A three-way-between-subjects MANOVA was conducted with Completions, Selections, and Self-Report serving as the dependent variables and Gender, Age, and Urban serving as independent variables (as Urban was not significant, it is not discussed, though it was included in analyses). Following significant Wilks’ Multivariate Tests for Gender, Age, and a marginal interaction, between-subjects effects were examined (Table 2).

- Males made more sarcastic selections, reported using sarcasm more, and provided marginally more sarcastic completions than Females.
- There was a significant effect of Age on selections, with the Younger group selecting more sarcastic responses than the Older group.
- There was a marginal effect of Age on completions, though post-hoc tests were n.s.
- There was also a significant Age*Gender interaction for self-report, with Older Females reporting using sarcasm less often than Middle Females or Older Males.

For definitions of sarcasm, Females defined sarcasm as negative more often than Males. Additionally, sarcasm was defined as negative least often by the Younger group, followed by Middle, and the Older group defined it as negative most often (Table 1). No other effects were significant.

Table 2 Summary of univariate effects of Age, Gender, and Age*Gender on sarcasm use across measures.

Gender differences in sarcasm use were found, in line with prior research, with the largest differences in self-reported use. Sarcasm use also tended to decrease with age, with the largest differences in self-reported use particularly among Females. Both Females and the Older group—those who use it the least—defined sarcasm as negative more often, suggesting a possible influence of the social desirability of sarcasm use. These results highlight the complex and changing pragmatic influences that affect how sarcasm is perceived and used.

Conclusions

References