background. Therefore, clarification is needed so the hearer could grasp what the speaker said, either literally or figuratively.

Smile and laughter are signs that someone is amused. These responses are expected from the hearer of sarcastic remark, especially when he or she recognizes the inappropriateness of the speaker's sentence as well as the speaker's attempt to veil it with its opposite meaning. Therefore, it supports the notions that state that sarcasm often induces humorous situation (Huang, Gino, & Galinsky, 2015; Caucci & Kreuz, 2012; Seckman & Couch, 1989; Rockwell & Theriot, 2001; Ducharme, 1994).

The Interpersonal Relationships among the Characters of Three Star Trek Movies

The data shows that responses to sarcasm found in the three Star Trek reboot movies were not distributed evenly. Literal responses came out as the most frequent responses said by the hearers of the sarcastic remark, while laughter appeared to be the least frequent response. The discussion below attempts to identify the characters' drives behind their decision to prefer particular responses to sarcasm to other responses.

This paper employed Brown & Levinson's (1987) two sociological variables (power and distance) to determine the character's relationship. Social distance (D) between the speaker and the hearer, which can be measured by the similarity or difference among them (a symmetric relation).

Strangers have great distance (D+) because they know very little of each other's information, as they often to meet and share experiences together they become who friends have small distance (D-). Relative power (P) of the speaker with respect to the hearer, which means the degree to which the speaker can impose his/her own will on the hearer (an asymmetric relation). Power is divided into three categories, higher power (P+), equal power (P=), and lower power (P-). It should be noted that these variables are taken from the speaker's viewpoint.

There are six categories of P-D relationship which ranges from strangers (greater distance [D+]) to close friends (smaller distance [D-]) and superior/senior rank (higher power [P+], colleague (equal power [P=]), and junior rank/cadet (lower power [P-]). Most sarcastic exchanges occur when both the speaker and the hearer of the sarcasm are smaller in distance or familiar with each other (D-). Star Trek's characters who are familiar to one another and whose power are equal (P=, D-) tend to be the most sarcastic, while characters with higher in power and greater distance (P+, D+) and equal in power and greater distance (P=, D+) appear to be the least sarcastic.

P-D relationships aside, McCoy conveys the most sarcastic remarks with 24 utterances, which 16 utterances out of them are directed to Spock. Kirk is following closely by saying 17 sarcastic remarks, which mostly directed to Spock (9 utterances) and Pike (5 utterances). Uhura conveys 3 sarcastic remarks which are directed to both Spock (2 utterances) and Kirk (1 utterance). Aside of being the most frequent sarcastic remarks' hearer, Spock manages to convey 3 sarcasms which each of them is directed to Pike, Kirk, and McCoy. Scotty conveys sarcastic remarks to both Kirk and Spock Prime once, whereas both Vulcan Minister and Pike convey sarcastic remark once to Spock and Kirk, respectively.

Out of 7 victims of sarcastic remarks, Spock appears to give out the most responses with 29 of 52 responses found in the movies. Even though he mostly replies the sarcastic remarks in serious manner or literally (8 cases), at the same time he gives zero responses to sarcastic remarks said to him as often as he responds the sarcasm literally (8 cases). Spock manages to respond nonverbally in 5

out of 6 occasions, and he also gives out 3 metalinguistic comments to sarcastic remarks, all by himself. In very rare occasions, he responds to sarcasm by changing the topic (2 cases), laughing (1 case), and returning the sarcasm (1 case). Kirk comes out as the second most response-giver with 11 responses. He mostly responds to sarcasm by exchanging it by another sarcasm (4 cases). He sometimes changes the topic (2 cases) and gives no response to the sarcasm (2 cases). However, he rarely responds to it literally (1 case), with a smile (1 case), and nonverbally (1 case). Meanwhile, Pike gives out 6 responses which consist of three literal responses, two zero responses, and one topic change. Both McCoy and Spock Prime give 2 responses to sarcasm. McCoy responds it by smiling as the sarcasm said to him and returning the sarcasm, while Spock Prime answers it literally and changes the topic. Dr. Marcus and Jaylah only respond to sarcasm once, and both of them answer it in a serious manner.

There are four main pairings in Star Trek movies who have dominant and significant appearance over the course of three movies. They are McCoy-Spock, McCoy-Kirk, Kirk-Spock, and Kirk-Pike.

The relationship between McCoy and Spock has been abrasive from the beginning of the Star Trek's trilogy. They have different ways to approach a problem, and oftentimes they bicker and banter to each other. Over the course of the three movies, they grow accustomed to each other's personalities and become more considerate to one another. Mostly, Spock responds McCoy's sarcasm in serious tone (literal), nonverbal, and/or gives no response to it at all (zero response). This phenomenon may be explained by their different cultural background. Spock is a Vulcan, an alien species who uphold logical and pragmatic thinking.

Throughout the three movies, the friendship between McCoy and Kirk is shown strong and honest. They are being themselves in front of each other as well as embraced each other's weaknesses. Therefore, sarcastic exchanges between these two men are considered to be a way to glue them together. Among the responses given by Kirk, three of them are sarcasms, two of them are zero responses, and one for each is nonverbal response

and topic change. Both Kirk and McCoy give out the most sarcastic remarks throughout the movies. Kirk's sarcastic response to McCoy's sarcasm is expected because they have myriad things in common.

Kirk and Spock have a unique relationship from the beginning. They have opposing personalities and perspectives to begin with, which always lead to conflicts. However, they bond through these conflicts. Overall, Spock's responses to Kirk's sarcastic attempts were literal responses (1 instances), zero responses (3 instances), nonverbal (2 instances), and metalinguistic comments (3 instances). While zero response and nonverbal responses occurred in both relationships, literal response and metalinguistic comments only occurred when Kirk acted as captain or had a higher authority than Spock.

Christopher Pike and Jim Kirk had a father-son relationship. He could see the greatness Kirk had in store on their first meeting, something he believed Starfleet had lost ever since Kirk's father's death. His offer to make Kirk enlist in Starfleet was a gamble and an act of faith. On the other hand, Kirk somehow saw a father figure in Pike. He supported and believed in him when no one else did. Thus, he tried to prove his worth to Pike every chance he got, even if he had to break some rules. Kirk often shows his desperation to Pike. Pike seems to understand Kirk's nature to be sarcastic when he is annoyed. He responds in literal, zero response, and once, he changes the topic, mostly to avoid more conflicts.

Other than abovementioned pairs, sarcasm also occurred in other characters' pairings. Some sarcastic remarks happened between characters who were not well-acquainted, while some others happened to in some close-knit relationship. As most close-knit relationship has been explained in detail above, the rest of pairings left were mostly not quite familiar with each other. However, distance was not the only factor for the hearer to respond in particular response. The power differences between the hearer and the speaker also influenced the way the hearer respond to sarcastic exchanges.

All things considered, power and distance played essential role in determining the hearer's

response to the speaker's sarcasm. Colleagues or friends tend to understand sarcasm straightly rather than strangers because of the common ground they shared, albeit their differences in terms of power. Consequently, they have the freedom to respond in a way that they prefer. On the contrary, the difference in power and/or their unfamiliarity seemed to render their freedom to give various responses. Thus, the responses were mostly consist of serious answer (literal), changing the topic, or zero response.

CONCLUSION

The 51 instances of responses to sarcasm found in three *Star Trek* reboot movies all fit to Eisterhold, Attardo and Boxer's categories. The most frequent response which appeared in the three movies is literal response with 15 instances (29.41%) and is followed closely by zero response with 12 instances (23.53%). Sarcasm, nonverbal, and topic change have the same number of occurrences with 6 instances (11.76%). Metalinguistic comment, smile, and laughter have the smallest number of occurrences.

The interpersonal relationship between the speaker and the hearer of the sarcasm seems to play an important part for the hearer to choose particular response to sarcasm. It is important to take into account that the developments of the relationship between the interlocutors. The three *Star Trek* movies used in this study mostly have the same main characters who develop their relationship over the course of the movies. Therefore, some changes in power and distance are expected as the story goes on.

According to the six classifications of P-D relationship, the characters from *Star Trek* movies mostly have equal power with close familiarity (close friend/acquaintance) (P=, D-). The least number of sarcasm occurs in a relationship where they are not well-acquainted and the speaker has higher or equal power [(P+, D+) & (P=, D+)]. It can be concluded that most sarcasm occurs when the distance between the interlocutors are small, or they know each other well.

From this research, it can be concluded that there are no salient patterns in responding to sarcastic remarks in relation to the characters' interpersonal relationship. However, characters with closer distance or are well-acquainted tend to give various responses to sarcasm. However, characters with greater distance or not are well-acquainted (strangers) tend to respond to sarcasm literally (or in serious tone), nonverbally, or give no apparent response (zero response).

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