The Complexity of Functional Syntactic Structures of Sarcasm Expressions

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ABSTRACT

This linguistic research adopted a descriptive qualitative approach that focuses on the syntactic structure of sarcasm expressions. The data for this study were collected from the popular television series *Friends*, which focused on the character Chandler Bing. Bing was one of the most known characters among various sitcom series with iconic sarcasm. This study aimed to identify the complexity of the syntactic functional structures including adjuncts, specifiers, and complements. Employing the x-bar theory for analysis, the study categorized the collected data into complex adjuncts, complex specifiers, and complex complements, accompanied by their respective x-bar schemas and thorough explanations. The results showed that Bing's sarcastic expressions exhibit complexity across a variety of functional structures with the various word categories as the construction. The most common complex form was identified in the complement structure. This study contributed to a nuanced understanding of syntactic aspects of sarcasm, especially within the linguistic framework of his x-bar theory.

Key words: complex, Chandler Bing, sarcasm, syntactic, x-bar

INTRODUCTION

Language serves as the primary communication tool employed by human to engage in interpersonal communication. Devoid of language, individuals would encounter considerable challenges in their interactions with one another. Wardhaugh (2006) states language as abstract knowledge that encompasses an understanding of rules and principles as well as the ability to use sounds, words, and sentences effectively, rather than merely recognizing specific examples of them.

It implies that learning a language is deeper than only knowing about the use of words and sounds. It requires an understanding of the grammar of the language as well. Keraf (in Atik 2020) identifies one of the manifold functions of language, namely, as a means of self-expression. Through the intricate structure of language, individuals are endowed with a diverse array of vocabulary options to articulate and convey their emotions or thoughts, subsequently manifested in the form of carefully chosen words, phrases, or sentences.

Beyond the mere act of word selection or sentence structure, the stylistic nuances of language employed by individuals in their interactions are diverse and multifaceted. As posited by Pradopo (1999), language style involves the deliberate use of language to achieve a particular impact. It aligns with the statement conveyed by Hartoko and Rahmanto (1986) that language style is essentially the diverse manner in which individuals express their personal language characteristics.

One prevalent form of linguistic expression is sarcasm, which constitutes a crucial aspect of verbal irony. According to Ruiz de Mendoza and Palacio (2019), irony emanates from a clash of scenarios in the mind of the ironist, while sarcasm itself, as defined by Grice (1975), is an expression carrying a meaning opposite to that which is overtly conveyed.

Sarcasm, a part of language style or figure of speech, blends subtlety and hidden meanings through carefully chosen words for a veiled and intricate communication style. Much like other linguistic constructs, the expression of sarcasm, as an integral part of the linguistic family, is shaped not only by the selection of words but also by syntactic functions, namely adjunct, specifier, and complement. These three functions serve to buttress sarcastic expressions, each playing distinct roles. An adjunct, an optional element, imparts additional information that can contribute to the sarcastic tone by introducing unexpected or ironic details. A specifier, a type of determiner or modifier, offering more information about a noun, may enhance the sarcastic effect through the use of specific or unexpected descriptors. A complement, a necessary element completing the meaning of a verb or noun, holds the potential to encapsulate the core ironic meaning.

The explanation regarding the influence provided by these three syntactic structures actively demonstrate that sarcastic expressions can contain complex adjuncts, complements, or specifiers. The use of those linguistic structures can involve the complexity of a particular reason which allows speakers to create sarcasm with layers of meaning, subtlety, and irony. The intentional manipulation of language, coupled with the strategic placement of these elements, contributes to the richness and complexity of sarcastic expressions.

Sarcasm is a ubiquitous element of everyday conversation, appearing in arguments, jokes, and even casual interactions. People often use sarcasm as a tool of humour or wit, or as a way to indirectly get a point across. It functions as a form of linguistic playfulness, allowing individuals to express contradiction or irony without resorting to overt criticism. In the realm of everyday communication, sarcasm acts as a social lubricant, promoting society through shared understanding and providing a humorous lens through which people interact. Whether it's a clever comment on a question or a clever refutation in a friendly discussion, sarcasm has become an integral part of everyday conversation.

Sarcasm is a prevalent feature in both popular and academic literature, including novels, movies, and TV programs. Sarcastic language, despite its vulgar and uncharacteristic use in literature, has long been considered a potent tool of language that can be used for both amusement and subtle social commentary. One of the popular series that adopted a large percentage of the expressions of sarcasm is *Friends* (1994-2004). Widely known for its sophisticated storytelling nuances, this sitcom tells the story of a group of friends grappling with the idiosyncrasies of coming of age in New York City. Among this ensemble of personalities, the one who shines brightest in the firmament of sarcasm is Chandler Bing.

The intricate syntactic analysis of sarcasm within linguistic frameworks remains relatively uncommon, despite extensive research in the broader field. Prevailing investigations into sarcasm have predominantly centered around pragmatic and semantic dimensions, sidelining detailed examinations of its syntactic underpinnings. This oversight is understandable given the multifaceted nature of sarcasm, wherein researchers have traditionally probed its manifestation through diverse linguistic elements such as word choice, intonation, pragmatics, and social context.

Nevertheless, the dynamic nature of the linguistics field continues to pave the way for evolving research trends. Emerging studies may soon delve deeper into the syntactic structures of sarcasm, addressing the existing gap in our understanding. A notable exploration in this direction is the work of Michaelis and

Feng (2015). Their research centers on sarcastic interrogative sentences, particularly examining the English Split Interrogative. Utilizing Sign-Based Construction Grammar, the study dissects the syntactic, semantic, and discourse-pragmatic properties of the Split Interrogative as a vehicle for sarcastic expression.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sarcasm in linguistic research is familiar with the analysis toward semantics and pragmatics approach, additionally includes a recent study carried out by Ramadhan and Setiasari (2023), where the research distinguishes various types of sarcasm and elucidates the unique functions each serves within the narrative. A parallel discussion on sarcasm in *Friends* comes from Garbe (2020), who deviates slightly from categorization to delve into the strategies employed by characters in the series when delivering sarcastic remarks, unraveling the underlying goals of these verbal manoeuvres. Concurrently, pragmatic studies exploring sarcasm in Friends have garnered attention from academics such as Qiu (2019)and Anssari & Hadi (2021). Both studies adopt Grice's (1975) cooperative principle as their analytical lens, focusing on the deliberate violation of these principles as characters employ sarcasm within the sitcom.

This paper advance research on sarcastic expressions uses the X-bar theory to analyze sarcasm from the perspective of syntactic structure. Several studies that have utilized the X-bar theory include the analysis of complexity which was carried out by Hutami and Mulyadi (2021) with the object of the Banjar language Hamparan Perak dialect. The analysis focused on complex predicates, where the results showed that complexity is formed by verbs which occur when two or more verbs are attached side by side and both act as a single predicate. Another work was conducted by Imamah and Subiyanto (2021), where the analysis focused on the grammatical transformation of adjuncts in nominal phrases from translated texts. The research results reveal three types of shifts of adjectival adjuncts, namely when the adjunct is omitted, shifts into a complementizer phrase, and shifts into a prepositional phrase. A similar study was conducted by Anam (2022) which comprises the same text in English and its Indonesian translation as the data. The research findings indicate various variations in constructing constituents for phrases in both languages. Two different constituents can create a new phrase without a head representing the phrase, and a preposition in Bahasa Indonesia can precede the adjectives.

While previous research on sarcasm has primarily concentrated on semantic and pragmatic analyses, there is a notable lack of studies examining sarcasm through the lens of syntax. Additionally, studies employing X-bar theory, such as those by Hutami and Mulyadi (2021) on complex predicates, Imamah and Subiyanto (2021) on adjunct transformations, and Anam (2022) on bilingual syntactic variations, have not extended their focus to the syntactic structures underlying sarcastic expressions. This research addresses this gap by utilizing X-bar theory to analyze the syntactic structure of sarcasm, specifically examining complex adjuncts, specifiers, and complements, as reflected in Chandler Bing's sarcastic remarks in *Friends*. The novelty of this study lies in its application of X-bar theory to sarcasm, offering a purely syntactic perspective on how sarcastic expressions are constructed.

UNDERLYING THEORIES

The X-bar theory was developed by Noam Chomsky in the 1970s and was originally used for phrase-level analysis. The X-Bar schema, which represents the hierarchical structure of phrases, is made up of various levels or "bars" that help linguists systematically analyse the internal structure of phrases. The X-Bar

schema is recursive, meaning that the same structure can be used at different levels of complexity, accommodating natural language syntax.
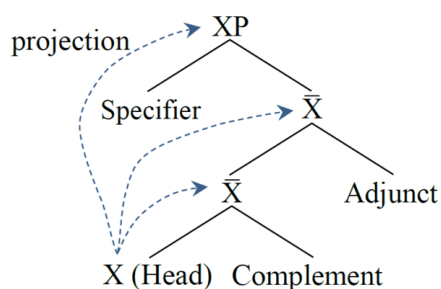

Figure 1: X-bar Schema (X-Bar Theory 2023)

The X-bar schema follows the head principle, consisting of a head and its surrounding components. XP represents the entire phrase and serves as the highest level in the projection. The head of XP is located at the minimum projection (x) and it is the core element of the phrase that gives the phrase its essential meaning. The relevant components are specifiers, complements, and adjuncts. Specifiers represent elements that modify or provide additional information about the head that is located at the first intermediate projection (x') at the left. Complements represent elements that complement or modify the head to complete its meaning, located at the minimum projection and standing beside the head. Adjuncts, optional elements, modify the phrase and will not change the meaning if it is removed, located at the second intermediate projection (x'). The example can be seen in Figure 2.
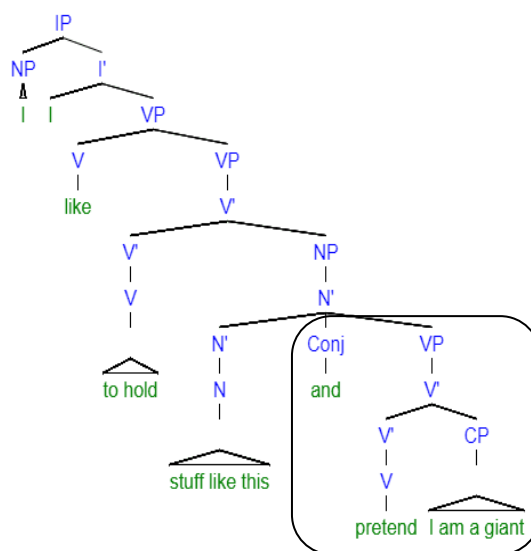

Figure 2: X-Bar Tree of "Sometimes I like to hold stuff like this and pretend I'm a giant".

Figure 2 shows a complex adjunct in that sarcastic expression. Without using the adjunct "and pretend I am a giant.", the sentence already shaped the sarcasm, but it will lack of sarcastic tone. The adjunct provides additional context that amplifies the absurdity and exaggeration, both of which are hallmarks of sarcastic expression. This demonstrates that complex adjuncts contribute not only to the syntactic structure but also to the overall effect and impact of the sarcasm. By

extending the utterance, the adjunct highlights the speaker's intent to ridicule or mock in a more vivid and engaging manner. In addition to adjuncts, this study will analyze complex specifiers and complements to explore how these syntactic elements further shape and support sarcastic expressions.

Expanding on this line of inquiry, this research will leverage the utilization of the X-bar theory to dissect adjuncts in sarcastic expressions uttered by the character Chandler Bing. This study aims to analyze the complexity of the three functional structures present in sarcastic expressions by Chandler Bing and to understand the extent to which these structures influence the conveyed sarcastic expressions. By applying the X-bar theory, the research aims to provide a detailed examination of the syntactic structures underlying Chandler Bing's sarcastic utterances, shedding light on the intricate use of adjuncts, specifiers, and complements in crafting sarcasm within the linguistic framework. The investigation seeks not only to categorize the types of complexity employed but also to unravel the syntactic intricacies that contribute to the overall effectiveness of Chandler Bing's sarcastic expressions.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was focusing on the complexity of adjuncts, complements, and specifiers of sarcasms. It used a descriptive qualitative approach. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative methods rely on text and image data, making them ideal for linguistic studies that aim to explore syntactic, semantic, or stylistic features in depth. This approach was chosen to analyze the syntactic structure of sarcasm using the X-bar theory, where the forms of the data were textual. Qualitative approaches allow researchers to consider idiomatic variations in syntactic structures used to convey sarcasm. This included examining the use of certain syntactic structures. It provided a deeper understanding of how sarcasm is constructed linguistically.

This research involved multiple stages, beginning with the collection of data, followed by the analysis and presentation of the data. Data collection was carried out by documenting the utterance, including capturing and recording the scenes where the sarcasms were being delivered. The research object obtained from secondary data sources in the form of videos of the TV series *Friends* was simultaneously observed, and the sarcastic expressions made by the character Chandler Bing are noted. This selected expression contained a complex set of sentence structures.

The next step was data analysis. Considering that the research focused on analyzing the complexity of adjuncts, complements, and specifiers, X-bar analysis was used more efficiently. In this step, X-bar theory was utilized to analyze the complex syntactic structure of selected sarcastic expressions rather than entire sentences. This allowed for more efficient analysis. The data analysis process followed the framework proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which involves three concurrent stage: reducing the data to focus on relevant patterns, presenting the data in an organized format, and drawing conclusions that are repeatedly verified against the data.

Data presentation involved categorizing sarcastic expressions based on their syntactic complexity. The results of the analysis included the sarcastic expressions, accompanied by the X-Bar schema derived from the analysis of phrase structure. The discussion delves into the types of words contributing to the complexity and elucidates how they influence the conveyance of sarcastic expressions. This step aligns with Miles and Huberman's (1994) emphasis on data display and interpretation, ensuring clarity and facilitating meaningful insights into the syntactic features of sarcastic expressions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

As mentioned in the introduction, the structure of constructing sarcastic expressions is similar to sentences and phrases in general. This structure is related to grammatical functions, namely adjuncts, complements, and specifiers. This study identified functional categories of complex adjuncts, complements, and specifiers in English sarcasm uttered by the character Chandler Bing. These functional categories are evident in the form of different types of phrases.

Complex Specifiers

In the examined data, several sarcastic expressions containing complexity in the specifier function structure were identified. Some examples of the data are as follows.

(1) Chandler : Hey, anybody know a good tailor?
    Joey : You need some clothes altered?
    Chandler : No, no, I'm just looking for a man *to draw on me with chalk.*
(2) Kathy : No, but that's bad.
    Chandler : Yes, okay. Here's what we do. We forget it happens, okay?
    Kathy : What?
    Chandler : We swallow our feelings, *even if it means we're unhappy forever.*
(3) Jill : Would you like to call somebody?
    Chandler : Yeah, about 300 guys *I went to high school with.*
(4) Ross : Oh and it gets worse.
    Chandler : Oh my God! You can do the duet *of Ebony and Ivory* all by yourself.
(5) Chandler : Could you want her more?
    Ross : Who?
    Chandler : D the sarcastic sister *from what's happened.*

As reported by the analysis conducted using the X-bar theory schema, it was revealed that there are several phrase categories contributing to the formation of these complex specifiers, which will be detailed in the discussion below.

Sarcasm (1): *to draw on me with chalk.*

In datum number (1), it can be observed that the sarcastic expression begins at the beginning of the sentence, where there is a denial followed by "just looking for a man," further followed by a clause in the form of a combination of phrases. The phrase (infinite phrase) "to draw on me with chalk" in the sarcastic sentence "No, no, I'm just looking for a man to draw on me with chalk" is a complex specifier that includes a verb phrase. This sentence contains the verb phrase "to draw", which seems to be a desired action by Chandler, and two prepositional phrases, "on me" and "with chalk". Here, "to draw on me with chalk" specifies the man that Chandler's looking for. "on me" acts as a prepositional complement construct of preposition and noun to indicate the surface on which the drawing is made. Meanwhile, "with chalk" acts as a prepositional adjunct construct of a preposition and an object pronoun. The use of the preposition "with" introduces an additional layer indicating the tool used for drawing, which is chalk. This structure conveys a seemingly absurd or sarcastic desire for unconventional interaction.

The word category used in this complex specifier includes both verbs ("draw") and prepositions ("on," "with"), through multiple elements working together to create subtle meanings that are represented by a syntactic structure to convey. The speaker uses the simple verb "draw," but combines it with an unexpected and whimsical context to emphasize the ironic tone of the expression,

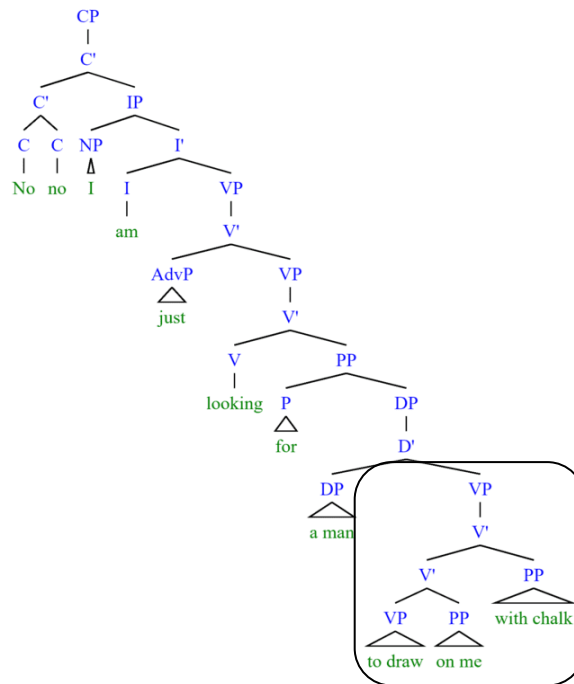the interaction of these components makes the utterance emphasize humour and sarcasm

Figure 3: X-Bar Tree of "a man to draw on me with chalk".

Sarcasm (2): *Even if it means we're unhappy forever*.

Dialogue (2) happens when Chandler has an affair with Joey's girlfriend then he suddenly realizes he did the wrong thing but can't lie about his feelings. The sentence "it means we're unhappy forever" within the sarcastic statement "We swallow our feelings, even if it means we're unhappy forever. Sound good?" serves as a complex specifier, adding depth and irony to the speaker's message. In this syntax, "it means" acts as a determining phrase completed with a verb "means" indicating the result or interpretation of a previous action/clause. Using the pronoun "it" introduces a degree of abstraction, creating a sense of uncertainty as to what is causing the misfortune. Following this, the second determiner phrase constructs complex word categories "we're unhappy forever" characterizes the consequence described in the determiner phrase. This phrase contains a verb and adjective phrase as well. The adjective "unhappy" describes an emotional state, and the adverb of this adjective, "forever", adds a temporal dimension, emphasizing the permanent nature of the hypothetical misfortune. This complex specifier effectively expresses Chandler's sarcasm and emphasizes the absurdity of the proposed outcome.

This phrase represents a combination of two determiner phrases, a conjunction, and an adjective phrase is used strategically to create nuanced expressions. The determiner phrase "it means'' introduces a conditional interpretation, and the adjective phrase ``we're unhappy' forever" further explains the undesirable outcome. This deliberate use of language and grammatical structure contributes to an overall tone of sarcasm and satire, emphasizing the exaggerated and unrealistic nature of the proposal. The juxtaposition of the formal-sounding "it means" and the adjectival phrase underscores the absurdity of sacrificing one's well-being for the sake of conforming to the implied expectation.
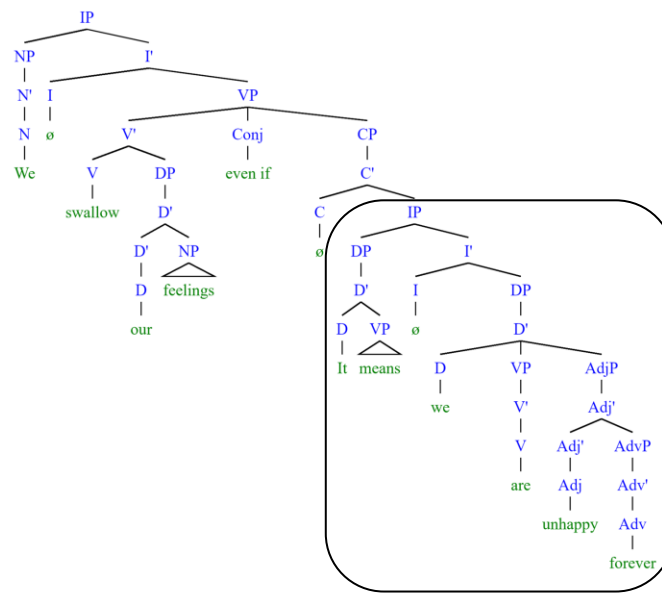
Figure 4: X-Bar Tree of "it means we're unhappy forever".

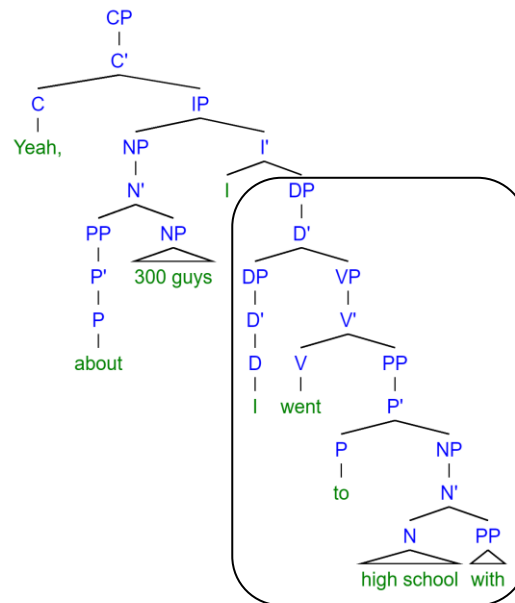Sarcasm (3): *I went to high school with.*

Figure 5: X-Bar Tree of "I went to high school with".

In dialogue (3), Chandler is stuck in an ATM center with a model and he is very nervous about it. In Chandler's sarcastic response to Jill's question in the dialogue, "Yeah, about 300 guys I went to high school with," the clause "I went to high school with" serves as a complex specifier by adding a layer of humour and exaggeration to his statement. This expression is built from a determiner phrase and a prepositional phrase. The determiner phrase "I" establishes the subject, indicating that this expression involves Chandler who is also the speaker. The verb "went" describes the action or experience, specifying that Chandler attended high school. The prepositional phrase "to high school with" introduces additional

information about the relationship, clarifying that the connection exists between Chandler and the 300 guys from high school. The combination of these phrases forms a cohesive unit that humorously exaggerates the extent of Chandler's acquaintances from his high school days.

Chandler's use of the determiner phrase, verb phrase, and prepositional phrase combination contributes to the sarcastic and humorous tone of the dialogue. The determiner phrase anchors the statement in Chandler's personal experience, the verb phrase provides the action, and the prepositional phrase adds specificity to the nature of the connection. This humour arises from the absurdity of Chandler claiming to know such a large number of people from his high school days and the implied impracticality of wanting to call all of them.

Complex Adjuncts   In addition to complex specifiers, the emergence of complex adjuncts was also found in some sarcastic expressions by Chandler Bing as follows.

(6) Joey   : Why don't you go see Frankie? My family's been goin' to him forever. He did my first suit when I was 15. No, wait, 16. No, 'scuse me, 15. (still confused) All right, when was 1990?

Chandler : Okay. *You have to stop the Q-tip when there's resistance!*

(7) Phoebe   : Would you stop already? Get out of the bitter barn and play in the hay.

Chandler : Oh, you're right I, I should play in the hay. *Forget about the fact that I just dropped 400 dollars to replace a bracelet that I hated to begin with.* Bring on the hay.

(8) Joey   : You didn't cry when Bambi's mother died?

Chandler : Yes, *it was very sad when he stopped drawing the deer.*

(9) Monica   : Did you bring my shoes?

Chandler : *Why don't you check in my saddle bag while I chew on a bail of hay?*

(10) Chandler : Rach, Rach, we gotta settle.

Rachel   : Settle what?

Chandler : *The Jamestown colony of Virginia, you see King George is giving us the land, so-*

Along the lines of complex specifiers, analysis conducted using the X-bar theory schema revealed that there are several phrase categories contributing to the construction of these complex adjuncts, which will be detailed in the discussion below.

Sarcasm (6): *the Q-tip when there`s resistance!*

In dialogue (6), Chandler comments on Joey sarcastically using "Okay. You have to stop the Q-tip when there's resistance!" The expression "the Q-tip when there`s resistance!" stands as a complex adjunct. This structure combines the determiner phrase "the Q-tip" and the complementizer phrase "there's resistance" which is presented by the conjunction "when". This adjunct is the only element to create a sarcastic form in this expression. The noun phrase is the core element that figuratively expresses the action of probing with a cotton swab. The inclusion of a complementizer phrase adds specific instructions and advises Joey to stop the action at the point of resistance. It demonstrates the similarity to the physical sensation one might feel when using a cotton swab. This combination of elements increases the complexity of adjuncts and provides a vivid and humorous way to convey the message.
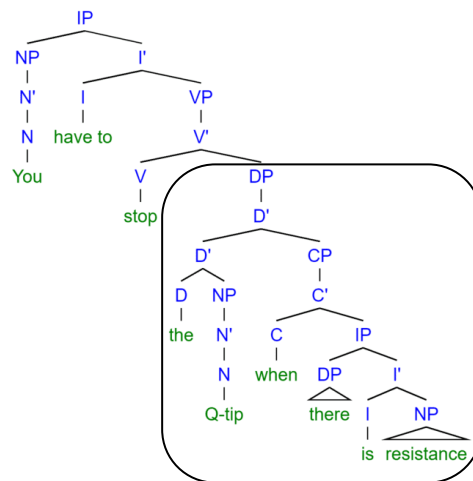
Figure 6: X-Bar Tree of "the Q-tip when there is resistance".

Analyzing the word categories in this complex adjunct, "the Q-tip" functions as a determiner phrase, and "when there's resistance" acts as a complementizer phrase. The determiner phrase provides the essential object of the action, while the complementizer phrase refines the instruction by specifying when to cease the action. This combination showcases how different word categories collaborate to create a layered and metaphoric expression of the wit and humour in Chandler's sarcastic comment.
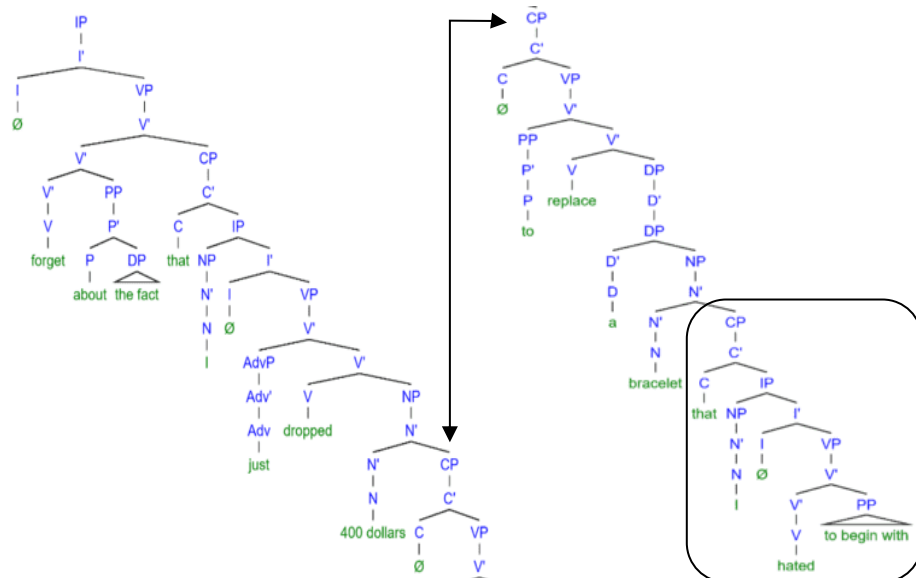
Sarcasm (7): *that I hated to begin with*

Figure 7: X-Bar Tree of "that I hated to begin with".

The second data (7) shows that Chandler responds to Phoebe's suggestion in the form of sarcasm. In the sarcastic statement "Forget about the fact that I just dropped 400 dollars to replace a bracelet that I hated to begin with. Bring on the hay." the phrase "that I hated to begin with" is considered a component of complex adjunct.

The clause "that I hated to begin with" forms a complex adjunct, with a relative pronoun or it is categorized as a determiner phrase ("that") introducing a relative clause constructed by two verb phrases ("I hated to begin with"). This construction adds further detail by explaining Chandler's initial feelings toward the bracelet. The inclusion of "to begin with" contributes to the complexity, suggesting a sense of continuity or persistence in Chandler's dislike for the bracelet. Together, these components create a nuanced and sarcastic expression, underscoring the irony of the situation and Chandler's humorous take on it.
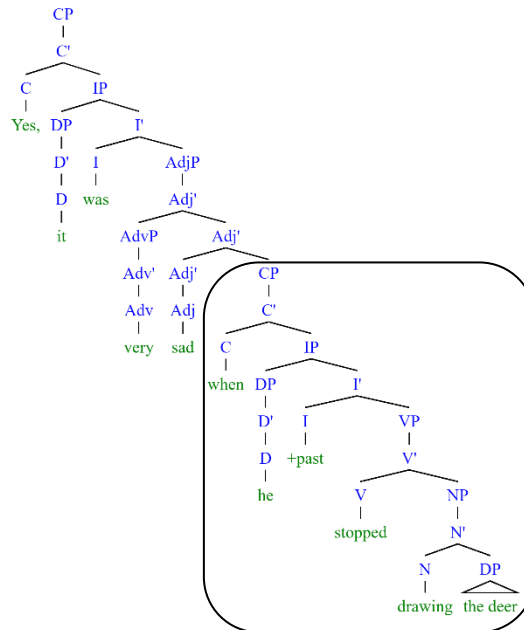
Sarcasm (8): *when he stopped drawing the deer.*

Figure 8. X-Bar Tree of "when he stopped drawing the deer".

The response Chandler gives to Joey in dialogue (8) shows a complex adjunct as the sarcastic element. In his sarcastic response, "Yes, it was very sad when he stopped drawing the deer," the clause "when he stopped drawing the deer" is analyzed as a complex adjunct, combining a conjunction, determiner phrase, and verb phrases. The conjunction provides temporal information or a specific period about the event. The conjunction followed by the determiner along with the verb "he stopped" specifies the action at the moment under which the sadness supposedly occurred for Chandler. Additionally, the noun phrase "drawing the deer" acts as the object of the preposition "when," stood by the noun and determiner phrase giving further detail about the specific action related to the previous phrase. The combination of these phrases creates a complex adjunct as a clause to modify the main clause. This adjunct plays an important role as the previous one, where it is the source of the sarcasm tone.

This complexity creates and enhances the sarcasm by introducing a sad explanation for the perceived sadness. Chandler cleverly uses this complex adjunct to misdirect the emotional weight that is felt by his friends by twisting his sadness to a different part of the movie rather than the real poignant moment in the movie. The juxtaposition of an emotional statement with a trivial reason for that emotion adds a layer of humour and sarcasm to the response.

Complex Complements

The complement is the important part of a sentence. This part also becomes a significant component in explicitly expressed sarcastic remarks. Below is some sarcasm by Chandler Bing that utilize complex complements.

(11) Monica : Look at you, you won't even look at him.
Chandler : Oh come on, tell me. *I could use another reason why women won't look at me.*

(12) Melanie : There's a little child inside this man.
Chandler : Yes, *the doctor says if they remove it, he'll die.*

(13) Monica : I wanna bet
Chandler : *I'm so confused as to what we've been doing so far.*

(14) Monica : Shut up! The camera adds ten pounds.
Chandler : OK, so how many cameras *were actually on you?*

(15) Phoebe : Why would you kill his fish?
Chandler : Because sometimes Phoebe, *after you sleep with someone, you have to kill a fish.*

In the same manner as complex specifiers and complex adjuncts, the findings of X bar theory analysis on complex complement revealed that there are several phrase categories contributing to the functional construction of complex complement. The discussion below will explain the findings.
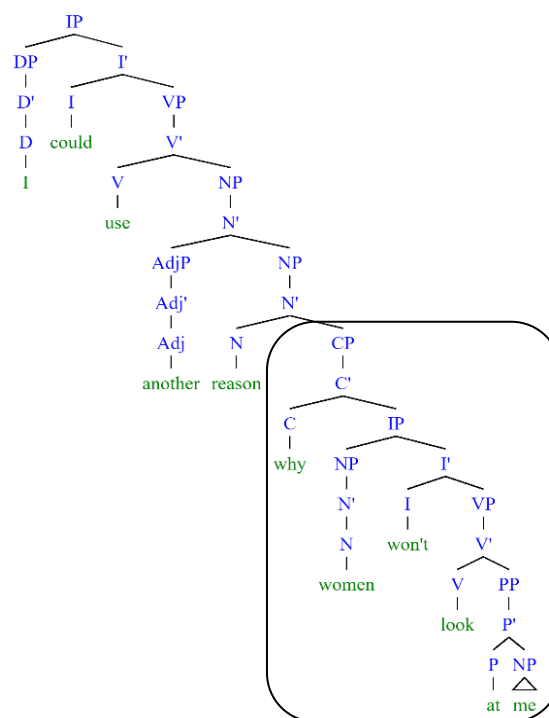
Sarcasm (11): *why women won't look at me.*

Figure 9: X-Bar Tree of "why women won't look at me".

The dialogue in number (11) is about Rachel hesitating to tell Chandler about her dream to Chandler and then Monica teases her, the response they get from Chandler is sarcasm. Chandler's sarcastic response to Monica's statement to Rachel during the conversation is: "Oh, come on, tell me. I could use another reason why women won't look at me." The clause "why women won't look at me" uses different word categories to convey a nuanced meaning. It serves as a complex complement to the built-in. This structure consists of a complementizer

"why", a noun phrase, and a verb phrase. The question word and noun combined "why women" become the subject and specify the group of people in this complement. The modal "won't" functions as a modal verb and in this context expresses a lack of ability or possibility. The verb phrase "look at me" describes an action or behaviour that the subject won't engage in.

The combination of these elements forms a cohesive unit that humorously suggests Chandler is looking for further reasons for his perceived lack of interest from women. Chandler's use of a combination of noun phrases, modal, and verb phrases contributes to the sarcastic and self-deprecating tone of his utterance. The noun phrase establishes the subject, the modal adds a layer of disbelief or humour, and the verb phrase describes the specific action that Chandler is wondering about. The humour in this case comes from Chandler's exaggerated concern about why women don't look at him, showing his self-awareness and ability to use words to make fun of himself.

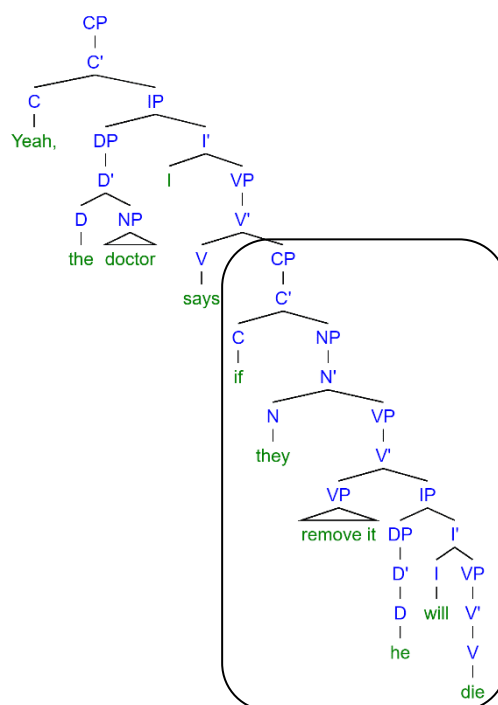Sarcasm (12): *the doctor says if they remove it, he'll die.*

Figure 10: X-Bar Tree of "the doctor says if they remove it, he'll die".

Chandler's next sarcasm is provided in dialogue (12) when it is a conversation between him and Joey's girlfriend, Melanie. In Chandler's clever confutation to Melanie's remark, "Yes, the doctor says if they remove it, he'll die." the clause "the doctor says they remove it, he'll die." is a subtle point in language and represents a complex complement of the functional syntactic features. As you can see in the X-bar diagram, this structure includes different word categories.

Chandler begins with a determiner phrase "the doctor," followed by a verb phrase "says if they remove it, he'll die." The main verb is "says," which is accompanied by a complementizer phrase "if they remove it." The complementizer "if" introduces a conditional clause. Within the clause, there is a noun phrase constructed with a verb, "they remove it," encompassing the pronoun "they," the verb "remove," and the object pronoun "it." Finally, the

sentence concludes with another inflectional phrase "he'll die," consisting of the pronoun "he," the modal "will," and the verb "die."

Chandler's use of a complex complement in this sentence allows for a humorous and exaggerated interpretation of Melanie's initial statement. The doctor's hypothetical removal of the "little child" is presented with flat humour, emphasizing the absurdity of the scenario. The linguistic structure, with its combined phrases and clauses, contributes to the comedic effect.
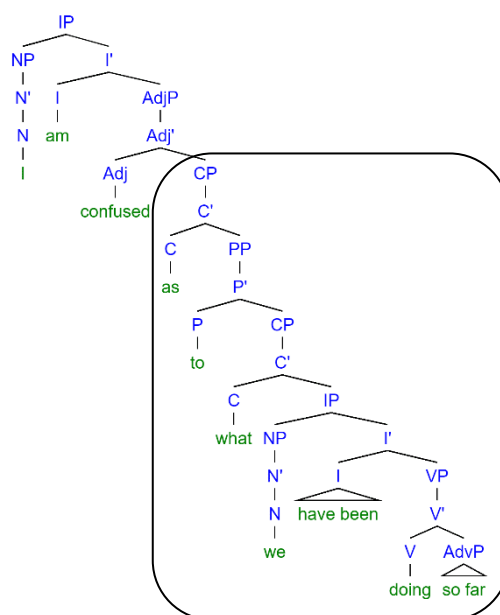
Sarcasm (13): *as to what we've been doing so far*.

Figure 11: X-Bar Tree of "as to what we've been doing so far."

A contrasting sentence structure shows in dialogue (13) when again, Chandler sarcastically responds to Monica. In Chandler's response to Monica's statement, "I wanna bet," where he says, "I'm so confused as to what we've been doing so far," the phrase "as to what we've been doing so far" functions as a complex complement in a form of a prepositional phrase, adding a layer of humour and emphasis to Chandler's confusion why Monica even wants to bet. This construction involves various word categories as provided in the x-bar schema.

The main structure of "to what we've been doing so far," starts with a noun phrase where the relative pronoun "what" introduces the clause. The rest of the phrase includes a verb phrase "we've been doing so far." Within the VP "we've", is a contraction of "we have," functioning as a pronoun refers to all of the people involved at that moment, "have been doing" is a past participle serving as the main verb, and "doing so far" is an adverbial phrase. The subordinating conjunction "as" introduces the complement, indicating the nature of Chandler's confusion. Chandler's choice of a complex complement reflects his comedic style, using language to playfully exaggerate his state of confusion. The structure of the sentence, with its noun phrase, verb phrase, and adverbial phrase combination, contributes to the overall humour. The use of the modal "I'm so confused" and the elaborate complement, create a humorous contrast with Monica's simple statement.

The findings of the current study, which explored how complex syntactic structures contribute to sarcasm and humor in Chandler Bing's dialogues, share

some similarities with Imamah (2021), Anam (2022), and Hutami (2021) . All these studies identify significant syntactic transformations or structures, with the first two focusing on shifts in adjuncts and phrase structures during translation. Similarly, the current study highlights the importance of syntactic structures, particularly complex specifiers, in shaping the meaning of sarcastic expressions. Like Imamah (2021) and Anam (2022), which identified the shifting of adjuncts into different structures, the current study shows how syntactic complexities, such as verb phrases and determiner phrases, play a key role in the expression of humor and exaggeration in sarcasm. These structural elements help convey the mocking tone of Chandler's sarcasm, much like how syntactic shifts in the previous studies contribute to changes in meaning and tone during translation.

However, there are key differences in the focus of the findings. While Imamah (2021) and Anam (2022) center around the shifts in grammatical structures during translation, specifically the omission or transformation of adjuncts and their syntactic roles, the current study emphasizes how complex syntactic structures specifically generate humor and sarcasm. Hutami (2021), which analyzed complex predicates in a regional dialect, also identifies structural complexities, but its focus on predicate formation contrasts with the current study's exploration of how syntax in sarcastic phrases creates humor. Overall, while all the studies highlight the role of syntax in conveying meaning, the current study contributes uniquely by focusing on the link between complex syntactic structures and the humor that sarcasm relies on, something the other studies do not directly address.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the all-embracing analysis of this comprehensive exploration into the complex syntactic structures, particularly the examination of adjuncts, complements, and specifiers within sarcastic expressions, has unveiled a rich level of complexity. The study clarifies that the intricate nature of these linguistic elements is not randomly used but rather meticulously sewn through different word and phrase categories. The analysis shows that most of the data with complex functional structures are headed by verb phrases, determiner phrases, and complementizer phrases with more than two elements being the construction. The findings convey the significant role played by these complex structures in forming the tone and diverse nuances of sarcasm. Moreover, the different complexity of these syntactic structures contributes significantly to the overall humorous effect. Essentially, the employment of the x-bar theory has proven instrumental in facilitating the exact analysis of the syntactic structure, allowing for a deep exploration of the complexities involved. By leveraging the x-bar theory, this study provides a structured framework that enhances our understanding of how the interplay of adjuncts, complements, and specifiers contributes to the construction of sarcasm. The identified syntactic complexities not only showcase the structural intricacies inherent in sarcastic expressions but also shed light on the profound impact such complexities wield in the creation of humour.

This research explored the intricate syntactic structures involved in sarcastic expressions, particularly focusing on the functional roles of adjuncts, complements, and specifiers. However, it is limited to the analysis of sarcastic utterances from a single character in a specific context, which may not fully capture the variety of sarcastic expression structures across different speakers, cultures, or languages. Additionally, the study employed the X-bar theory as its primary theoretical framework, which might restrict the analysis to syntactic aspects, with semantic and pragmatic considerations underexplored. Future

research could broaden the scope by integrating cross-linguistic comparisons, examining diverse cultural contexts, or combining pragmatic and semantic analyses. Such studies would enrich our understanding and knowledge of sarcasm and its complex linguistic manifestations while addressing the gaps left by this research.

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