

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

In the digital era, communication has become more open, fast, and easy for many people to access through online platforms. Social media allows individuals from various backgrounds to participate in public discourse without the limitations of geography, time, or institutional gatekeeping. It has become an essential tool for communication and expression, creating ways for people to connect, share personal information, and actively participate in global public conversations (Bashir et al., 2025). The growth of digital platforms increases diversity and freedom of expression that become a complicated subject that requires to address by various fields or disciplines (Szinek, 2022). While these platforms let people speak freely, they also create new problems about how that freedom is used and controlled.

Among social media platforms, YouTube is no longer just a place to share videos; it has become a space for public discussion where people comment, debate, and share their opinions. The comments section provides a channel for viewers to interact not only with the content but also with one another, contributing to a form of digital conversation. YouTube comments are often studied in linguistics because they are interactive and contain complex forms of communication (Coats, 2025). In addition, the platform provides features that allow users to not only post but also rate and react

to comments, transforming the section into a collaborative and evaluative space for public opinion (Siersdorfer et al., 2010).

Although social media allows people to express themselves freely, the lack of strict rules often causes unwanted problems. In open forums such as comment sections, communication is not always constructive; it can become emotionally charged, aggressive, or even harmful. The Internet and social media have brought about various forms of communication, allowing people to share opinions widely and quickly. One of the most concerning forms of negative online expression is hate speech, which refers to any kind of expression that attacks or discriminates against individuals or groups based on personal attributes such as race, religion, gender, or ethnicity (Mondal et al., 2017). However, hate speech has become a modern problem for people and communities because of user's facelessness, freedom, and weak regulation (Perera et al., 2023). Hate speech has become a widespread problem, as more and more people use digital platforms to attack others based on race, gender, religion, or other identities. The spread of hate speech online has become a serious problem, prompting the scientific community and international institutions to formulate various initiatives to combat this type of content (Tontodimamma et al., 2021). As digital communication continues to grow, so does the need to understand how hate is constructed and conveyed through language.

Hate speech has become a controversial term today, with some supporting its regulation and others opposing it (Gorenc, 2022). Hate speech happens when someone

or a group says things to provoke, insult, or stir up anger against others because of their skin color, race, ethnicity, religion, or other reasons (Fauzi Wirahyuda & Nursapia Harahap, 2024). The presence of hate speech on social media is a complicated issue, as it leads users to post hateful content in the comment sections (Poletto et al., 2021). Hate speech can appear in many online spaces, but it tends to circulate more quickly on social media, where emotional reactions and provocation are more common (Matamoros-Fernández & Farkas, 2021; Zhang & Luo, 2019). The design of these platforms, along with the way users interact on them, makes social media a particularly effective place for the rapid spread of hateful content (Schmid et al., 2024). On the other hand, studies indicate that user comments at the bottom of webpages receive minimal attention (Jörg Haßler et al., 2019). Which may result in hate speech in comments being overlooked or less recognized compared to original posts.

Comments section on digital platforms has initially become one of the main part for the broadcast of hate speech. These spaces usually have little moderation and let users post comments anonymously or with little responsibility. The anonymity and distance of online interactions can make people feel braver to show hostility that they would normally hide in face-to-face situations (Ismail et al., 2024). Social media can serve as a powerful tool for information exchange, yet many users exploit it as a medium to attack others or disseminate hate speech (Fauzi & Harahap, 2024, p. 1866). YouTube, in particular, presents a unique environment in which comment threads under popular or controversial videos become highly reactive, emotionally charged spaces.

When many people can see the comments, talk with each other, and share strong opinions, these comment sections can become places where hate speech grows easily.

A clear example of online hate speech can be seen in the comment section of a YouTube video that features a discussion on *The Woke Agenda*, where Douglas Murray is one of the speakers. The video discussed about topic that claimed to be a sensitive topic, such as the Identity of politics, the *culture of cancel*, and radical ideologies. These topics often cause strong public reactions. Many of the comments under the video show not only disagreement but also sarcasm, mockery, and harsh language. The responses of the video produce emotional and prejudices attitudes, creating comments section to a useful source for studying how hate speech appears and how it is expressed through language.

The word *woke agenda*, along with *woke*, *wokeness*, and *wokery*, was first used in Black slang to describe someone who is well-informed and conscious of social issues (Editor, 2017). Woke is closely connected to Black consciousness and the fight against racism. It began as Black slang and was first mentioned in popular culture in the spoken-word part at the end of Lead Belly's 1938 protest song *Scottsboro Boys* (Cammaerts, 2022). The term *wokeness* and *woke* have been put up by the right wings and utilized as political weapons at the same time. They shifted away from their original meaning in the civil rights movement and became insults toward people who fight against fascism, racism, and other forms of injustice and discrimination. These terms are now often used to imply an excessive or extreme progressive reaction

(Cammaerts, 2022). It focuses on social justice and inequality, with a strong emphasis on intersectionality. This means that different social factors, like race, gender, and class, are connected and affect how people or groups experience the world (Phiri, 2023). *Wokeness* has grown into a topic in the British press and has developed into a broader discussion in Western media. In the early 20th century, Black Americans who were aware of local social and political issues were described as "*woke*". The term has since changed, becoming an aspect of a more comprehensive concept of social justice. Ideas often associated with being *woke* include progressive movements such as anti-racism, anti-colonialism, anti-fascism, anti-capitalism, anti-sexism, anti-ableism, environmentalism, feminism, gender inclusivity, and support for LGBTQ+ rights (Smith et al., 2023). However, in recent years, the term has become more politicized and used as a weapon, especially by conservative groups, to discredit social justice movements. Negative phrases such as *woke mob*, *woke agenda*, and *woke insanity* are used to criticize efforts to address structural inequalities and to portray the people involved as having harmful intentions (Cammaerts, 2022). This perspective seems to be effective, as many people view *wokeness* as both a threat and an ideology. For instance, *wokeness* was identified as the third most troubling ideology among 20 in Britain, surpassing concerns like sexism, ageism, and homophobia, according to a poll conducted by the Centre for Policy Studies (Smith et al., 2023).

This study focuses on analyzing hate speech found in the comment section of a YouTube video that discusses *The Woke Agenda*. The analysis applies the hate speech

typology proposed by Mondal, Silva, and Benevenuto (2017) to classify the targets of hate based on identity categories such as race, religion, gender, and others. In broaden the explanation of how hate speech is expressed by language, this study utilize concept of linguistic realization, which focuses at how definition and aspect such as attitude are represented through lexical and forms of syntactic. This method reveals how hate speech is constructed in online conversation by analyzing word choices, phrase patterns, and sentence structures that express hate or prejudice.

By combining these two perspectives, this research aims to examine both the types of hate speech and how they are expressed linguistically in YouTube comments on *The Woke Agenda*. Since online hate is often difficult to understand and indirect, focusing on linguistic realization helps identify not only what kind of hate is expressed but also how it is formed and support through language in digital interactions. Some examples of hate speech in YouTube comments can be seen below.

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Figure 1. 1 Preliminary Data Hate Speech - Gender

One example of gender-based hate speech can be seen in the following comment, “You know what else is a red flag? A female boss.” The comment appears to show a mocking or insulting women, suggesting that having a boss in female gender is unpleasant, negative and unwelcome. Mondal, Silva, and Benevenuto (2017) define gender-based hate speech as language that discriminates against people based on their gender and frequently promotes harmful stereotypes. This comment implies that women are not suitable for leadership positions, which reinforces sexism and the belief that men are more capable leaders. It not only insults women in leadership roles but also encourages gender bias in the workplace. From the perspective of language, this statement displays hate speech in both lexical and syntactic forms. At the lexical level, expressions such as *female boss* and *red flag* are often used in a way that suggests something unfavorable. In the comments, these phrases hint that a woman in a leadership role is seen as unreliable or not fit for the position. At the syntactic level, the use of a rhetorical interrogative sentence (*You know what else is a red flag?*) emphasizes sarcasm and strengthens the negative attitude toward women in power. This example shows that hate speech can be realized through word choice and sentence structure that reflect bias and discrimination.

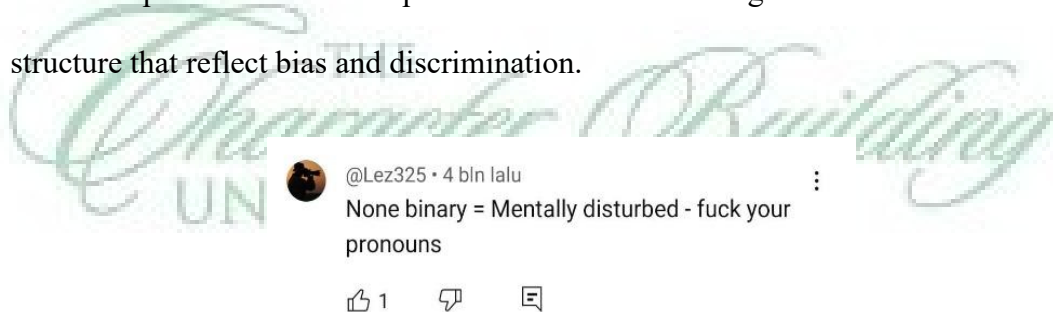


Figure 1. 2 Preliminary Data Hate Speech - Disability

One example of disability-based hate speech is the comment, *Non-binary = Mentally disturbed, fuck your pronouns*. This comment obviously offends persons whose gender is non binary by comparing their gender identification with a mental disorder or mental illness. Mondal, Silva, and Benevenuto (2017) define one of the kind of hate speech such as disability-based hate speech where the language that attacks people based on their physical or mental problems and generates negative stereotypes. This comment spreads discrimination by suggesting that being *non-binary* is a mental disorder, which denies gender diversity. It not only attacks individuals but also encourages intolerance toward the *LGBTQ+* community. From a perspective of language, this comment contains hate speech in both lexical and syntactic forms. At the lexical level, the words *mentally disturbed* and *fuck your pronouns* contain strong negative and offensive meanings that express anger and rejection. On the grammatical level, a line like *fuck your pronouns* comes out as a direct burst of anger. This example shows that hate speech can be realized through word choice and sentence structure that express hostility and discrimination.

To conclude, this research analyzes hate speech in YouTube comments on Douglas Murray's *The Woke Agenda*. It identifies different types of hate speech using Mondal, Silva, and Benevenuto's (2017) typology and examines how these hate expressions are shown through lexical and syntactic features.

1.2 The Problems of Study

1. What types of hate speech are found in the YouTube comments on Douglas Murray's video *The Woke Agenda*?
2. How is hate speech linguistically realized in the YouTube comments on Douglas Murray's video *The Woke Agenda*?

1.3 The Objectives of Study

1. To categorize the different kinds of hate speech expressed in the YouTube comments on Douglas Murray's video, *The Woke Agenda*.
2. To clarify the linguistic representation of hate speech in YouTube comments, highlighting the utilization of words, phrases, and expressions that show hatred or prejudice

1.4 The Scope of Study

The focus of this study is limited to examining hate speech in the comment section of Douglas Murray's YouTube video *The Woke Agenda*. The study uses Mondal, Silva, and Benevenuto's (2017) typology to identify and categorize several forms of hate speech based on factors such as race, gender, behavior, and other characteristics of society. The study also looks at how hateful remarks show up in the language. It pays attention to the words people choose. It also notices how the phrases are formed. It also notes the shape of each sentence. The analysis only uses comments

that show hate in a clear way or in a subtle way. Comments that do not show hostility are left out.

1.5 The Significances of Study

This study is considered to be useful for analyzing hate speech. The significances of this study can be divided into two categories:

1. Theoretically

This study expands to the academic discussion of hate speech on the internet especially in social media by drawing on Mondal, Silva, and Benevenuto's (2017) categorization of hate speech as its theoretical foundation. It also uses the concept of linguistic realization to describe how hate speech is conveyed through language, focusing on lexical and syntactic elements such as word choice, phrase construction, and sentence structure. By combining these two perspectives, this study strengthens the theoretical understanding of how hate speech works both linguistically and categorically in online discourse. It also explains how different types of hate speech, such as those targeted against race, gender, or religion, convey itself using unique language patterns. This study contributes to the literature on digital platform such as social media especially YouTube comment and discourse analysis by focusing on the grammar and syntax of hate speech in online forums.

2. Practically

This study provides useful information for content moderators, regulators, and social media companies looking to develop more effective ways to recognize and address hate speech on the internet. Platforms such as YouTube can enhance their moderation systems by categorizing various types of hate speech and understanding how these expressions contribute to polarization in public discourse. This study can also be useful for people who want to raise awareness about how online hate speech affects others. The findings may help encourage better behavior when people interact on the internet and make it easier for discussions about sensitive issues, including those linked to the woke agenda, to stay more respectful.

