

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

Language plays a crucial role in human interaction, functioning as a primary medium through which individuals express ideas, emotions, attitudes, and judgments (Wardhaugh, 2010). In contemporary society, the function of language has expanded beyond face-to-face interaction into digital communication, particularly through social media platforms. Social media enables users to communicate instantly, publicly, and without strict regulation, allowing language to be used freely in expressing opinions toward social issues and public figures. However, this freedom often results in the emergence of harmful linguistic practices, one of which is hate speech.

Hate speech has become a significant phenomenon in online communication. It refers to expressions that insult, demean, or attack individuals or groups based on certain characteristics, identities, or alleged behaviors (Brown, 2017). In digital spaces, hate speech is not always expressed explicitly through offensive words; it may also appear in the form of accusations, insinuations, mockery, or emotionally charged statements whose meanings can only be fully understood through context. This makes hate speech a relevant object of linguistic study, particularly within the field of pragmatics, which focuses on meaning in context and speaker intention (Yule, 1996).

Social media platforms such as Instagram play a central role in the circulation of hate speech. Instagram allows users to comment freely on photos and videos shared by others, including celebrities (Hu et al., 2014). Due to their popularity and visibility, celebrities are particularly vulnerable to public scrutiny and hostile discourse. Korean celebrities, in particular, often attract intense attention from global audiences, resulting in both admiration and excessive criticism. Their online presence frequently becomes a space where netizens express emotional reactions, moral judgments, and negative assumptions.

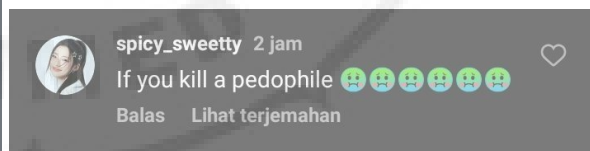
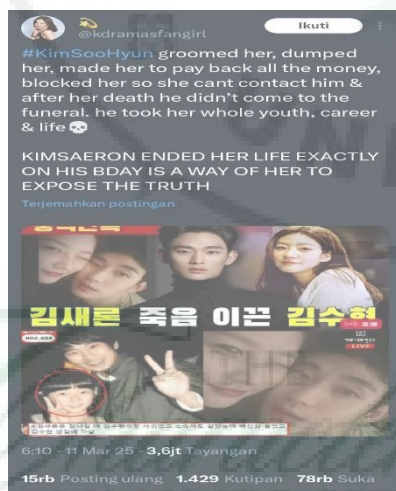
One notable case that illustrates this phenomenon is the controversy surrounding Korean actor Kim Soo Hyun following the death of actress Kim Sae Ron. The incident sparked widespread discussion and speculation among netizens, many of whom directed hateful comments toward Kim Soo Hyun on Instagram. These comments included accusations, insults, and moral condemnation related to alleged inappropriate behavior. The volume and intensity of these comments indicate that Instagram has become a site of unfiltered hate speech, making it a suitable platform for linguistic analysis.

Understanding hate speech in this context requires more than identifying offensive words. Hate speech often operates pragmatically through implied meanings, assumptions, and intentions. Pragmatics, as defined by Yule (1996), examines how speakers convey meaning beyond literal expressions and how hearers interpret utterances based on context. Within pragmatics, speech act theory is particularly relevant, as it explains how utterances function as actions. Austin (1962) distinguishes speech acts into locutionary,

illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, while Kreidler (2002) emphasizes that utterances carry intentions such as accusing, blaming, mocking, or insulting, which are central to identifying hate speech.

This study also adopts Mondal et al.'s (2017) classification of hate speech, which categorizes hate speech based on the targeted aspects, such as behavior, gender, physical appearance, or social class. This framework allows for systematic identification of the forms of hate speech present in online comments. When combined with pragmatic analysis, it enables a deeper understanding of how hate speech is constructed and what communicative purposes it serves.

Example of the preliminary data:



The relationship between Kim Sae Ron, who was 15, and Kim Soo Hyun, who was 27, has faced controversy due to their age difference and accusations of inappropriate conduct. Her tragic death on Kim Soo Hyun's 37th birthday has raised concerns about the pressures of their relationship and the mental health challenges in the entertainment industry.

This comment sentence is netizen hatred, which can be seen from the words **"If you kill a pedophile"** containing negative words. By adding a nausea emoji to the comment, such as disgust, regarding sensitive cases such as alleged abuse or inappropriate relationships. In Mondal's theory (2017), hate speech and Kreidler's theory (2002) include rude and disrespectful comments, category behavior because it attacks someone based on the alleged act (pedophilia), and is included in the intention of this hate speech accusing.

Such examples illustrate that hate speech on Instagram is not merely a matter of rude language but involves complex pragmatic mechanisms, including intention, implicature, and emotional expression. These mechanisms contribute to the harmful impact of hate speech, as they can damage reputations, influence public perception, and intensify online hostility. In the context of celebrities, hate speech can also have serious psychological and social consequences (Sunstein, 2017).

Several previous studies have examined hate speech on social media. Ghaffari (2022) analyzed celebrity discourse on Instagram with a focus on gender, digital femininity, and hate speech, highlighting how public figures are positioned within online power dynamics. Merlyn Titahena and Prihadi (2023) investigated hate speech directed at Indonesian celebrity Chandrika Sari Jusman using a descriptive qualitative approach. Similarly, Mubarok et al. (2024) analyzed hate speech in Instagram comment sections using speech act theory.

Although these studies provide valuable insights into hate speech on Instagram, most of them focus on Indonesian celebrities or emphasize general discourse analysis and illocutionary acts. There is still limited research that specifically applies pragmatic analysis to hate speech targeting Korean celebrities, particularly by integrating hate speech classification with speech act intention analysis. Moreover, few studies examine how contextual factors and public controversy shape the intentions behind hate speech in celebrity-related cases.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill this research gap by conducting a pragmatic analysis of hate speech directed at Kim Soo Hyun on Instagram. By identifying the types of hate speech and analyzing the intentions behind hateful utterances, this research aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of hate speech as a pragmatic phenomenon in digital communication. The findings are expected to enrich sociopragmatic studies and provide insight into how online hate speech operates within the context of Korean celebrity culture.

1.2. Problem of Study

In line with the background of the study, the problem is formulated as follows :

1. What types of hate speech are found in the comment section of Kim Soo Hyun's Instagram Posts?
2. How are the hate speeches categorized based on the intentions?

1.3. Objective of Study

Related to the problem of the study, the objective is formed as follows :

1. To find out the types of hate speech that may be found in the comments on the Posts of Kim Soo Hyun's Instagram Posts
2. To explain how hate speech is categorized using the intentions in the comment section of Kim Soo Hyun's Instagram Posts

1.4. Scope of Research

In this study, limits the research to hate speech comments found in the comments column of Kim Soo Hyun's Instagram posts since election day from 20 January to 12 February 2025 with a pragmatic approach. This research analysis will use Mondal's (2017) theory to determine the types of hate speech and Kreidler's 2002 theory to explain the intent of hate speech.

1.5. Significance of the study

This research is expected to provide valuable contributions both theoretically and practically

1. Theoretically, the results of this study are expected to benefit English literature students who are interested in analyzing hate speech with information about theories and techniques for analyzing data.
2. Practically, the findings of this study are expected to encourage more in-depth research on various objects of hate speech through pragmatic analysis

