



LEXICON

ON ETHNO RELIGIOUS HATE SPEECH

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WHAT IS LEXICON ETHNO RELIGIOUS HATE SPEECH?

The Lexicon on Ethno Religious Hate Speech is made up of words and phrases used to show hatred between conflicting parties. In the case of the conflict in the three southern border provinces of Thailand, the conflict between the Thai state and the insurgency movement started in 2004, and the use of violence is still ongoing. Besides the direct violence used against government officials, insurgents, and civilians, indirect violence has been used and affects the coexistence between people in society. One of the most influential examples of indirect violence is hate speech.

Hate speech is a tool used to divide people. Language has been used to communicate hatred in many different forms from using everyday words and phrases to newly invented hateful expressions. The fluidity of language plays an essential role in the communication of hatred, as it is challenging to define a particular word or phrase as hateful.

This Lexicon is a collection of hateful Ethno Religious words and phrases, used online in the context of the conflict in Southern Thailand. It intends to conceptualize specific forms of hate speech terminology, identify origins of such

hate speech, and show practical examples of their use online. In doing so, the Lexicon aims to reduce the radicalization of hate speech messages and stop the potential for future social polarization. To achieve this, the Lexicon uses counter-messaging to address the impacts of harmful speech and narratives that contribute to conflict.

The Lexicon is one of many digital approaches to counter-narratives to prevent violence instigated by violent extremism. In this scenario, counter-narratives are applied to the hate sentiments that are perpetuated through the conflict in Southern Thailand. The expectation is that this Lexicon will support vulnerable individuals in the online world to positively affect relationships and de-escalate instances of violence in the offline world, amid the fragile relations of people in the ongoing conflict areas.

HOW IT WORKS

Enhancing the understanding of hate speech can be extended to various forms of communication, enabling people to keep an eye on those messages that occur online that may create hatred and physical violence for each other and keep cultural violence in the conflict areas.

This Lexicon works as an online dictionary with the aim of creating a common understanding of hateful speech in society. The Lexicon can also bring awareness to the use of language and can contribute to de-escalating hate and violent extremism by providing alternative language or counter-narratives. This approach is proposed by Chanchai Chaisukkosol as a 'counter-speech operation'. A counter-speech operation is a set of counter-narratives that challenges hate speech through reason and the sharing of polite, respectful perspectives¹.

Through adopting this approach, this Lexicon hopes to educate the public about specific words or phrases that have the potential to lead to violence and promote a culture that challenges tolerance of online hate. Moreover, this Lexicon could promote pluralism and diversity across online networks as a long-term approach to instilling respect and tolerance of people's differences, especially in conflict areas.

¹ Chanchai Chaisukkosol, "Hate Speech & Harmful Information: Alternatives for Political Response", Chanchai Chaisukkosol, June 16, 2011
<https://chaisuk.wordpress.com/2011/06/16/hate-speech-full-report/>

HATE SPEECH

Definitions of hate speech vary and change over time and in different social contexts. For example, in the 1980s, "hate" generally meant a strong dislike or opposition to something such as a person, a group of people, an idea, or objects in general. However, since the mid-1980s, hatred has been used in a narrower sense: it refers to the negative feelings of individuals towards identity groups such as race, color, sexual orientation, religion, political ideology, etc. In this context, hate overlaps with bias, prejudice, intolerance, and racism. After the 1980s, studies have defined hate speech as similar expressions of hatred, insults, or intimidation towards individuals or groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, or religion. At its worst, hate speech can also be considered part of dangerous speech. As explained by the Dangerous Speech Project, dangerous speech is:

“Any form of expression (e.g., speech, text, or images) that can increase the risk that its audience will condone or commit violence against members of another group”².

Hence, the definition of hate speech is controversial, and there is no consensus on its fixed boundaries. Despite the challenges with defining hate speech, there are some shared elements around the use of hate speech:

1. The devaluation or impairment of the target audience.
2. The focus on collective identities, not individuals.

² Dangerous Speech Project, “Dangerous Speech: A Practical Guide,” Dangerous Speech Project, August 4, 2020, <https://dangerousspeech.org/guide/>.

3. The use of hate speech can lead to discrimination or marginalization.

The hate speech used in the conflict in Southern Thailand contributed to the realization of two different worlds. One, an offline world where people interact with each other in person. . The other, is an online world where individuals interact virtually with no or little chance to experience interacting with others in person. .

Offline interactions between individuals in the context of Southern Thailand have played a significant role in weaving fragile relationships between groups in the conflict. However, social media platforms in some cases have been used to urge violence towards others in the context of the conflict in Southern Thailand. . This has potentially encouraged and contributed to the existence of online hate speech between Buddhists and Muslims. As a consequence, hateful individuals and groups have taken advantage of the speed, reach, and anonymity of online social media platforms to spread and entrench hate.

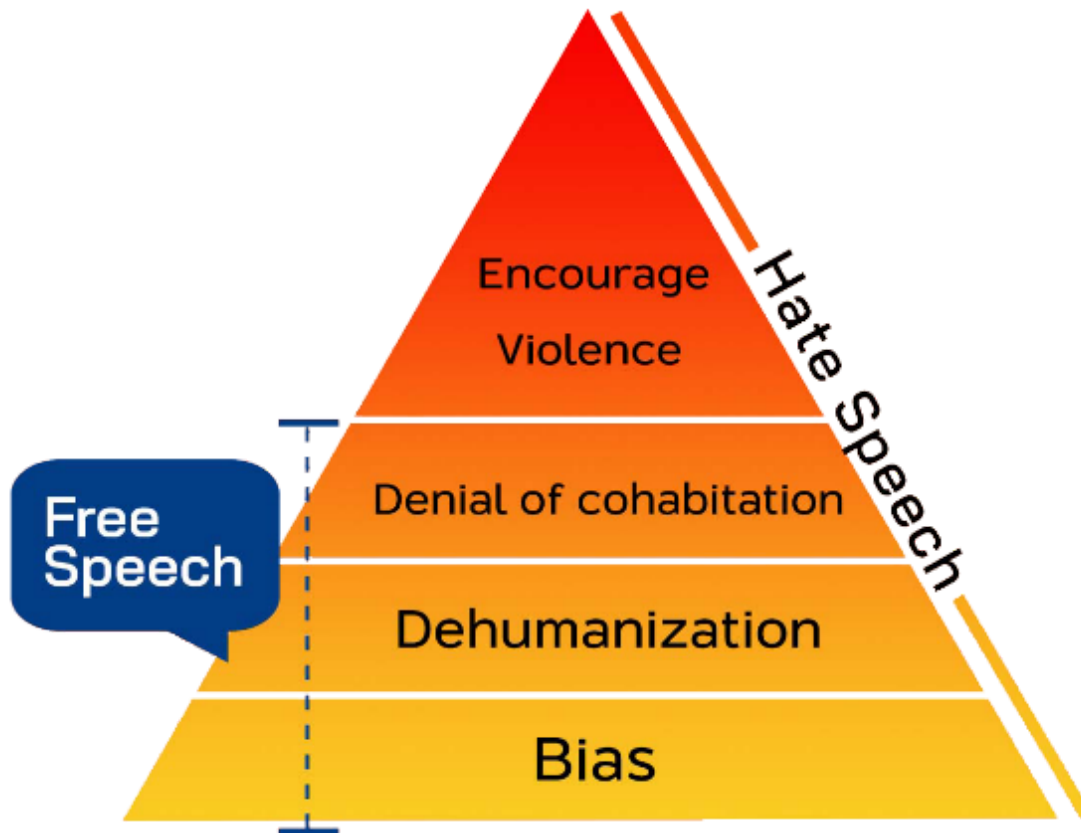
THE 4 LEVELS OF HATE

In 2021, the Patani Forum held in-depth interviews with scholars, journalists, and government representatives on the meaning of hate speech. Patani Forum found that people in society understand the meaning of hate speech in different ways:

First, the use of hurtful words and expressions, such as intentional and unintentional insults, bullying, insulting, inferiority, slandering opposites, and inciting violence against target groups; or

Second, through words and expressions that create explicit hatred or aim to cause violence against a target group, such as spreading stigma and degrading people — antagonizing the target audience and justifying the use of violence against opponents.

Therefore, according to Patani Forum's data collection and review of studies related to hate speech, as mentioned above, hate speech levels can be categorized into the following 4 levels of action:



The extent of classifying something as hate speech is linked to whether it can be classified as free speech and dangerous speech. For example, mild hate speech can be considered freedom of speech or speech that should not be restricted, whereas hate speech advocating for violence is considered part of dangerous speech.

To distinguish between hate speech and free speech, you should first look at the intention of the speech and whether it is provoking or creating hate. You should then consider relevant contextual elements such as the speaker's tone of voice, gestures, body language, social context, culture, and tradition. This will support you to determine whether the words and phrases used are devaluing, insulting or dehumanizing people, or not.