

Cultural and Social Reactions on TikTok: Hate Speech Against K-Pop Idols

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Abstract

Social media itself is a means of communication that is easily accessed by anyone, everyone is free to reveal anything through their social media accounts. This study aims to describe the motives of hate speech found on TikTok. Hate speech is contradicted to the concept of politeness in a language which is an indicator of linguistic elegance. TikTok is a social chain that aims to help account owners to share or upload photos to other users. This research used descriptive qualitative. Qualitative methodologies refer to research produces which produce descriptive data: people's own written or spoken words and behaviors. The data were analyzed by using the theory of pinker, 2011. The object of this study includes comments containing hate speech found on TikTok of @kep1bts. Based on the results of observations on TikTok, it was found that some of the following data include hate speech aimed at K-Pop idols and illocutionary comments. The results of the study indicate that the most common reason is sadism, making up 42% of the comments, where people enjoy causing emotional harm to others. Another 21% of the comments are due to instrumental violence, where people aim to hurt others for personal gain. Revenge motivates 16% of the comments, driven by personal grudges. Ideological reasons, at 11%, involve conflicts over beliefs or values. Power dynamics account for 10%, where commenters seek to dominate or feel superior to others.

Keywords: Hate Speech, TikTok, Sociolinguistics

INTRODUCTION

Sociolinguistics, as subfield of linguistics examines the interaction between language and society. Language serves not only as a means of communications but also reflects social organization, identity and interpersonal dynamics. Sociolinguistics explores how social factors like socio economic status, ethnicity, gender and context influence language use, perception and evolution. Hudson (1996) mentioned, sociolinguistics can be defined as the examination of languages within social contexts, aiming to contribute to the comprehension of foreign language instruction, the essence of language and its articulation, and the insight into societal dynamics. In essence, sociolinguistics delves into the ways in which language serves as a tool for interpersonal communication. It underscores the significance of language study due to its pervasive influence on society at large.

The field of sociolinguistics, deriving from the fusion of "socio," pertaining to social or societal elements, and "linguistics," referring to the study of language, focuses on elucidating the interplay between language and society. Sociolinguistics explores how language is used within society and how social factors

influence language variation and change. Hate speech, as a linguistic phenomenon, is deeply intertwined with sociolinguistics. It involves the study of how language is used to express hatred, hostility, or discrimination towards individuals or groups based on their identity, such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Sociolinguistic research sheds light on the various linguistic strategies used in hate speech, the social contexts in which it occurs, and its impact on both individuals and society. For example, sociolinguistic analysis can reveal how hate speech is employed to marginalize certain groups, reinforce power dynamics, or incite violence. Understanding the sociolinguistic aspects of hate speech is crucial for developing effective strategies to combat it and promote linguistic diversity and social harmony.

Sociolinguistic can be examined through several theoretical frameworks, notably influenced by Goffman E (1959). This theory focuses on human interaction and behaviour, particularly in-person interactions in which individuals coexist physically. Goffman E (1974) 's seminal contribution is critical for understanding the relationship between human behaviour and communication. He was notable for being the first scholar to use the metaphor of dramaturgy to acquire deeper insights into relationship dynamics and self-perception. Goffman's theoretical framework is a useful lens for analysing the differences in behaviour displayed by individuals and groups in social settings, particularly when it comes to the expression of hate speech. Individuals within a certain social environment, according to Goffman (1959: 24), impose "moral demands" on the audience in order to affect their reactions in a preset or socially acceptable manner. This framework supports in understanding why and how people engage in various behaviours, especially the use of hate speech, in social settings.

Global phenomena like K-pop and social media interact profoundly with the cultural and social dynamics in Asia, fostering significant cultural exchange, social influence, and activism. K-pop, a cornerstone of the Korean Wave or "Hallyu," serves as a powerful tool of soft power for South Korea, enhancing its cultural influence across the globe. By blending Western musical elements with traditional Korean music and other Asian influences, K-pop creates a hybrid culture that resonates widely, promoting a shared cultural experience and a sense of pan-Asian identity. This cultural export significantly shapes youth culture and identity, as fans across Asia emulate the fashion, behavior, and attitudes of K-pop idols. The highly organized K-pop fandoms, active on social media, create strong communities that often engage in social and political activism, leveraging their collective power for various causes.

Social media platforms like twitter, Instagram, and TikTok significantly enhance cultural exchanges by making Asian content globally accessible. This democratization of content promotes diverse interactions and mutual understanding. Viral trends from Asia can spread rapidly, influencing cultural practices and social norms. Social media also plays a crucial role in political expression in organizing protests, raising awareness and advocating for change. Additionally, it provides marginalized groups with support networks for connection and advocacy. The relationship between K-pop and social media intensifies their impact on Asia's cultural and social dynamics. K-pop artists utilize platforms such as YouTube, V live and Instagram to promote their work, engage with fans and maintain a global presence. This interaction enables K-pop fandoms to mobilize effectively, achieving significant social and economic influence and fostering a more interconnected Asian society. Hate speech, often manifesting as verbal rather than aggression, is used to assert dominance (Baryadi,2012), (Pranowo 2009), argues that rude behaviors stem from emotional impulsivity, prejudices and staunch defense of viewpoints, forming the basis of hate speech. Culpeper (2011) emphasizes the social significance of hate speech in public discourse and its importance for linguistic inquiry. Despite its prevalence across various domains, hate speech is rarely comprehensively analyzed. It intersects with disciplines such as social psychology, sociology, conflict resolution, and media studies. Understanding hate speech requires an interdisciplinary approach, considering its linguistic, social-psychological and legal dimensions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Types of Hate Speech

Hate speech, often perceived as a combination of hatred and speech, encompasses emotions and phrases that provoke negative feelings towards specific targets. It broadly includes slander, unfair treatment, dehumanization, demonization, and incitement to violence. Modalities and Benevento (2017) mentioned that hate speech could be categorized into eight types, race, behaviour physical appearance, class, gender, ethnicity, disability and religion.

2. Motives of Hate Speech

Investigating the motivation behind hate speech is crucial for understanding this harmful phenomenon. Motivations are complex, often stemming from biases, ideological beliefs, or socio-political grievances. Individuals or groups may use hate speech to assert dominance, reinforce social hierarchies, or support discriminatory agendas. Pinker (2011) categorizes hate speech into five types, instrumental violence, power dynamics, retaliation, ideological fervour and sadism.

a. *Instrumental Violence*

Instrumental violence denotes the use of violence to achieve secondary objectives, contrasting with reactive violence, which arises in response to perceived threats or provocations. Frightening entails instilling the belief in others that harmful actions will be carried out.

b. *Power*

The concept of power emerges when the perpetrator seeks to bolster or maintain their standing within the social hierarchy, as articulated by Pinker (2011).

c. *Revenge*

Revenge involves retaliating or penalizing someone for perceived or actual harm inflicted upon oneself. Hate speech may be employed as a tool to target the individual perceived as the source of offense. Perpetrators often employ a shared code understood by their peers.

d. *Ideology*

The dynamics of in-group and out-group distinctions are significant in human interactions and can lead to hate speech directed at individuals perceived as outsiders. Characteristics such as ethnicity, social status, appearance, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, and personality traits can heighten the risk of being targeted.

e. *Sadism*

Sadism, although a stark term, encapsulates the pleasure derived from causing physical or emotional harm to others. In the realm of social media, this may manifest as online harassment inflicted by individuals seeking entertainment or stimulation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This article is a descriptive qualitative research study that aims to examine and explain the reasons behind hate speech on a TikTok account that features videos of the Korean girl band LE SSERAFIM's performances. The data in this article consists of comments made by netizens on a TikTok account that features video content of LE SSERAFIM, a Korean girl band, performing. This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to comprehensively depict all aspects pertaining to the issue of investigation. Qualitative research is conducted in a real-life environment and aims to comprehend or interpret occurrences based on the significance that individuals attribute to these phenomena. The descriptive model is employed in this research due to the presence of elements that yield information about specific phenomena under investigation. This study examines the occurrence of hate speech by internet users on TikTok accounts. This study examines the underlying motivations behind hate speech in the language employed by online users, as well as the factors that drive internet users to engage in hate speech on social media. The findings of this research can be summarized as the outcomes of this case study.

The information for this article was gathered via observation and screenshot analysis. The screenshot data was presented in the form of a picture, with a description accompanying each image. Simultaneously, the observation data is recorded in a tabular format. The data collection process for this article involves the following steps. It mostly relies on documentary methodologies, utilizing only data that directly supports the study issue. The data for this research will be extracted from downloaded or screenshot images of comments made by TikTok users.

Upon completing the screenshot and observation, the researcher proceeded with the subsequent actions;

1. The process of demarcating the data according to their frequency of occurrence from the transcription.
2. Classify the identified data based on the research problem and
3. Make inferences based on the connections between data points.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Motives of hate speech

Table 1. The Total Number of Hate Speech Motives

No	Motives	Total
1	Instrumental violence	4
2	Power	2
3	Revenge	3
4	Ideology	2
5	Sadism	8
Total :		19

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the total number of hate speech motives as Instrumental Violence is 4, Power is 2. However, the Revenge is 3 and ideology is 2, and also the Sadism is 8. In addition, the total of hate speech motives occurrence in cultural and social reaction in TikTok is 19.

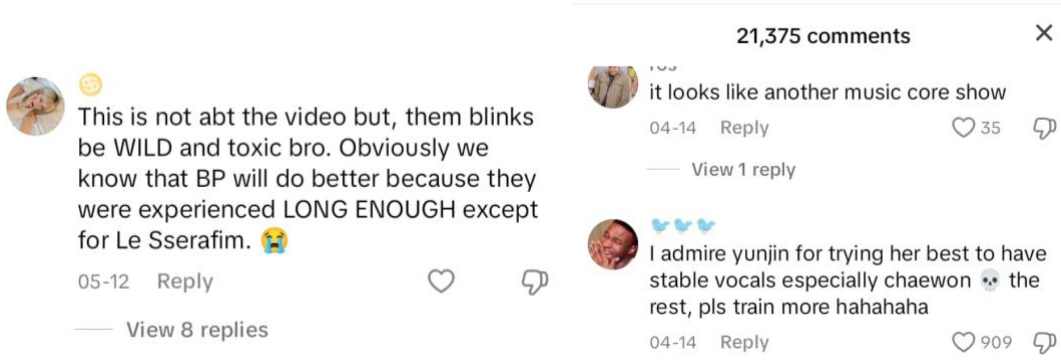
Table 2. Hate Speech Motives Utterances by Netizen

No	Motives	Hate speech utterances
1	Instrumental violence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. @ : “This is not about the video but, them blinks be WILD and toxic bro. Obviously we know that BP will do better because they were experienced LONG ENOUGH except for Le Sserafim. 2. @you: “It looks like another music core show” 3. @ : “I admire yunjin for trying her best to have stable vocals especially chaewon the rest, pls train more hahaha” 4. @ : “Oh they clearly weren’t ready for Coachella. Hybe shouldn’t have sent them. Poor girls, now they receive exaggerated

		amounts of hate, which can affect their career”
2	Power	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. @ : “Itulah pentingnya trainee bertahun tahun supaya gak ngandelin backtrack kenceng 2. @jill : “Its always “Backtrack” but not “they improved”
3	Revenge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. @Azty? : “COACHELLA, ARE YOU READY?!?” nuh uh, the question is, ARE YOU? 2. @Alleyya : “ksian yunjin sama chaewon berat bgt kayaknya berusaha membuat gbnnya gak malu” 3. @marvelous1921: “this makes me want to take a deep breath...I feel suffocatd”
4	Ideology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. @Phile: “Pls hybe js send txt or svt or bring back BP aespa. I don’t think they deserved to perform to Coachella. Can u js ask sm to let exo perform on ur stage?” 2. @ridmi: “omg what a mess is this ...coachella isn’t for everyone.. im a kpop lover but this is so embarrassing
5	Sadism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nwjns.phamhanni: “is eunchae’s position just to be the “cute maknae”?” 2. @Nela: “Le sserafim bagus tauuu, suaranya serak serak berserakan” 3. @Jisoo kim: “They never fail to disappoint” 4. @#1LISA STANNINNN: “aespa one of the best singer in Coachella 5. @Madin: “Omg, their live voice”

1. Instrumental Violence

In this context, there are several comments that show instrumental violence. the use of violence to achieve secondary goals, in contrast to reactive violence, which arises in response to perceived threats or provocations. TikTok account @kep1bts uploaded a video of girl band Le Sserafim's performance at the coachella performance, besides that some comments come from social media citizens who express their negative assessment of Le sserafim's performance at Coachella a few months ago. so, this can cause victims to feel mental pressure against the hateful comments expressed.



2. Power

Based on the TikTok @kep1bts account, there are comments that show motive hate speech in the power category which means that the concept of power arises when actors try to improve or maintain their position in the social hierarchy, as articulated by Pinker (2011). This can be seen from the comments of one of the social media citizen accounts who said *"that's the importance of years of trainees so they don't rely on loud backtracks"* and in the second comment by one of the TikTok residents @jill said *"its always "Backtrack" but not they improved"*. both comments show motive hate speech based on the power category, when Le sserafim performed their song at the Coachella performance which was seen by TikTok residents expressing their hatred by comparing le sserafim's voice with the backtrack sound when recording their mv.



3. Revenge


based on TikTok account @kep1bts there are comments that show motive Revenge involves retaliating or punishing someone for perceived or actual harm inflicted on oneself. Hate speech can be used as a tool to target individuals who are considered the source of offence. there are several comments that show the motive of revenge, on the @atzy account commented '**COACHELLA, ARE YOU READY?!?!?**' *Nuh the question is, ARE YOU?*' the comment is said to be included in the revenge motive section because, this comment expresses a very deep hatred for Le serrafim's performance in Coachella which shows a voice that is not comparable to the voice in the mv. Then, the *second comment was followed by @Alleyya* who expressed a comment in Indonesian "**Kasian yunjin and chaewon's weight makes gbnya not ashamed**' 'accompanied by a comment by @marvelous1921 "*this makes me want to take a deep breath... I feel suffocated.*" which also shows a malicious comment on LE Serrafim's performance at coachella when their voice is very bad for their views.

-  Azty?
"COACHELLA, ARE YOU READY?!?!"
nuh uh, the question is, ARE YOU?
05-18 Reply  1 
-  Alleyya  
ksian yunjin sama chaewon berat bgt
kayaknya berusaha membuat gbnya gak
malu
05-14 Reply  3 
-  marvelous1921
this makes me want to take a deep
breath...I feel suffocated.
04-14 Reply  1,578 

4. Ideology

In this context, we can see two comments that show the ideological motive of hate speech. Ideology means that the dynamics of in-group and out-group differences are very important in human interactions and can lead to hate speech directed at individuals who are perceived as outsiders. Characteristics such as ethnicity, social status, appearance, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, and personality traits can increase the risk of being targeted. on account @philo commented *“pls hybe js send txt or svt or bring back BP or aespa. i don't think they deseved to perform to a cochella. can you js ask sm to let exo perform on ur stage”* and the second comment on account @rida *“js asked sm to let exo perform on ur stage? ‘ and the second comment on the @ridmi account which states “omg what a mess is this.. cochella isn't for everyone.. im a kpop lover but this is so embarrassing.”* based on the two comments expressed comments in the form of ideology which shows Le Sserafim's performance with other bands such as aespa, exo, and blackpink which are included in the motive hate speech section of the ideology field.

21,375 comments X

 Philo
Pls hybe js send txt or svt or bring back
BP or aespa. I don't think they deserved
to perform to Coachella. Can u js ask sm
to let exo perform on ur stage?
04-14 Reply  135 
— View 4 replies

 ridmi
omg what a mess is this ... coachella isnt
for everyone ...
im a kpop lover but this is so
embarrassing
04-14 Reply  1,938 
— View 14 replies

5. Sadism

In this context, we can see some comments from some TikTok residents who expressed harsh and hateful sentences that included sadism in the motive of hate speech. Sadism, although a crude term, encapsulates the pleasure derived from causing physical or emotional harm to others. In the realm of social media, this can manifest as online harassment perpetrated by individuals seeking entertainment or stimulation. based on some of these comments showing the harsh terms of their assessment of Le Sserafim's performance at coachella.



The image shows a screenshot of a TikTok comment section with 10,165 comments. The visible comments are:

- nwjns.phamhanni**: Is eunchae's position just to be the "cute maknae"?
04-17 Reply 63.7K
View 208 replies
- Nela**: Le sserafim bagus tauuu, suaranya serak serak berserakan
04-18 Reply 247
View 6 replies
- Jisoo Kim**: They never fail to disappoint
- #1 LISA STANNNN**: aespa one of best singer in Coachella
04-14 Reply 213
View 7 replies
- Madin**: Omg, their live voice....
04-14 Reply 7,287
View 34 replies
- Rap God**: disgusting...
04-15 Reply 179
View 12 replies
- nono**: aespa- boring
lesserafim-off key
BP- no problem
04-14 Reply 746
- k**: blackpink is the standard 🔥
04-14 Reply 1,281
View 65 replies

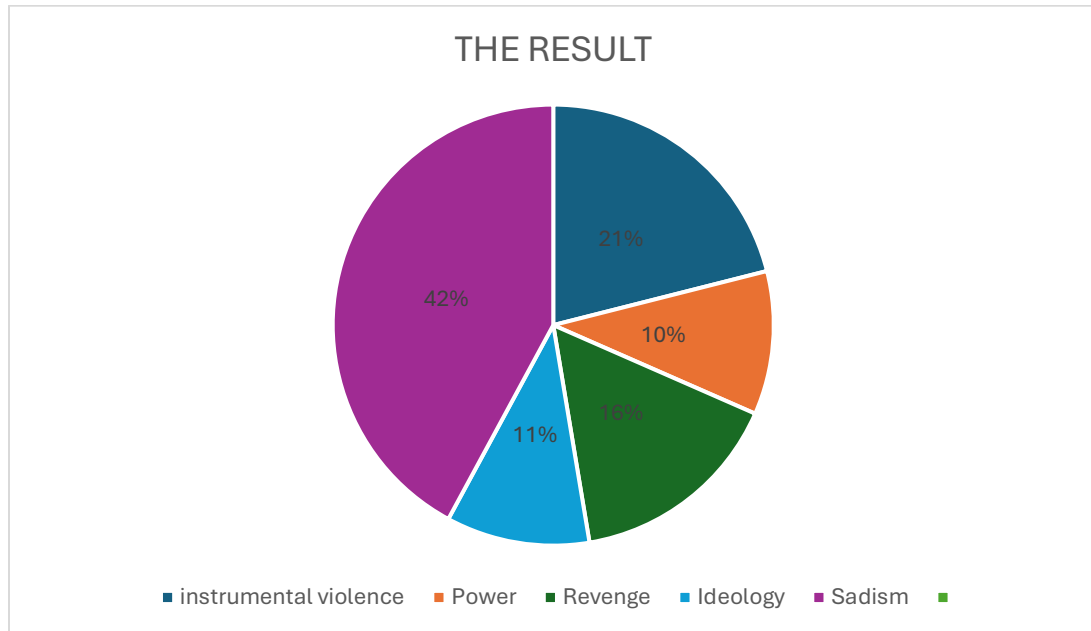


Chart 1. The Result of Motives of Hate Speech

Based on the chart above, the result of motives of hate speech can be seen as follows: instrumental violence is 4 as 21%, power 2 as 10%. On the other hand revenge is 3 as 16% and ideology is 2 as 11%. In addition, sadism is 8 as 16%.

CONCLUSION

Hate speech denotes a range of communicative behaviours, encompassing verbal, written, or symbolic expressions, that are intended to degrade, instil fear, or instigate violence or animosity towards individuals or collectives based on attributes such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or other discernible traits. Its manifestations span from overt manifestations of discrimination to subtler manifestations of prejudice and partiality. The ubiquity of hate speech across various platforms, including social media, public discourse, and institutional channels, has emerged as a matter of global concern. Hate speech, as a linguistic phenomenon, is deeply intertwined with sociolinguistics. It involves the study of how language is used to express hatred, hostility, or discrimination towards individuals or groups based on their identity, such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, etc. The research on hate speech in TikTok comments about Le Sserafim's Coachella performance shows various reasons behind the negativity. The most common reason is sadism, making up 42% of the comments, where people enjoy causing emotional harm to others. Another 21% of the comments are due to instrumental violence, where people aim to hurt others for personal gain. Revenge motivates 16% of the comments, driven by personal grudges. Ideological reasons, at 11%, involve conflicts over beliefs or values. Power dynamics account for 10%, where commenters seek to dominate or feel superior to others. These results highlight that hate speech on social media comes from different sources, including the desire to hurt others for fun, personal issues, and political or social disagreements. To effectively reduce hate speech that can harm mental state of someone, strategies need to address these various motives of hate speech.

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