

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

In the digital era, social media has become the dominant platform for communication, shaping public opinion and influencing political discourse on a global scale, social media has billions of users worldwide, which makes it one of the main platforms in the digital era for disseminating information, According to Idelegato Dina (2021), social media language is a way of communication that people use to express themselves on the Internet, especially in discussions. Instagram is a very popular platform that allows users to share photos, videos, and narratives that provide a live picture from the field. Many activist accounts, such as Middle East Eye, share news, infographics and photos directly from the conflict site. Through visual content platforms like Instagram can influence public perception. Images of war casualties, infrastructure damage or demonstrations can influence how people see the conflict. Using these platforms, activists, organizations and influencers raise public awareness and spread stories that support a particular side.

Social media like Instagram has turned into a digital arena for the war between Palestinians and Israelis. However, hate speech often appears on these platforms, escalating tensions. Hate speech is a type of hostile online communication that targets a social group to insult, demean, or belittle its members (Hawdon et al., 2017) in Scahmid (2022), Supporters of each side

used social media to spread stories that demeaned or insulted the other side in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that lasted for years, sensitive issues such as religion, land, and national identity became sources of hate speech. Hate speech carried out online not only affects human relations, but also increases social polarization and exacerbates the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) organization reported an increase in hate speech against Jewish and Muslim communities on social media platforms such as Instagram during the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in May 2021. Many hateful comments targeted the accounts of activists, communities, or news organizations such as Middle East Eye.

Social media has become a key place where the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has become one of the most polarizing issues in the world. People's perception of the conflict has been shaped by platforms such as Instagram, where narratives range from accurate to highly biased. The online media Middle East Eye focuses on news and analysis about the Middle East. The Instagram account has a large following and is often the topic of conversation about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. On Middle East Eye's posts, comments create polarization between Palestinian supporters and Israeli supporters. All groups tend to defend their own stories and attack the opposing group. Often, hate speech comes in the form of negative stereotyping, generalization, and dehumanization of the opposing party. Disagreeing parties are often described with words such as "terrorist", "occupier", and "murderer." Middle East Eye is a clear example of how

media platforms can be a source of data for researchers to study patterns of hate speech. By studying the hate speech found on this account, we can better understand the dynamics of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is one of the longest-running conflicts in the world. Often, Israeli media portrays Palestine as a security threat, while Palestinian media portrays Israel as an oppressor. This creates perspectives that influence the international community about the conflict. Media effects theory will be used in this study to investigate the relationship between media exposure and public attitudes towards hate speech. The research will assess whether certain media portrayals encourage the normalization of hate speech or foster resistance to it by analyzing how different types of media content affect audience perceptions.

Many studies have examined how social media facilitates political discourse, especially in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, most of these studies focus on broader platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, and often overlook the unique dynamics and patterns of engagement that exist on Instagram. As a visual-based platform with high user interaction in comments and posts, Instagram offers a distinct discourse space worthy of further exploration. filling this gap is to conduct a content analysis of posts, comments, and private messages to find the most common types of hate speech, such as generalizations, stereotypes, threats, or insults. monitoring the spread of hate speech by analyzing social networks, finding popular hashtags, and observing conversation trends.

This research aims to analyze hate speech on the “Middle East Eye” Instagram account in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This research will categorize the types of hate speech and it will also analyze the factors that contribute to the emergence of hate speech. As such, this research will help develop effective strategies to reduce hate speech on social media and promote its use. This research is expected to provide valuable information for policy makers, social media practitioners, and the general public on how to create a more equitable and inclusive digital environment.

B. Statements of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, the researcher formulates following the research questions:

1. What types speech Act are found in the hate speech produced on the Middle East Eye Instagram account regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict?
2. What factors contribute to the emergence of hate speech in comments on the Middle East Eye Instagram account related to the Israel-Palestine conflict?

C. Objectives of the Study

Based on the research questions described above, the study aimed to analyze hate speech related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict found on the Middle East Eye Instagram account . The specific objectives of this study are:

1. To identify and classify the types of speech acts found in the hate speech expressed in the comments on the Middle East Eye Instagram account regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict.
2. To explore the factors contributing to the emergence of hate speech in comments on the Middle East Eye Instagram account related to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

D.Significances of the Study

1. The Teachings of the English Language

The findings from this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of how language functions in digital communication, particularly on social media platforms such as Instagram. English teachers can use the insights from this study to teach students about the pragmatic aspects of language, especially speech acts and their role in conveying meaning, expressing emotions, and influencing others. This research can help enrich teaching strategies that involve pragmatic analysis of real-life language use in online contexts.

2. The Learning of the English Language

This study will increase students' awareness of language use on social media, especially in the context of sensitive issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Students can improve their pragmatic ability and critical awareness of language use by learning how speech acts function in hate speech. This will also help them become more intelligent and responsible language users in the digital environment.

3. Future Research on the Same Topic

This study provides a foundation for further pragmatics research, particularly the analysis of speech acts and hate speech in online communication. This study fills a research gap by focusing on Instagram, a platform that is often overlooked in pragmatics studies. Future research could explore other forms of online interaction, apply different pragmatic theories, or examine strategies to reduce hate speech and promote respectful communication on social media.

E. Scope and Limitation

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on analyzing hate speech related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from a pragmatics perspective; specifically, it analyzes different types of speech acts and factors that influence the emergence of hate speech. This study focuses on public comments and interactions containing hate speech in posts related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the Middle East Eye account. Social media interactions on Instagram are the focus of the analysis.

Limitations of the Study

The research is limited to Instagram specifically the Middle East Eye account. The research will analyze only a certain number of posts and comments from the Middle East Eye Instagram account during a selected timeframe (2021-2025). The selection of posts will be based on relevance to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The research will focus on publicly

available posts and comments on the Instagram account and will not include private interactions or messages.

G. Operational Definitions

To ensure clarity, and prevent misinterpretations, the researcher defines the following keyterms in the research:

1. Hate Speech

In this research, Hate speech is understood in its various forms, such as direct insults, threats, dehumanization, etc., which are used to classify and analyze its manifestations.

2. Middle East Eye Instagram account

Instagram is a visually-based social media platform that allows users to share content in the form of images, videos, stories, and scrolls accompanied by text descriptions or captions. Middle East Eye (MEE) Instagram account is the account of a UK-based independent digital news organization founded in April 2014 that focuses on reporting news, opinion, and analysis about the Middle East, North Africa, and the Muslim world as a whole, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

3. Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The Israel-Palestine conflict is a complex conflict spanning seven decades. This conflict began with the struggle for land, identity, and political rights in the Palestinian territories. Historical events such as the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 and the Balfour Declaration in 1917 exacerbated this conflict. Thousands of people have died, and refugees and infrastructure

damage have been caused by this conflict, which has led to political and social tensions between both sides. For years, peace efforts have been made through negotiations and agreements, but no significant progress has been achieved

4. Pragmatics

Pragmatics is the study of meaning in context, which examines how Instagram users convey implicit or indirect meaning through their comments. Pragmatics is used to reveal the speaker's intent behind hate speech related to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

5. Speech acts

Speech acts are the use of language to perform actions through utterances. Based on Searle's classification (1969), this study categorizes Instagram comments into five types of speech acts: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative, to identify how hate speech is constructed pragmatically.

