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"Go to hell, America you f*ing idiot" digital racism in the online netizen comments on online TV platforms

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to uncover the construction of digital racism in the comment sections of online TV platforms and explain the mechanisms of reproduction of discriminatory ideologies through language practices in the digital public sphere. The study uses a qualitative approach with van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis method, which integrates text structure analysis, social cognition, and social context. Data in the form of netizen comments that appeared in real time during international sports broadcasts were collected through non-participant observation, documented, and then analyzed through thematic coding, categorization of racist speech forms, and critical interpretation of linguistic aspects, ideology, and digital media characteristics. The results show that digital racism is present not only in the form of explicit hate speech, but also through more subtle discursive strategies, such as labeling racial and national identities, stereotypes based on physical characteristics, the use of pejorative diction, dehumanizing metaphors, irony, and humor that normalize discriminatory practices. The reproduction of racism is reinforced by the repetition of comments, affirmations between users, account anonymity, the speed of interaction, and weak content moderation so that racist speech is perceived as a normal part of match commentary culture. These findings confirm that language in digital spaces is not neutral, but rather serves to construct and legitimize racist ideologies through everyday communication practices. This research contributes to the development of critical linguistics and digital racism studies and emphasizes the importance of critical digital literacy, language ethics, and content moderation in creating an inclusive online public space.

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Introduction

The phenomenon of digital racism in the era of online media represents a contemporary reflection of a longstanding problem that has now metamorphosed through digital communication technologies. The shift of social interaction into online spaces opens new channels for the reproduction of hate speech based on race, ethnicity, and cultural identity. As explained by Schols & Maussen (2025), racism can no longer be understood merely as an individual attitude expressing racial hatred, but must be situated within a

structural and institutional framework in which social, economic, and cultural practices mutually reinforce one another in sustaining racial hierarchies. Racism is defined as discriminatory treatment or hatred experienced by individuals or groups based on their race or ethnic origin. This racism negatively impacts individuals' health and well-being, sense of safety, mobility, and access to education, employment, housing, healthcare, and other essential services (Kamp et al., 2024). Within the context of digital media, algorithms, communication platforms, and online cultural norms function as "cognitive and affective archives" that systemically perpetuate racial bias and prejudice (Young, 2022). Therefore, the comment sections on online television platforms are not merely arenas for users to express freely, but rather a new locus for the structural operation of racism, which is transformed into micro-aggressive interactions, stereotyping practices, and symbolic neglect toward certain racial groups (Temmerman & Mast, 2020).

Digital racism also represents an epistemological change in how to understand racism itself. Racist practices must be viewed as exclusionary and discriminatory actions embedded within complex systems of values, norms, and social practices (Arneback & Quennerstedt, 2016). Within this framework, racist speech in cyberspace is not merely a moral deviation of individuals, but rather a manifestation of broader systems of knowledge and power relations. Patterns of hate speech in comment sections, whether expressed explicitly or implicitly, indicate that online media play an active role in constructing new forms of racial discrimination that are flexible and adaptive to the logic of digital communication. This perspective aligns with the findings of Wong et al. (2021) who highlight three types of racial consciousness in modern societies - naive, bystander, and victim - which illustrate how individuals in digital public spaces often normalize or ignore subtle forms of discrimination due to a perceived lack of direct involvement.

Furthermore, the historical contexts underlying structural racism continue to resonate strongly within modern digital communication (Rattansi, 2020). The roots of racism lie in the histories of colonialism, imperialism, and global capitalism, which have produced dominant narratives of superiority attributed to certain groups (Schols & Maussen, 2025). These ideological traces are now manifested through the production of online discourse, as social media and news platforms function as digital replications of longstanding social structures. It is within this terrain that "digital racism" emerges as a site of contestation among visual, algorithmic, and discursive forms of representation that reinforce the marginalization of minority groups (Jackson et al., 2023). For instance, on online television platforms that broadcast multicultural content, comment sections frequently become spaces for the spread of racialized stereotypes and humor, thereby reinforcing social distance between "us" and "them."

At the psychosocial level, Petrucelli (2020) emphasizes the importance of understanding "the ism in racism" as a form of collective traumatization that is internalized by both perpetrators and victims. He highlights how microaggressions and symbolic violence generate deep feelings of isolation and humiliation. When transferred to digital spaces, such trauma becomes embedded within online affective circulations, such as likes, shares, and comments, that further strengthen the performativity of racism (Wang & Li, 2020). Accordingly, each comment that demeans a particular racial identity on online television platforms constitutes not merely a verbal act but also forms part of a structural chain that systematically produces a sense of "inferiority" through technological mediation (Jackson et al., 2023). Based on this discussion, the research question guiding this study is how digital racism is represented and normalized through netizens' linguistic practices in the comment sections of online television platforms.

Various studies have shown that contemporary racism no longer always manifests in overt discrimination, but increasingly operates through subtle, covert, and normalized discursive practices in everyday life. In Germany, research has shown that denying the existence of racism is a mechanism that maintains discriminatory ideologies and weakens the effectiveness of anti-racism movements (Kim & Steinhilper, 2025). Meanwhile, in Norway, racism more often manifests in the form of stereotyping, racialization, and symbolic exclusion, which are not always recognized as racist acts despite their impact on social discrimination (Ellefsen et al., 2022). In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia, racism has developed through narratives that link racial, ethnic, and migration identities with health threats, thus reinforcing social exclusion in public spaces (Ben & Elias, 2024). These three studies demonstrate that language plays a crucial role in constructing and reproducing racist ideologies, but their analysis has focused on the socio-political context, policies, or experiences of discrimination in general.

However, the discursive mechanisms that shape and normalize racism in real-time digital interactions, particularly in the comment sections of online TV platforms during international sports broadcasts, remain relatively understudied. This is even though online comment spaces are spontaneous communication arenas that enable the reproduction of stereotypes, identity labeling, dehumanization, and legitimization of racist speech through rapid, anonymous, and repeated user-to-user interactions. This gap highlights the need for an approach capable of uncovering how language choices not only represent social prejudices but also construct power relations and ideologies in digital communication. Therefore, this study employs van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis model, which integrates the dimensions of text structure, social cognition,

and social context to explain the discursive mechanisms of the formation, reproduction, and normalization of digital racism in the comment sections of online TV platforms.

The *state of the art* and the novelty of research on racism in the global context have undergone a significant paradigmatic evolution over the past two decades. Whereas racism was previously understood in a narrow sense as interpersonal bias manifested through individual hatred toward other groups, contemporary scholarship, as emphasized by (Schols & Maussen, 2025), has shifted toward a structural and institutional understanding of the concept. This change has major theoretical consequences because it demands that research no longer stops at analyzing individual behavior, but rather explores the social, political, and cultural systems that support the continuation of racism in modern life. Within this context, studies on digital racism constitute an increasingly important yet still underexplored area, particularly in the era of online media that generates new spaces of interaction between humans and technology. Digital platforms are no longer merely media of communication but have become arenas of meaning production in which racial identities are negotiated and reconfigured. In the international literature, this phenomenon is commonly referred to as digitalized racism, namely forms of racism mediated through algorithms, language, and digital culture.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) design based on van Dijk's model combined with Digital Speech Act Analysis as developed (Arneback & Jämte, 2022). The integration of these two approaches allows analysis not only of the linguistic structure of comments, but also of the pragmatic function of utterances as social acts that reproduce, legitimize, or normalize racism in the digital public sphere. While van Dijk's model is used to uncover the relationship between text, social cognition, and social context, digital speech act analysis is used to identify the communicative function of each comment, such as insults, labeling, stereotyping, provocation, justification, and normalization of racist utterances. This approach departs from the view that racism is a social construct that operates through discourse, symbols, and power relations, so the analysis focuses not only on the content of the utterances, but also on the mechanisms of meaning formation and discriminatory ideologies in the digital ecosystem (Balfour, 2020; Schols & Maussen, 2025).

This design allows each comment to be analyzed not only as a linguistic statement but also as a social act that plays a role in shaping racial perceptions and identities (Gavra & Bykova, 2023). This approach views language as a means of reproducing power and ideology that can both normalize and challenge social inequalities (Ortiz, 2020). Furthermore, the analysis also considers the affective dimensions of digital speech, such as emotions, reactions, and sentiments, which contribute to the reinforcement or perpetuation of racial bias in online interactions (Petrucelli, 2020).

The research data source is in the form of public comments uploaded by users in the comments column of online TV platforms that broadcast international sports matches. Data selection was carried out purposively with the following criteria: (1) comments published on broadcasts featuring athletes or teams from diverse racial, ethnic or national backgrounds; (2) comments are publicly available without access restrictions (Wong et al., 2021); (3) comments contain indications of racial representation, stereotypes, insults, or other forms of discrimination; and (4) comments are a direct response to the course of the match so they represent real-time digital interaction. All comments are collected during the specified observation period and documented in the form of a digital archive for analysis.

This study focused on national and regional online television platforms that have active public comment sections and broadcast content with diverse ethnic, cultural, or racial representations. The selection of online television platforms as the research site also held a strong epistemological basis. Based on the findings of (Wong et al., 2021), educational and public media constitute powerful spaces of social representation that significantly shape public racial perceptions. Online television platforms function as a new form of public media that extends social discourse from formal broadcast spaces into informal comment sections.

Data was collected using non-participant observation and digital documentation. Researchers observed interactions in the comments section without engaging in conversations or responding to users. All comments meeting the research criteria were documented through screenshots and transcriptions into the research corpus. At this stage, a screening process was conducted to eliminate duplicate comments, spam, and comments unrelated to the research focus.

The analysis was conducted in stages through five steps. First, all comments were read repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the interaction context. Second, open coding was conducted to identify speech units containing racial representations or discriminatory practices. Third, codes with similar characteristics were grouped into categories, such as racial labeling, stereotypes, pejorative diction,

dehumanization, racist humor, exclusive nationalism, and forms of normalization of discriminatory speech. Fourth, each category was analyzed using van Dijk's CDA framework across three dimensions: text structure (lexical choice, metaphors, rhetorical strategies, and argumentation patterns), social cognition (prejudice, shared knowledge, and ideology underlying the comments), and social context (relationship with digital media dynamics, user anonymity, and online comment culture). Fifth, each comment was analyzed as a digital speech act to identify its pragmatic functions, such as mocking, demeaning, inciting, legitimizing stereotypes, or gaining support from other users. The results of the analysis were then critically interpreted to explain the mechanisms of the formation and normalization of digital racism.

The credibility of the analysis was maintained through theoretical triangulation, integrating van Dijk's CDA and Digital Speech Act Analysis perspectives. Furthermore, the coding process was iterative to ensure category consistency, while the interpretation of each finding was always linked to the conversational context and relevant scientific literature, reducing subjectivity.

This research used only comments openly available in digital public spaces without any interaction with users. All account identities were anonymized during the reporting of the research results to maintain user privacy, in accordance with ethical principles of internet research. The data was used solely for academic purposes and analyzed without revealing any information that could identify specific individuals.

Results and Discussion

Overview of the Informants and Data Context

The data for this study were obtained from the netizens' comment section of an online television platform, namely Moji TV Live, which broadcast an international sports event. A total of more than sixty netizen comments were selected for analysis. These comments were posted within a specific time frame, from midday to the afternoon, and were published on September 4, 2025. The informants in this study consisted of anonymous netizens whose identities were anonymized using initials in accordance with ethical standards in digital media research.

The netizens' comments emerged in real time and were spontaneous. The comments reflected immediate reactions to the progression of the match. Overall, the comments are classified into three main categories: (1) neutral comments related to the score and the progression of the match; (2) supportive comments directed toward particular teams; and (3) offensive comments containing elements of racism, ethnic stereotyping, and derogatory speech.

This study specifically focused its analysis on three categories, as they exhibited the most obvious and problematic practices of digital racism. These three categories were selected because they presented how algorithms and user interactions could systematically reinforce racial prejudice in cyberspace. By examining these aspects, the study aimed to uncover patterns of discrimination that were often hidden behind the sophistication of digital technologies.

Forms and Frequency of Racist Utterances in Netizens' Comments

The results of the analysis indicated that **racist utterances occurred repeatedly**, both in explicit and implicit forms. One account, under the initials *L*vers w**lve* gs* b*d*ut*, dominated the production of offensive discourse, posting more than twenty comments containing derogatory content.

> "AMERIKA IDIOT" (02:10 pm)
> "CHINA IDIOT" (04:58 pm)
>
> "bodoh"
> [Stupid] (05:18 pm)

These utterances revealed a pattern of direct labelling, in which national identities were reduced to a single negative attribute. In addition, the use of capital letters indicated heightened emotional intensity and verbal aggressiveness. The use of this single label not only simplified a nation's complex identity but also served as a dehumanizing tool that reinforced the boundaries between "us" and "them." Visually, the emphasis through capital typography created an impression of intimidation aimed at dominating the conversation and silencing healthy dialogue space. Individuals in the community use everyday, agentic strategies, such as aspirations for invisibility, strategic "outing," and the formation of transformational alliances (Burç et al., 2025). This strategy is a main feature of racist discourse, in which the ingroup is positioned as superior while the outgroup is represented in negative and homogeneous terms.

Racism Based on Physical Characteristics and Racial Stereotypes

Besides direct verbal insults, the data also revealed physical trait-based racism, particularly targeting East Asian ethnic groups. This is evident in the following comments.

> “cina matanya burem wkwkkw” (05:15 pm)
> [Chinese people’s eyes are blurry LOL]
>
> “tikung woy sipit” (05:16 pm)
> [Cut in, hey, slanted eyes]
>
> “ayo sipit” (05:17 pm)
> [Come on, slanted eyes]

These comments demonstrated how physical characteristics were made as a basis for insult while simultaneously being reproduced as humor. The use of laughter markers (e.g., *“wkwk”*) indicated that racist utterances were positioned as entertainment rather than as problematic acts. This phenomenon pointed to the normalization of racism in digital spaces, where insults to human dignity were packaged in ways that consider them as a normal and light thing. Consequently, humor functions as a defensive mechanism that softens the offensive nature of such utterances, while also complicating efforts to confront perpetrators due to the justification of “just joking.” This practice illustrates how digital language simultaneously reproduces biological and cultural forms of racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). Racism that is hidden and cumulative, such as physical or mental abuse in childhood, as well as small acts such as using language that marks one's "foreignness", for example speaking English to a Finnish person or using language that alienates (Kähäri, 2025). Thus, racism was not only present at the level of explicit meaning but also through linguistic symbols that had been normalized within popular culture.

Patterns of Repetition and Discursive Dominance

The findings also revealed a pattern of repetitive racist utterances produced by the same account within a short time interval. For instance, the account anonymized as *L*vers w**lve* gs* b*d*ut* consecutively posted the following comments.

> “**MAMPUS AMERIKA ANAK IDIOT**” (02:02 pm)
> [You die, America, Idiot Kids]
>
> “**AMERIKA ANAK IDIOT**” (02:06 pm)
> [America, Idiot kids]
>
> “**AMERIKA IDIOT**” (02:10 pm)
> [America idiot]

This repetition indicated that racist utterances were not incidental but rather **intentional and continuously reproduced** as a form of symbolic domination within the comment sections. Such consistent message repetition functioned to collectively reinforce stigma, allowing racist narratives to gradually be accepted as general truth by digital audiences. Over time, this form of symbolic dominance through repetition generated a toxic environment that systematically marginalized targeted groups from participation in public spaces. Such representations are ideological, as they produce dominant meanings that appear natural, while in fact constituting social constructions.

Racism is considered something that is common and inherent in society, and the supremacy of a person's physical characteristics and character continues to be reproduced in social life (O’Neill, 2025). The netizens’ identities as dominant subjects were further reflected in their willingness to repeatedly use offensive utterances without guilt. This observation reinforced the argument that digital comment sections functioned as arenas for the production of symbolic superiority, in which racial insults were employed as tools for self-affirmation and self-identity (Nakamura, 2013).

Contrast with Non-Racist Comments

Interestingly, the analysis also identified neutral and supportive comments, such as:

> “SEMANGAT HOST…
> [KEEP GOING, HOST] 👶🏻👶🏻💛” (04:21 pm)
>
> “mesir tuh bagus ya… baru tau wkwk”
> [Egypt is actually good...just found out LOL] (04:59 pm)

The presence of these non-racist comments indicated that racism was not an automatic reaction among viewers, but rather a specific discursive choice made by certain netizens. This finding proved that identical content background does not uniformly trigger negative responses, instead, it depended on individuals' ideological dispositions and personal ethical frameworks. According to Billig (2001), humor is often employed as a mechanism for normalizing hate speech because the perpetrators are able to shield themselves behind claims of "just joking."

This racism appears in the form of denial, color-blindness, and erasure, which makes the environment a space that is already "always anti-racist" and thus hinders meaningful anti-racist action (Gebhard et al., 2023). This contrast between racist and non-racist comments highlights the existence of a negotiating space where netizens actually had full control over whether to reject or adopt discriminatory narratives. Perceptions of racism vary, with some people seeing it as an overt form of discrimination, while others see it as a more subtle and hidden problem (Peucker et al., 2024). Therefore, the presence of these objective voices served as a form of passive resistance that undermined the claim that digital racism was an inevitable collective consensus. Online TV platforms provided real-time comment sections that were spontaneous and highly emotional, particularly within the context of sports events. Such conditions tended to reinforce affective expression without ethical reflection.

The Critical Linguistic Analysis of Implicit and Ambiguous Utterances

In addition to explicit racist expressions, the data revealed the presence of comments that appeared linguistically neutral or joking but contained hidden ideological meanings, as follows.

> "mesir tuh bagus ya… baru tau wkwk"
> [Egypt is actually good. just found out LOL] (04:59 pm)

> "ini mah selebrasi semangat. Beda dgn tim kita"
> [This is an enthusiastic celebration. It's different from our team] (04:14 pm)

Textually, these utterances did not contain overt insults. However, from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, phrases such as *"just found out"* and *"different from our team"* functions as an implicit evaluation that places other groups in a previously inferior position. Such discourse includes a strategy of *positive self-presentation* and *negative other-presentation* that operates subtly but effectively in constructing symbolic hierarchies. Thus, racism did not solely appear in the form of explicit verbal abuse, but was also embedded in linguistic presuppositions that reflect latent prejudice. Discrimination and personal experiences of racism based on physical appearance (skin color), ethnicity, and religion, which occur in most societies, especially groups from non-indigenous backgrounds (Ben et al., 2024).

Social Representation through Nationality and Competence

Netizens commented, such as:

> "jauhin bang mesir" (05:09 pm)
> [Stay away, bro, Egypt]

> "kena mental lu mesiirrr" (05:17 pm)
> [You're mentally broken, Egypt]

The comments above represented certain national groups as threats or as subjects worthy of psychological humiliation. Such representations constructed a collective image in which the defeat or suffering of a particular team was framed as something to be celebrated. This phenomenon is often fueled by extreme rivalry, where the failure of an opponent is perceived as a moral victory for one's own group. As a result, empathy within the community is eroded and replaced by a culture of bullying normalized on social media.

Such representations are not neutral, as they frame other groups through narratives of negative emotion. In this context, nationality functioned as a social identity marker that was attached to meanings of weakness, failure, or deserved humiliation. This process reinforced symbolic boundaries between the ingroup and the outgroup. Despite educational backgrounds, there are nuances and variations in how certain groups navigate and combat everyday racism based on ethnic background and experience (Piwoni, 2025).

Typology of Digital Racism: Situational Racism and Sporting Euphoria

Further data revealed what could be described as *situational racism*, namely, forms of racism that emerge in response to the context of sports competition and mass euphoria, such as:

“ayo china tahan” (05:18 pm)
[Come on, China, hold on]

“ambil 1 set” (05:18 pm)
[Take one set]

“mental baja” (05:20 pm)
[Mentally tough]

These comments appeared supportive. However, when placed alongside previous racist remarks from the same account, a moral inconsistency emerged: performative support mixed with racial insult. This phenomenon is known as everyday racism, where racism is not always consistent or consciously ideological, but is present as a contextual, everyday social practice (Essed, 1991). In the euphoria of sport, the line between team support and racial insult becomes blurred, so that racism is considered “normal.” In the world of sport, we face various forms of systemic racism and sexism, such as microaggressions, microassaults, and microinvalidations, which cause significant emotional and social burdens (Clarkson et al., 2025). This emphasizes the importance of a materialist approach and critical social theory to understanding and countering racism as a phenomenon embedded in social and economic structures, not simply as a matter of individual attitudes or actions (Celikates, 2025).

Typology of Digital Media Contexts and Collective Interaction Dynamics

Further comments also revealed the dynamics of collective interaction, as reflected in short utterances such as:

“blog” (04:40 pm)
[dumb]

“hadeh” (05:17 pm)
[ugh]

“nicee” (05:20 pm)
“niceee” (06:07 pm)

Individually, these comments did not carry racist content. However, within a comment sections which had already full of offensive discourse, such minimal responses may be interpreted as a form of permissive silence or *silent endorsement*. The absence of rejection or correction of racist speech contributes to the normalization of hatred on social media (KhosraviNik, 2017). Real-time digital culture encourages rapid, rather than reflective, responses. This created a reactive and emotional communication environment, where problematic speech easily slipped through without ethical evaluation. This hate speech does not stand alone, but rather emerges in the context of existing racial tensions and often reinforces each other (Banga, 2024).

The language ethics used in the comments revealed the blurred line between support and discrimination, that the main problem is not only the rude, racist speech, but the blurring of ethical awareness of language. Many netizens seem unaware that their comments contribute to the reproduction of stigma, even if they are not explicitly racist. They often dismiss these remarks as mere banter or spontaneous criticism, without reflecting on the underlying bias. However, when these stereotypical comments are repeated en masse, discriminatory narratives against certain groups become more entrenched and accepted as normal.

Overall, this research showed that digital racism emerged explicitly and repeatedly through netizen comment patterns. This discriminatory practice placed racial and national identities as primary targets of insults, reducing the dignity of individuals and groups. This phenomenon became increasingly complex as racist narratives are often packaged in the form of humor and sporting euphoria to soften their offensive nature. Ironically, such practices continued to be produced on a massive scale due to weak platform moderation, which provided space for hate speech to grow without firm sanctions. This lack of oversight ultimately perpetuated symbolic domination that poisons interactions in digital spaces. Based on these findings, further analysis is necessary to examine the deeper meaning and sociological implications emerged. The social significance of these findings is expected to provide a strong foundation for formulating strategies to address digital racism in the future.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirmed that digital racism as not merely a momentary expression of emotion, but rather a structured and ideological practice of social discourse. The language in netizen

comments is not neutral, but rather represents power relations, ideology and social prejudice. From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, the language employed by netizens reflects broader power relations and systems of meaning (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2008). The use of labels such as "idiot" to refer to particular national groups demonstrates a process of symbolic dehumanization, in which the other group is represented as intellectually inferior. This practice is in line with the findings (van Dijk, 1998) that modern racism often operates through everyday language that seems ordinary, but is deeply ideological. Through this labeling, cultural or political differences are no longer debated rationally, but instead reduced to stigmas that attack their human dignity. Consequently, discrimination and unfair treatment of these groups are considered normal because they have been constructed as less valuable.

Netizens' comments in this study showed a sharp dichotomy between the ingroup and the outgroup. When netizens expressed support for a particular team, other groups were positioned as objects of mockery and derogation. This pattern confirmed Social Identity Theory Tajfel & Turner (1986) and Hall (1997) which states that individuals tend to enhance their group's self-esteem by demeaning other groups. In this context, racism functioned as an identity affirmation tool rather than merely as an expression of hatred. By insulting entities such as "America," "China," or "Egypt," netizens symbolically asserted their own position as parts of a perceived superior group. In social psychology, this mechanism is known as an attempt to boost the self-esteem of a group (in-group) by putting down another group (out-group). In this way, digital hate transforms into a kind of collective ritual that provides a false sense of pride and validation of netizens' own national identity.

One of the key findings of this study was the normalization of racism through humor and repetition. Utterances such as *"Chinese people's eyes are blurry LOL"* illustrated how racist expressions were reframed as jokes. Humor often functions as an effective strategy for normalizing hate speech because it removes the moral dimension (Billig, 2001). It is stated by Habermas (1984) that ideal public communication requires rationality, responsibility, and respect for other parties. In this data, this principle was frequently displaced by the logic of entertainment, collective emotion, and anonymity. As a result, language lost its deliberative function and is transformed into a tool for affective release. The repetition of racist utterances by the same account further amplified the normalizing effect. When such expressions do not receive sanction or correction, racism shifts from a deviant act to an accepted discursive practice. What should be a healthy exchange of ideas has instead become a shallow arena for polarization. The barrier of anonymity makes users feel free from social consequences, leading them to prioritize immediate emotional gratification over sound argument. Ultimately, public discourse no longer produces consensus or shared understanding, but merely perpetuates hostility.

The findings of this study supported the view that online media, particularly digital television platforms, play a significant role in the reproduction of racism. User anonymity and weak moderation contribute to what (Suler, 2004) mentions as the *online disinhibition effect*, a condition in which individuals feel free to violate social norms. Within this context, racism is no longer confined to extremist groups but becomes part of *everyday racism* (Essed, 1991) which is easily accessible and reproducible by ordinary users. Through constant digital interaction, racist jokes or comments are no longer considered serious moral violations, but rather part of the new normal. Ordinary users often reproduce these discriminatory narratives unconsciously, simply by following popular conversational trends on social media. As a result, the line between casual humor and racial prejudice becomes increasingly blurred, perpetuating structural discrimination in everyday life without triggering guilt.

Ethically, the findings of this study revealed a failure to use language wisely in the digital public spaces. Language, as stated by Bourdieu (1991), has symbolic power that can perpetuate social inequalities. Digital racism has the potential to reinforce stereotypes, discrimination, and intergroup conflict. Its social implications include weakened social cohesion and an increased tolerance toward hate speech. Racism cannot be addressed simply through superficial reforms or increased representation, as it is embedded in the structures of capitalism and global geopolitical conflicts. Therefore, to end racism comprehensively, an approach that recognizes the role of structural economics and politics is needed, as well as developing a visionary and action-oriented political project that challenges the foundations of capitalism and promotes long-term social transformation (Virdee, 2025). This approach emphasizes that racism is not simply individual prejudice, but rather a systemic instrument used to divide the working class for the benefit of a small economic elite. Therefore, the anti-racist struggle cannot stop at moral awareness campaigns or mere rhetoric of inclusivity on social media. It requires a collective movement capable of concretely overhauling the unequal distribution of resources and building new institutions rooted in universal social justice.

Therefore, this study emphasizes the urgency of stronger critical digital literacy and moderation policies. This study contributed to the study of digital racism by providing empirical evidence from the context of online television comment sections, an area that remained relatively underexplored. However, the limitation of this study lies in its focus on data from a single platform and broadcast context, therefore,

the generalization of findings should be approached carefully. Therefore, future academic research needs to broaden the scope of analysis by comparing the dynamics of digital racism across platforms and exploring the specific algorithms that trigger the escalation of hate speech. This expansive approach will not only enrich the theoretical body of knowledge on cyberracism but also yield more applicable and comprehensive content moderation policy recommendations.

Conclusion

This research demonstrates that digital racism in the comments sections of online TV platforms is not merely an expression of individual prejudice but is constructed and normalized through real-time discursive practices within interactions between netizens. The research findings demonstrate that this normalization process occurs through the repeated use of language strategies, mutually reinforced by other users' responses, and influenced by the characteristics of digital comment spaces that enable the rapid and collective reproduction of discriminatory meanings. Thus, language in digital spaces functions as a mechanism for the formation and legitimization of social ideology, not simply a medium for conveying opinions. Theoretically, this research expands the field of Critical Discourse Analysis by demonstrating that the reproduction of racism in digital media needs to be understood as a dynamic and collaborative discursive process, shaped through the simultaneous relationship between language choices, user interactions, and the digital communication context. Methodologically, this research demonstrates that the integration of van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis model with digital speech act analysis provides a more comprehensive analytical framework for uncovering the linguistic and social functions of online comments in constructing, maintaining, and legitimizing racist speech. Empirically, this research provides evidence on how sports commentary sections on online TV platforms become spaces for the spontaneous, interactive reproduction of racism, and are continually reinforced through normalization mechanisms between users. The practical implications of this research suggest that efforts to address digital racism should not simply focus on eliminating hate speech but also consider the discursive patterns that enable such speech to gain social legitimacy through user interactions. Therefore, the findings of this study can serve as a basis for developing content moderation policies that consider the context of discourse, developing digital literacy programs oriented toward pragmatic awareness and language ethics, and developing racist speech detection systems that identify not only offensive language but also discursive strategies that disguise discrimination. Ultimately, this research confirms that the novelty of digital racism lies not solely in the form of speech itself, but in the discursive mechanisms that collectively construct, normalize, and legitimize discrimination in real-time online television commentary spaces.

Declarations

Author contribution	:	Tri Indrayanti was responsible for the entire research project. She also led the manuscript writing and collaborated with the other authors. Agung Pramujiono, Ira Eko Retnosari, and Fajar Susanto participated in data collection and analysis. Sheptia Nurainy Putri and Catherine Yam-Oc Tabequero participated in data transcription. All authors actively contributed to the preparation, revision, and publication of the research output
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