

Shyness and Sarcasm Use: Is There a Stereotypical Relationship?

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Recent studies of sarcasm have addressed varying research questions. In particular, the relationship between shyness and sarcasm comprehension has received attention: some studies found that shy adults and children rate sarcasm as meaner than others.^{1,2} One study found shy children to be marginally less likely to use sarcasm,³ while another found a positive correlation between male shyness and aggressive humour, under which sarcasm was included.⁴ There has been little direct exploration of the relationship between adult shyness and sarcasm production, with no examination of the effect of stereotypes and other sociocultural factors. This study investigates whether adult sarcasm use is related to shyness, and whether there is an associated stereotype; in this presentation, I will outline the study concept and methodology.

I hypothesize that shy participants will report higher sarcasm use than outgoing participants, and that shy people are stereotypically viewed as more sarcastic. I will survey 80 undergraduate students on personal sarcasm use and shyness levels. Other cognitive variables will be examined, including personal and perceived cultural attitudes on shyness, outgoingness, and sarcasm, and perception of a societal relationship. To account for sociocultural influences, participants' gender and age demographic and family, language, and cultural background will be collected. Data will be analyzed for significant correlations.

This study will further our understanding of sarcasm use as it relates to cognitive and social variables. The results will allow further study of why – or why not – shy adults use more sarcasm, and what factors contribute to the stereotype or lack thereof.

Word count: 249

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