Hate Speech in YouTube Comments on Rohingya Refugees in Thailand and Syrian Refugees in Europe

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze language patterns in hate speech found in comments on YouTube about Rohingya refugees in Thailand and Syrian refugees in Europe. Data were collected from 4,113 comments in Thai and 13,960 comments in English and appeared on a video-sharing website specifically from news clips about Rohingya refugees in Thailand during the year 2015-2019 and news on Syrian refugees in Europe during 2013-2019. After applying critical discourse analysis theory on the data, three types of hate speech were found: 1) name calling; 2) verb phrases; and 3) modifiers. The hate speech addresses race, religion, gender, body shape, taste, potential, ability, and individual or group identity. There were five types of name-calling, namely regarding race, religion, threats, animals/evil, and being unwanted; three types of verbs, namely danger/threats, behaviors/actions, and eviction/expulsion; and two types of modifiers, namely degrading quality and degree intensity. The three sets of vocabulary equally form hate speech in Thai and in English. In both languages, refugees are portrayed as villains, devalued as unwanted, dangerous, and

offensive. Modifiers are used to magnify the degree of intensity driven by the underlying emotional implications.

Keywords: hate speech, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Rohingya refugees, Syrian refugees

Introduction

People have different opinions about news on important issues related to race, ethnicity, religion, and identity differences, as well as peculiar and unorthodox behaviors of certain groups of people who may have different and uncustomary characteristics in society. This type of news may affect the viewer's feelings either positively or negatively (Sedler, 1992, pp. 631). Social media allow a free expression of opinions and criticism regardless of whether the person is directly affected by the news or not. Examples of comments on the Thai PBS news channel's page in a news clip titled "600,000 Rohingya fight for food in refugee camps" on September 27, 2017, are shown in (1) and (2).

(1) "A *dangerous race, even Muslims themselves don't even want them. Why on earth would we take them?*"

(Thai PBS, 2017)

Rohingya is referred to as a "Dangerous race". The word "Muslim" also adds another feature of the Rohingya people to show that the Rohingya are also Muslims. "Muslims don't even want them" indicates that they are unwanted and cannot co-exist with other Muslims.

(2) "*In my opinion, Islam made up a selfish law that prohibits birth control. They know that religion is naturally passed on from parents to children. The more the children, the wider the religion will spread quickly. They hoped for Islam to rule the world but did not think about the negative consequences that would follow, such as overpopulation.*"

(Thai PBS, 2017)

This commenter starts off with "In my opinion" to express his standpoint about the differences between different religions by criticizing Islam as a "selfish" religion since it encourages having more children while expecting the religion to rule the world. The commenter also implies that Muslims may be ill-wishers.

On the other hand, The Daily Conversation channel posted a clip titled "Europe's Refugee Crisis Explained" on September 11, 2015. Comments are similar found, as shown in (3) and (4).

(3) "S*o nice and naive...* DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MANY OF THESE REFUGEES ARE <u>TERRORISTS</u> *?????*"

This commenter uses a sarcastic tone to imply that refugees are dangerous because some of them are terrorists.

(TDC, 2015)

(4) *"When is Europe going to say* "GO BACK TO WHERE <u>YOU</u> CAME FROM" YOU BRING NOTHING BUT VIOLENCE DISEASE FILTH & CRIME… THEY HAVE A WORK SHY CULTURE & SPREAD A CANCER TO EUROPE…*& our leaders just piss in the wind*"

(TDC, 2015)

"YOU" refers to the Syrian refugees. The commenter describes the refugees as being a disgrace comparable to malignant cancer.

Comments (1) and (2) refer to Rohingya refugees while those in (3) and (4) refer to Syrian refugees. The comments demonstrate that people freely express their opinion and feelings on the topic with critical language. Such critical statements are a discourse that reflects the thoughts and views of the speaker. Van Dijk (2009, pp. 66) states that an individual's mental representation differs from that of others depending on social and linguistic characteristics that affect the reproduction and comprehension of discourses according to mental model, knowledge, and ideology. Mental representation plays an important role in language and discourse production.

Nowadays, many online communities such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube play an important role in disseminating, transmitting, and spreading information in society. It works similarly to a thread or a web board. According to Panyametheekul (2015, pp.101), a thread is a space for people to exchange their opinions and experiences and to discuss many issues. Online users are free to express their opinions; however, they must also respect those spaces' rules, regulations and etiquette.

Therefore, this type of interaction is similar to that of a mass discussion. It is possible to see differences in the views and polarization of thought that lead to disagreement with the use of language. One byproduct of social media is the "logical fallacy", which is an illogical argument that shows bias and prejudice that lead to hatred and violence. Ramasuta (2015, pp.18) calls this type of expression "hate speech". Hate speech is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as public speech that expresses hate or encourages

violence towards a person or group based on something such as race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation. Piwawattanapanich (2015, online) calls this phenomenon "hate speech" and the Thairath newspaper calls it "speech causing hatred".

The phenomenon of biased criticism towards the news has become a process of building hate speech, which is worrisome since it can escalate into violence. It can begin with the separation between "us" and "them". This causes a dichotomy that divides more than one group of ideas, which may lead to controversy, argument, retaliation, and attacking the target group, which eventually turns into violent brawls. The video presentation titled "Basic Hate Speech for Thai People" prepared by the Center for Media Policy Studies, Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University, was a campaign to raise awareness among the media, news publishers, and the public on the dangers of using hate speech to disturb the peace and that leads to violence.

Based on the explanations provided above, the use of language to generate hatred on social media platforms not only serves the purpose of freely expressing opinions and criticizing news but also serves as a repository for accumulating hatred, as long as those texts have not disappeared. Issues related to personal identity, particularly race, religion, or physical appearance, are often sensitive social topics (Sedler, 1992), and the language used to generate hatred can fuel conflicts and escalate violence (Aslan, 2017, pp. 229). This is particularly concerning when it comes to the spread of hatred on online social media, which can be broadcast without boundaries (Misinformation-World Health Organization-Medium, 2020). Previous research has extensively studied the use of hate speech in the English language from both sociological and linguistic perspectives (Aslan, 2017; Assimakopoulos et al., 2017; Chetty & Alathur, 2018; Miro-Linares & Rodriguez-Sala, 2016). However, studies on hate speech in the Thai language have primarily focused on the dimensions of communication studies and social sciences (Ramasuta, 2015), with limited research in the field of linguistics. Therefore, researchers have shown interest in studying and comparing the differences between the language used to generate hatred in the Thai and English languages.

The present research questions are: first, what type of words are considered hate speech, and second, is Thai hate speech different from foreign hate speech? If so, how are they different in terms of each language usage? The topics in question are Rohingya refugees in Thailand and Syrian refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic within the frameworks of van Dijk's (1999) critical discourse analysis.

Literature Review

What is Hate Speech?

Hate speech is called "Pratusvaca" by Ramasuta (2015), derived from the word "Pratus" (Monier Williams' Sanskrit Dictionary) meaning "to commit an offense against someone" which includes "to intimidate, threaten, insult and provoke." Therefore, "hate speech" means words or forms of language that generate hate by intimidating, harassing or insulting individuals or groups of people with certain identities such as race, religion, skin color, gender, etc.

Sedler (1992, pp. 631) states that hate speech is a form of power discourse strategy. It is used to express dissent, opposition, hatred and violence against groups that do not belong in the society. The legal definition of hate speech is broadly defined as the use of language in a way that attacks an individual or group to cause harm and is hated for reasons of inherent identity such as race, religion, age, gender, physical condition and sexual orientation.

Aslan (2017, pp. 227) studied online hate speech in relation to anti-Syrian refugees on YouTube. According to Aslan, hate speech has been a long-established phenomenon. Today's digital age helps hate speech to spread much faster; hatred is passed on through language regarding issues such as racism, discrimination against gender, enemies, minorities, religions, foreigners, immigrants, and refugees. Many countries are facing refugee problems, such as South Sudan, Afghanistan, and Syria. Aslan (2017) analyzed hate speech against Syrian refugees on YouTube using van Dijk's critical discourse analysis (1987) and it was found that the hate speech against Syrian refugees was circulated and reproduced. They were portrayed as traitors, as a threat, as trespassers, and as a cause of economic problems in the country.

After conducting an extensive review of the relevant literature, it became apparent to the present author that the concept of hate speech is predominantly elucidated within the realm of social dimensions, encompassing aspects such as morality, human rights laws, and regulations (Almagor, 2011; Sedler, 1992). Additionally, the understanding of hate speech is often explored in relation to violence and protective legislation (Aslan, 2017; Assimakopoulos et al., 2017; Chetty & Alathur, 2018; Miro-Linares and Rodriguez-Sala, 2016). Conversely, within the field of language study, the explication of hate speech is primarily confined to the context of speech act theory. Furthermore, in the context of Thai research, the definition of hate speech has primarily been explored within the domain of communication arts, as evidenced by the work of Ramasuta (2015), with limited in-depth

investigation within the field of linguistics. The aforementioned factors served as the motivation for undertaking this study.

Critical Discourse Analysis and Hate Speech

Fairclough (2001) and van Dijk (2009) agree that critical discourse analysis studies the effect of language on power, influence and inequality in society. Language is analyzed under social contexts for the awareness of social roles and for the preservation of rights and for gaining a deeper understanding of these discourses. In this section, the concept is presented as critical discourse Analysis of Fairclough (2001), van Dijk (2001) and the hate speech of Hodsdons (2000) and Gelber (2002). Details are as follows.

Fairclough (2001) proposed the concept of critical discourse analysis (CDA), though this concept had already played a role in the social sciences. Fairclough is considered to be the originator of its use in linguistics. This concept is used in the study of discourse from a linguistic perspective. Fairclough (2001, pp. 18-19) defines "discourse" as a form of language used in social practice. It is not surprising that the content in the textbooks shows the relationship between language and society. The three independent components are connected to each other, as illustrated below.

Figure 1

The Three Dimensions of Fairclough's Discourse
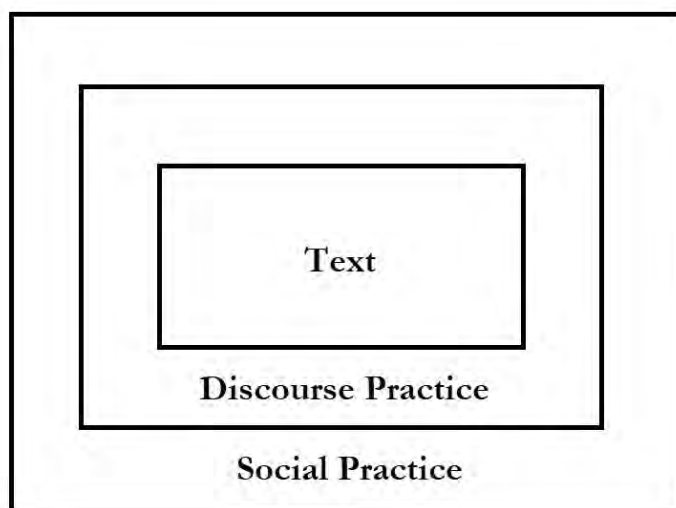
Note. Fairclough, N. (2001, pp.121-138)

The framework shows three dimensions of discourse: text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practices. Language is a component of society and society is a language-building component as well. Therefore, language is interrelated with the social context in which it is used.

Van Dijk (2001) added that the most important component of discourse is "ideology". He noticed that the word "ideology" was often mentioned in newspapers and in the speech of many politicians. The word ideology is often not used in a positive light but contains a connotation in terms of communism, neo-liberalism, pacifism, consumerism, and anything that ends in -ism. However, ideology is rarely used to refer to individual self-concepts, so there needs to be a revised definition of ideology. Van Dijk (2001: 11-40) cites the definition of ideology from the French philosopher of the late 18th century, Destutt de Tracy (1803), who proposed that "ideology" is the science of ideas, which is the study of ways of thinking, speaking and presenting arguments. Ideology is an idea that has been rooted and built up to become a fixed idea that is difficult to change. Moreover, ideology has an effect on our thoughts, especially about society, politics, and religion, which is a system of beliefs that people in society have in common. It also includes various movements that occur in society as well, such as socialist regimes, anti-socialism, liberalism, nationalism, etc. Therefore, ideology is the basic belief of a group of members in society. On the other hand, ideology has a negative connotation because it is considered a political tool to manipulate people to have ideas and beliefs in the direction that the authority desires. Meanwhile, those that resist the ideology do not let themselves be manipulated by the authority, and this results in the phenomenon of the polarization of thought. It is therefore interesting to study the ideological dimensions of discourse and to consider how ideologies are represented and reproduced. For example, racism and xenophobic ideologies are manifested against immigrants and minorities. Generally, racism is also related to different ideologies such as anti-Semitism, nationalism and xenophobia.

Figure 2

Van Dijk, Teun's Discourse-Practice-Social Relationship Triangle

Society

Cognition   **Discourse**
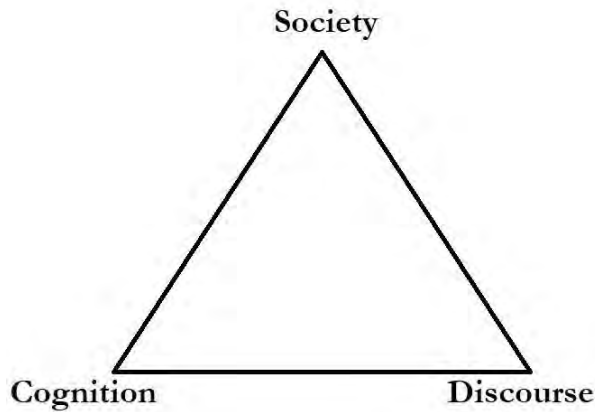
Note. Van Dijk, T. A. (2001, p. 11)

Van Dijk (2001, p. 11) proposed that ideology and discourse must be a conceptual framework in which various principles of humanities and social sciences are fused together. The multidisciplinary framework includes discourse, theoretical, and social dimensions, emphasizing that ideological and discourse analysis cannot be done on a single principle. Discourse includes language, speech, text, interaction and communication. Mental representation includes ideology, beliefs, knowledge, thoughts which are under cognition. Ideologies can be social, political, cultural and historical. Group-specific ideologies are reproduced. Influence and anti-influence are analyzed under society.

Figure 3

Ideological Square

	Positive	**Negative**
Us	Accentuate our positives	Minimize our negatives
Them	Minimize their positives	Accentuate their negatives

Note. Van Dijk. (1999, pp. 150 -151)

In addition, with regard to discrimination, van Dijk states that human beings are instilled with the idea of racial and ethnic discrimination by using symbolic representations that convey prejudice and ideology in racism. Thus, discourse plays an introductory role in communicating racism, van Dijk (1999, pp. 150-151) said that in everyday conversations, topics of discussion include minorities and immigrants, and the topics discussed are often limited to a few topics, especially the criticism of classifying refugees as having unusual behavior and being a threat to the growing trend of negative sentiment. Therefore, immigrants and refugees are usually referred to by terms that differ from one's own group. The stories that are often told about immigrants or minorities are associated with aggressive behaviors, criminals, job stealers, city destroyers or threats. More importantly, these types of discourse usually come from the native of a country.

Hodsdon (2000) combined racism with hate speech into "Racist Hate Discourse". Hodsdon considered hate speech as a discourse strategy used to build power whenever there is a conflict, to express different opinions, hatred, conflict, and violence towards individuals or groups that do not belong or that are different in terms of race, skin color or religion. Hodsdon's approach to analyzing hate speech is important in understanding the relationship between the ideology of language users and their choice of language. Hodsdon's framework reveals the ways in which language users create linguistic expressions to attract attention and to persuade the audience to support them.

Further, we should also consider the speaker's knowledge and experience, which may affect language choice. The eight language patterns of Hodsdon adapted from Fairclough's and van Dijk's analyses are: intertextuality, transitivity, conversational implicature, overlexicalization, degree of specificity, emotive words, politeness/rudeness and stereotyping. Hodsdon's use of hate speech compared to that of van Dijk's (1999) is shown in the table below.

Table 1

Linguistic features that emphasize the communication of shared identity between "us" and "them"

Feature	Us	Them
Emotive words	Good	Bad
	God/Allah	Jews, government, law, enforcement
	Our family	Natural family
	Freedom/justice/equality	Actual law
	Truth	Lie

Feature	Us	Them
	Education Our interpretation blacks	Ignorance What "they" say Blacks who do not agree with us Whites
Group Specificity	Whites	Mongrel Whites who do not agree with us
Pronoun Usage	We, Us (exclusive)	They, Them
Lexical Specificity	More specific, positive descriptors, honorifics	Less specific, negative descriptors
Intertextuality	Discourse we agree with paragraphs/rephrases, references, illustrations	Discourse we don't agree with scare quotes, direct quotes, stylization
Politeness	Face needs meet	Rudeness, Face needs threatened
Agentivity	Acted upon, Driven to action	Actors, Pushing patient past their limits

Note. Hodsdon (2000, pp.130)

According to the table, Hodsdon categorized the data according to the linguistic features that emphasize the communication of shared identity between "us" and "them." For example, there are groups of words that express emotions as emotive words, specific words that refer to groups or individuals in various roles as group specify, pronoun usage such as self-referencing and specific targeting of the opposite party's context, intertextual, politeness, and even the selection of verb phrases used to present or emphasize certain important content as agentivity. These linguistic choices relate to the speaker's knowledge and feelings, as well as how they present themselves and how they present the opposing party. The data in this table align with van Dijk's (1999) framework of discourse analysis, which identifies language use in differentiating the roles of language users towards the other party.

Methodology

Data Collection

Examples of hate speech were collected from 4,113 comments in Thai and 13,960 comments in English and appear on YouTube channels of various news agencies, with special focus on news on Rohingya refugees in Thailand from 2015 to 2019 and news on Syrian refugees in Europe from

2013 to 2019, using van Dijk's critical discourse analysis (1999), as indicated above.

The comments were selected the first 100 most viewed video clips from representative news media on YouTube that featured news related to refugees under search terms such as "refugee", "Rohingya". "Syria", or other relevant keywords. The selection was based on the popularity of the media representative, considering the number of followers and the viewership statistics.

Results

The data analysis revealed that three types of hate speech were used in expressing opinions on the issue of Rohingya refugees in Thailand and Syrian refugees in Europe: 1) name calling, 2) action, and 3) modifiers, related to race, religion, gender, body shaming, taste, potential, ability and individual or group identity. The details are as follows.

Name calling in the present study represents the words or phrases that negatively refer to Rohingya and Syrian refugees. These words are related to their race, religion, gender, body, taste, potential, ability and individual or group identity, as shown in Table 1.

Table 2

Name calling in comments on YouTube about Rohingya refugees in Thailand and Syrian refugees in Europe

Name calling	Rohingya refugees	Syrian refugees
1. Ethnic terms	"Rohingya" "Bengali" "Indian" "Bang" "Bangladesh" "Peanut-eater" "wicked Indian"	"Syria" "Syrian" "Arab" "Arabic" "Arabian" "Asia" "Asian" "Eurasian"
2. Religion	"Muslim" "Evil Religion" "Garbage Religion" "Wicked Religion"	"Allah" "Muslim" "Islam" "the Angel of Death" "Allah Shitbar"
3. Danger	"Bandits" "Terrorists" "Untamed" "Scumbag" "nearby danger"	"bomber" "criminal" "despot" "dictator" "invader" "racist" "economic migrants" "illegal migrant" "intruder" "babymaker"

Name calling	Rohingya refugees	Syrian refugees
4. Animals/Evil	"Rotten-headed dog" "Fuck-headed beast" "hungry ghosts" "Ghost" "Hell beast" "Dogs" "Rat" "Cobra" "Fish spawning"	"Snakes" "hordes" "monster" "evil" "trojan horse" "devil" "rat"
5. The unwanted	"Junk" "Burden" "War" "Cancer" "Hell" "Trouble" "Low"	"filth" "shit" "diseases" "AIDS" "tuberculosis" "plague" "flood" "polluting" "toxic"

Upon investigation, the findings indicate a significant convergence in the semantic connotations associated with the utilization of Thai-English expressions to denote both Rohingya and Syrian refugees. In addition to their ethnic and religious categorizations, a substantial portion of these individuals are commonly referred to using terminologies typically associated with danger, disgusting or poisonous animals, or undesired entities, as the following.

Ethnic terms refer to the use of words or groups of words to refer to Rohingya and Syrian ethnicities; for example, Rohingya are called "Rohingya", "Bengali", "Indian", "Bang" "Bangladesh" and Syrians are called "Syria" "Syrian" "Arab" "Arabic" "Arabian" "Asia" and "Asian". Examples are shown below.

(1) A comment on a documentary on the history of the Rohingya people "Who are the Rohingyas? Why do Burmese people call Rohingya Bengalis?" posted on November 20, 2017

"The Rohingya are savages. If someone hires them, they are ready to kill at any time. These bastards don't care where they are. They can cause chaos everywhere. The solution is to get them on a fugitive ship and blow up the ship in the middle of the sea."

(TODAY - Today News Agency, 2017c)

(2) A comment on news about a Syrian girl who is fleeing her country of origin, posted on August 2, 2017

"The world can see how the arabs have fulled all around those funny pics just show they are criminals as they were when they were in their country and they keep being criminals as they go to other countries..."

(The Guardian, 2017b)

In example in (1), the term "Rohingya" is used to denote the ethnicity of the Rohingya indigenous peoples, while in (2) the term "Arabs" is used to refer to the Syrian people since the majority of Syrians are Arabs. Such terms are a mechanism to perpetuate the negative image of certain groups beyond

the Rohingya. It is also a form of discrimination by calling people by their ethnicity.

Religious terms refer to the use of words or groups of words related to religion, such as "Muslim", "Islam", "Devilism", "Evil Religion", "Allah", "the Angel of Death", and "Allah Shitbar" as shown below.

(3) A comment on the World Media Watch of the Rohingya Liberation Army, posted on February 19, 2018

"It's guaranteed that any country with Muslims will have war because these scumbags are selfish and like to create problems because if they are to rule themselves, they will continue to demand more and more.."

(Thai PBS, 2018)

(4) A comment on a situation at the Austrian border where an enormous group of refugees arrived on foot from Budapest, Hungary, posted on September 4, 2015

"Today, they're poor, hungry, thirsty, helpless refugees...Tomorrow, they're soldiers of Allah, ready to destroy everything..."

(Channel 4 News, 2015b)

In the example, the refugees are called by their religious attributes. In example (3), the term "Muslim" is used to refer to the Rohingya group in a stereotypical manner. This causes overgeneralization towards Muslims around the world in a negative image. It is also an insult to Muslims as a whole. For example, in (4), the word "Allah" or the God of Islam is used to refer to the target group to satirize or slander the people who believe in Islam. It is also a mechanism to create divisions on the basis of religious differences. The differences in belief systems become the reason for refusing to give help and to coexist.

Danger terms refer to the use of words or phrases to refer to Rohingya and Syrian refugees as frightening, threatening and untrustworthy. They have been referred to as "thieves", "snakes", "criminals", "invaders", "economic migrants", "illegal migrants", "intruders" and "babymakers", as shown below.

(5) A comment on the Rohingya refugee situation: the Thai Government to Solve the Rohingya Crisis, posted on August 28, 2018

"Don't let thieves into your house. Don't fall prey to Muslims."

(Thai PBS, 2018b)

(6) A comment on a situation in Germany where refugees are protested against and evicted from the area, posted on December 22, 2015

"They are not immigrants or refugees but invaders imported by traitors like those at the bbc."

(ABC News, 2015)

In example (5), the word "thief" implies that refugees are dangerous and are invading their homes. They have bad intentions against life and property, and can inflict damage and may bring danger or trouble to the residents of the house. In example (6), the word "invader" is similar to the behavior of a thief that intends to invade the area with bad intentions. These terms suggest that the refugees are like a villain that brings danger to others. It is also a provocation by creating terror as a justification for expelling, harming or eliminating them.

Animal and evil terms refer to the use of words or phrases to refer to Rohingya and Syrian refugees by comparing them to animals or other living things that are considered disgusting, dangerous and poisonous, such as "rotten dog", "cobra", "hell beast", "snakes", "hordes", "monster", "evil", "trojan horse", "devil", and "rat", as shown in the examples below.

(7) A comment on the lives of the Rohingya in Thailand: Criminal Court ruling over human trafficking case, posted on July 21, 2017
    "These cobras cannot be kept. Islam is dishonest to everyone."

(Spring News, 2017)

(8) A comment on the Syrian refugee situation: A group of Syrian refugees head to Europe, posted on November 25, 2015
    "Should never let the monsters in. The term refugee is just a front for them to plunder the host country."

(CaspianReport, 2015)

In example (7), the term "cobra" is used to refer to the Rohingya people as an animal of which we should be cautious since cobras are ferocious beasts that cannot be trained. They should not be trusted and should not be offered help. In example (8), the term "monsters" was used to refer to Syrian refugees, comparing them to imaginary demons to create fear. These terms make the refugees appear frightening and disgusting. They also are seen to degrade human values as a reason for wanting to eliminate them. This is similar to a historical event where Rwandans were compared to cockroaches. Degrading terms were a linguistic engine that started from devaluing humans and ended in genocide.

The "unwanted" refers to the use of words or phrases to refer to Rohingya and Syrian refugees as something unwanted such as "trash", a "burden", "trouble", a "cancer", a "parasite", "filth", "shit", a "disease", "AIDS", "tuberculosis", a "plague" and "polluting", as shown below.

(9) A comment on "Questions to the Rohingya: Unwanted by the world", posted on December 29, 2017

"*Thailand, don't let the trouble in and add up to the burden. Let me tell you. Chase them all away. Myanmar, their homeland, doesn't even want them. Why should we?*"

(PPTV36 [Around the World], 2017c)

(10) A comment on the Syrian refugee situation about a Syrian girl fleeing her country of origin, posted on August 2, 2017

"*So SAD! All these people losing their homes and being displaced and adding to the refugee plague!*"

(The Guardian, 2017b)

In example (9), the words "burden" and "trouble" are used to suggest that helping refugees is a tiring or compulsive task. In example (10), "plague" refers to a disgusting disease. Refugees are compared to a disease that can spread and cause harm. They are portrayed as disease carriers, dangerous germs and pollution. This suggests that people should be cautious and should not be indifferent to the problems that may be creeping in the future.

Verb Phrases are words or phrases referring to the actions of Rohingya and Syrian refugees in a negative light. The set of verbs relates to race, religion, gender, body, taste, potential, ability, as well as individual or group identity, as detailed below

Table 3

Verbs that appear in hate speech made on YouTube about Rohingya refugees in Thailand and Syrian refugees in Europe

Verbs	Rohingya refugees	Syrian refugees
1. Danger and threats	"assimilation" "chaos inducing" "land separation" "killing Buddhists" "abusing Buddhism" "burning temples" "smuggling" "bombing" "creating trouble" "trouble" "occupying the world"	"destroy" "take over" "threatening" "ruin" "take advantage" "killing" "invading" "flood" "swamp"
2. Behavior/habit	"lies" "propagating species" "no sterilization" "doesn't work" "no condoms" "no contraception" "demands" "refusing to cooperate"	"don't respect" "don't want to work" "lazy" "annoying" "complaining" "grow too fast" "not help" "no Help" "without help"

Verbs	Rohingya refugees	Syrian refugees
	"lazy" "overly religious" "ungrateful" "unfilial"	
3. Eviction or expulsion	"go back" "don't come" "don't take them" "get out" "don't want" "don't want" "don't take them in with you" "don't fall prey" "chase" "don't take it" "pull out" "get out" "back to Bangladesh" "shoot" "kill" "explode" "suppress" "cut off" "get out" "Kill it" "Shouldn't exist" "Dead" "Deadly" "Cleared"	"go (all) back" "don't need" "don't want" "(not) wanted" "(not) trust" "stop escape" "keep them in Syria" "deport" "get rid of" "out of" "go (away)" "send back" "back" "stop" "(not) welcome" "Kill themselves" "Fight" "Quit"

Upon examining the various verb usages, the findings indicate a notable resemblance in the semantic implications of said verbs when employed in reference to both the Rohingya refugees residing in Thailand and the Syrian refugees situated in Europe. However, it is crucial to note that these verb usages also bear significant relevance to their actions and behavioral patterns, often conveying a negative connotation, as seen in the following.

Danger and Threats refer to the use of words or phrases to refer to the dangerous and distressing behaviors of Rohingya and Syrian refugees that could affect national security, religion, culture, way of life, and lead to suffering in the nation, for example, "assimilation", "chaos inducing", "separatism", "kill Buddhism", "burn down temples", "create trouble", "destroy", "take over", "threatening", and "ruin", as shown below.

(11) A comment on Rohingya refugees: The problem of smuggling into the city, posted on January 14, 2013

"If you let them in, in 10 years, they will start separatism and demanding things. Then they will attack Buddhism, burn temples, kill and rape Buddhists like what they did in Myanmar. Do you feel bad for them now?"

(Summitnews, 2013)

(12) A comment on Syrian refugee situation: A lifeless body on the beach of a boy who was a war victim refugee, posted on September 3, 2015

"Keep them out. these people ruined their countries and now they're trying to destroy ours. Anyone who supports immigration into Europe supports the fall of western civilization."

(NBC News, 2015)

In example (11), the term "separatism" is used to refer to the malicious intent of refugees to take over the host country. It claims that refugees are a threat to national security. For example (12), the words "ruin" and "destroy" similarly portray destructive behaviors. Destruction can be concrete or abstract: concrete as in property, treasure, and nations; abstract as in beliefs and faith. The commenter mentions that refugees have destroyed their own country before and will do the same in the new country. These statements create the image of refugees as social villains. They are viewed as dangerous people that we should watch out for and not trust. The language is used to erase the pitiful and sympathetic image portrayed by the media. This could result in refugees not receiving any aid, being subject to hatred, and being the target of elimination.

Behavior/habit refers to the use of words or groups of words to refer to certain behaviors of the Rohingya and Syrian refugees that are used as stereotypes such as "lie", "propagating species", "no sterilization", "does not work", "does not use condoms", "does not use contraceptives", "demanding", "refusing to cooperate", "lazy", "overly religious", "ungrateful", "unfilial", "liars", "lying", "don't respect", "don't want to work", "annoying" and "complaining", as shown below.

(13) A comment on Rohingya Refugee Documentary: Voice from Myanmar, Who are the Rohingya?, posted on January 9, 2018
"Within just a few years, they multiplied themselves from a few tens of thousands to millions...causing many problems because they claim that their religion bans the use of birth control. They refused to work. Anyone who used to work with them all said they were lazy people..."

(PPTV36 [Around the World], 2018c)

(14) A comment on "The Syrian refugee crisis is likely to escalate", posted on September 12, 2015
"They come to Europe and don't respect our culture, they don't want to work. Why they don't go to Islamic countries..."

(TDC, 2015)

In example (13), the words "multiply themselves" and "ban the use of birth control" are used to reproach the behavior of Rohingya refugees who refuse to use contraception in the claim that contraception is against their religious principles. The commenters express their concerns and criticisms of the religion and sometimes satirize and speak sarcastically the beliefs and faith of the refugees. In example (14), "don't respect" and "don't want to work" refer to the claim that refugees do not respect others and do not want to work. It suggests that refugees are unable to adapt to living with

others, especially at work. They blame refugees for being too strict and holding on to their own religious beliefs. Publishing comments in this manner creates a bias in order to induce hatred towards the refugees so that they do not get help, and are opposed, expelled, and eliminated from society.

Eviction or expulsion refers to the use of words or phrases that refer to expelling Rohingya and Syrian refugees such as "go back", "don't come", "don't take…", "don't fall prey", "go (all) back", "don't need", "don't want", "(not) wanted", "(not) trust", "stop escape", "keep them in Syria", "deport", "get rid of", "out of", "go (away)", "send back", "back", "stop", "(not) welcome", as shown below.

(15) A comment on "Rohingya to use weapons against the Myanmar government", posted on February 5, 2017

"Why don't you go back to your original home? Islam will invade our race. Go back to where you come from. You just cause chaos wherever you are. I'm tired of it."

(Spring News, 2017a)

(16) A comment on the story of a Syrian girl fleeing her country of origin, posted on August 2, 2017

"Please Go all back !! Turkey don't Need Syrians!!!! We got problems enough. We don't want you !!!"

(The Guardian, 2017b)

In example (15), the word "go back" is used to convey disapproval. In example (16), the words "Go all back" is also suggestive of an eviction to force the refugees to return to their country. The use of the words "don't need" and "don't want" shows disapproval.

Modifiers are words or phrases that appear in a comment to emphasize or show degrading quality and degree intensity regarding the Rohingya and Syrian refugees as shown in Table 3.

Table 4

A set of modifiers that appear in hate speech on YouTube about Rohingya refugees in Thailand and Syrian refugees in Europe

Modifiers	Rohingya refugees	Syrian refugees
1. Degrading quality	"poor quality" "evil" "Low class" "scary" "lower than low" "terrible" "bastard" "untrustworthy" "damned" "cursed" "dirty" "ugly"	"annoying" "ashamed" "shame on" "bloody" "bad" "dangerous" "different (belief)" "disgusting" "fanatical"

Modifiers	Rohingya refugees	Syrian refugees
		"ungrateful" "horrible" "irrational" "lazy" "selfish" "terrible" "well fed" "unacceptable"
2. Degree Intensity	"extreme" "many" "more" "overflowing" "extremely" "multiplying" "overflowing" "enormous" "immense"	"extremely" "too…" "big" "damn" "maximum" "overwhelmingly"

Interestingly, the modifiers explored indicate the potential for describing these refugees in a derogatory manner, either through the utilization of degrading attributes or by employing degrees of intensity, as the following.

Degrading quality is the use of words to reinforce and intensify the degradation, such as "poor quality", "bad", "low class", "horrible", "low quality", "disgusting", "terrible", "unreliable", "vile", "damned", "filthy", "ugly", "annoying", "ashamed", "shame on", "bloody", "bad", "dangerous", "different (belief)", "disgusting", "fanatical", "ungrateful", "horrible", "irrational", "lazy", "selfish", "terrible", "well fed" and "unacceptable". Here are some examples.

(17) A comment on "Who are the Rohingya? Why do Burmese people call Rohingya Bengalis? Understanding the Rohingya Crisis", posted on September 9, 2017

"Low quality population. They only know how to ask. They do not know how to develop themselves and make a living. They are lazy. Nobody wants them."

(Workpoint [Workpoint TV], 2017)

(18) A comment on the story of a Syrian girl fleeing her country of origin, posted on August 2, 2017

"Bloody Islamic extremists. Making the western look after refugees and making a bad name for Islam."

(The Guardian, 2017b)

Example (17) contains words that are used to add more seriousness to the meaning of the words in the sentence, such as "low quality". The commenter uses these types of words to convey the emotion of disdain and to downgrade the Rohingya. In example (18), the words "Bloody" and "bad" are used to downgrade the characteristics of the Syrian refugees. The refugees are portrayed as dangerous people causing a problematic and worrying situation. This type of language suggests that refugees are terrifying, which

can result in them being ignored, being denied assistance, and being evicted, and can lead to violence against them.

Degree intensity refers to the words of expansion that increase or exceed the original state, such as "extremely", "many", "overflowing", "extreme", "multiplying", "overflowing", "enormously", "enormous", "extremely", "too…", "maximum", "overwhelmingly", to reinforce the meaning, as shown below.

(19) A comment on "Who are the Rohingya? Why do Burmese people call Rohingya Bengalis? Understanding the Rohingya Crisis", posted on September 9, 2017

"They don't work. They ask a lot in camps. I've watched a documentary. The Rohingyas give birth to hundreds of babies a day. That's extreme."

(Workpoint [Workpoint TV], 2017)

(20) A comment on "Syrian refugees decide to leave their homeland", posted on December 21, 2014

"i believe it is the duty of our countries to accept refugees, i will happily accept a limited number of syrian refugees. the problem i have is that they have overwhelmingly become a minority because of economic migrants coming from afghanistan, pakistan, north africa etc."

(RT, 2014)

In example (19), the word "extreme" is used to describe the growing population of Rohingya refugees. In example (20), "overwhelming" means too much and is used to describe concerns over imminent consequences. It is the use of words to expand the meaning in terms of quantity and to criticize the refugees in terms of population. In addition, these words also convey emotional implications, feelings and concerns regarding the increasing incidence of refugee migration.

Conclusion and Discussion

In analyzing hate speech on YouTube about the Rohingya refugees in Thailand and the Syrian refugees in Europe related to race, religion, gender, body, taste, potential, ability, and group identity, three main types of vocabulary were found, as mentioned above: 1) name calling, 2) verbs, and 3) modifiers.

Five types of name calling were found, namely ethnicity terms, religious terms, danger terms, animal/evil terms and unwanted terms. It can be concluded that, in addition to stereotyping a specific group or collectively, these terms are a divisive mechanism indicating difference that

appear along with the negative portrayal, which includes the villain, the problem, or the unwanted.

As for verbs, it was found that they could be classified into three categories: danger/threats, behavior/action and expulsion/eviction. It can be concluded that using these behavioral phrases creates the image of refugees as social villains that are considered dangerous and despicable people. Publishing this kind of hate speech creates a bias in order to inflict hatred on the target group so that they are rejected, resisted, expelled, and ostracized from society.

As for the modifiers, it was found that two types were used: degrading quality and degree intensity. It can be concluded that modifiers were used to portray refugees as feared and worrisome individuals, and this can result in refugees being ignored, denied assistance, and evicted, and can lead to violence against them.

These three sets of hate speech were equally found in the comments in both Thai and English. Whether it be name calling, a verb, or a modifier, hate speech equally creates the image of refugees as villains. They are portrayed to be groups of people that are devalued and unwanted in society, and they are considered to show dangerous and offensive behaviors. The modifiers reinforce and add weight to the intensity driven by the underlying emotional implications.

The research results are consistent with van Dijk's (1999) theory in that hate speech can be determined by the use of negative or positive connotations, i.e. negative meaning words referring to "them" while positive meaning words referring to "us". For example, terrorists are "them" and freedom fighters are "us". This also includes positive features such as being helpful and tolerant. The negative features that portray "them" include crime, violence and debauchery. From the comments on YouTube where content about refugees is being published, the terms are found that distinguish "them" (refugees) from "us", as shown in examples (21)-(22).

(21) Talk on "Are you that optimistic? Adopt one or two of the Rohingya? Posted on May 22, 2015

"I'm telling you. Rohingyas are not a hundred or two, but millions.. if we let them come in and take refuge here, they will keep coming.. Chaos is bound to happen to us Thai people. It's not that I don't feel bad, but I'm worried about our country."

(SpokeDark TV, 2015)

From example (21), it was found that the commenter used the word "we". This "we" not only includes the commenter, but also everyone in the country that shares the same ideology. This implies the status of "host" and the disagreement and non-supporter of the situation. The word "we"

cooccurs with "let them take refuge" and "worried about our country" to convey the state of ownership of the country and emotional states expressing anxiety about the situation. The word "them/they" cooccurs with "will keep coming" to convey the state of the problems regarding refugees. This kind of speech shows a hidden dissatisfaction and may result in refugees being ignored, expelled and eliminated, respectively.

(22) A comment on the story of a Syrian girl fleeing her country of origin, posted on August 2, 2017

"This is heartbreaking.... to see those poor countries have to take in all of these horrible monsters. I don't get why we don't just keep them in Syria and let them kill themselves off they already do a good job at it."

(The Guardian, 2017b)

From example (22), it was found that the commenter uses "I" to refer to himself but it may also refer to a group of people that share ownership of the country as well. "I don't get why we don't just keep them" conveys the state of ownership of the country and refusal to help the refugees. Refugees are referred to as "them", "they", and "themselves". "Let them kill themselves" shows indifference towards suicide. The use of the phrase "(they) do a good job at it" conveys satire and irony in a manner of admiration but with hidden malice.

In addition, we also find terms that show the commenter as "us" and the refugees as "them", as shown in (23) - (24).

(23) A comment on the Rohingya in Thailand "Stop Genocide", posted on September 6, 2017.

"Why not go live in your Muslim country? Thailand has given enough money and food. Do not let them in. They are very selfish."

(Thai PBS, 2017a)

In example (23), it was found that the term "Thailand" was used to represent the commenter. The use of the term in this manner would not be specific to the commenter only, but would also include groups of people with a common ground. He also mentions that (Thailand) "has given enough money and food" to demonstrate ownership of the country while the refugees are referred to as "Muslim Countries" in "Why don't you go live in your Muslim country?" This implies that he does not agree with offering help to refugees. This type of hate speech may result in the refugees being ignored and evicted respectively.

(24) A comment on "The journey of a group of refugee families" posted on September 10, 2015

"*But I am still against immigration. Why are the Syrians not fighting? Why did they not take their guns and attack the foreign invaders?*"

(The Guardian, 2015)

In example (24), the commenter uses the words "Syrians" and "invaders" to distinguish the refugees from others. "Why are the Syrians not fighting?" is used to imply the reprimand of the refugees, by using interrogative sentences to ask why these people did not stand up and fight in their homeland. There is also a hidden emotion of dissatisfaction that may result in the refugees being deported back to their country.

The "us" and "them" distinction is shown in examples (25)-(26).

(25) A comment on "Myanmar moves the Rohingya to a camp near Bangladesh", posted on June 4, 2015.

"*Thailand, don't act like a mercy horse getting fooled by foreigners... Remember, be nice to them and we are broke.*"

(TNN Online, 2015)

In the example (25), it was found that the use of "mercy horse" is a metaphor. It refers to a folk tale of a horse that likes to help others to the point of hurting himself. It describes his own country reaching out to help refugees. It also suggests that the commenter is fed up and refuses to offer help to the refugees. This can lead to them being ignored and evicted eventually.

(26) A comment on the story of a Syrian girl fleeing her country of origin, posted on August 2, 2017

"*Why she didn't stop, escape in first safe country outside Syria? Obviously because it was great opportunity to run like a plague through many countries to the rich Austria (free house, and life on taxpayers cost).*"

(The Guardian, 2017b)

In Example (26), we find that the word "plague" is used to refer to the refugee, suggesting that they can spread rapidly. It also conveys a sarcastic emotional state, saying that it was a good opportunity to spread to and invade other countries. This can lead to the refugees not getting help and getting evicted.

Based on the above analysis, we find words that have a negative connotation that clearly indicate hate speech; but when compared to the

overall language usage in the data, there are also many styles of argumentative language that are not considered hate speech. Such findings can be found in Alkomah and Ma (2022), who proposes that online toxic discourse can have the effect of creating conflicts between individuals and groups and can lead to dissatisfaction in the community. The use of language in arguments is further explained in Alkomah and Ma (2022) that the nature of hate speech is complex and can lead to many aspects of danger. It can come in the form of content that expresses opposition to an individual or group. In Alkomah and Ma (2022), a search engine was set to filter out words that contain hate speech. However, it only detected a relatively small amount of hate speech, and so it is possible that such techniques are still inefficient and unreliable. We suggest that other theoretical concepts need to be integrated in developing strategies for future research. Fatimah's research shows that hate speech is not necessarily apparent in terms of race, religion or negative connotations. Martins et al. (2018) conducted research in order to devise a tool to classify the use of hate speech in social media. They created a database of phrases that could be considered hate speech together with the use of Natural Language Processing (NLP) to add emotional information in inputting data into the program to analyze hate speech. The results showed that the program was able to accurately detect and identify 80.56 out of 100 percent of hate speech.

In summary, the usage of such derogatory terms to refer to refugees, including both Rohingya and Syrian individuals, can be attributed to various factors. First, it is crucial to acknowledge the existence of xenophobia and prejudice within societies, which can manifest in the form of stigmatization and dehumanization of marginalized groups. Refugees, often seen as outsiders or foreigners, may become targets of discriminatory language and negative stereotypes.

Secondly, the media's portrayal of refugees can influence public perceptions and shape the language used to describe them. Sensationalized news coverage, biased narratives, and political agendas can contribute to the creation and reinforcement of negative stereotypes, further fueling the use of derogatory terms.

Moreover, socio-political factors, including conflicts, economic concerns, and security fears, can exacerbate negative attitudes towards refugees. These factors may lead to the framing of refugees as a burden, as a threat, or as an unwanted presence, which subsequently permeates the language employed to discuss them.

It is important to note that the use of such language is not reflective of the inherent qualities or characteristics of refugees themselves but rather a reflection of societal attitudes, biases, and systemic issues. Efforts to promote

empathy, understanding, and human rights are crucial in challenging and rectifying the use of derogatory language towards refugees.

Acknowledgements

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