

A Veil of Anonymity: Exploring Japanese Politeness Strategies in Comments on Video Streaming Platforms

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INTRODUCTION

- **Changing Interactions:** Online communication, especially on YouTube, alters human interaction.
- **Freedom of Expression:** Anonymity on YouTube allows users to express opinions freely.
- **Flaming Phenomenon:** Posting provocative or abusive comments is common (Rajapaksha et al., 2019).
- **Social Impact:** Flaming negatively impacts the social environment (Riyanto, 2017).
- **Politeness Strategies:** Analysis of comments using politeness strategies.
- **Anonymity's Role:** Integrating Suler's (2004) theory of anonymity to understand its influence on behavior.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Politeness Theory - Brown and Levinson (1978):

Concept of "Face": Positive face (desire for appreciation) and negative face (desire for freedom)

Face Threatening Acts (FTA): Actions that threaten someone's face

Strategies: Bald on Record, Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, Off Record

Anonymity Theory and Online Disinhibition Effect - Suler (2004):

Anonymity: State of being unidentifiable, leading to freer, often extreme behaviors

Online Context: Use of fake usernames, accounts, or anonymous forums

Online Disinhibition Effect Concept: Increased openness, expressiveness, or aggression online

Impact: Enhanced use of impoliteness strategies due to anonymity and disinhibition

METHOD

Data Collection

Tool	YouTube data scraper (Python scripts + YouTube API)
Dataset	50 comments from selected YouTube videos
Process	Comments reviewed and annotated for politeness strategies

Data Analysis

Framework	Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness strategies
Categories	Bald on Record, Positive Politeness, Negative Politeness, Off Record
Approach	Detailed context analysis to categorize comments
Examples	3 comments per strategy discussed in detail

Integration with Theory

Theory	Suler's (2004) theory of anonymity
Goal	Examine how anonymity affects the use of politeness strategies in online communication

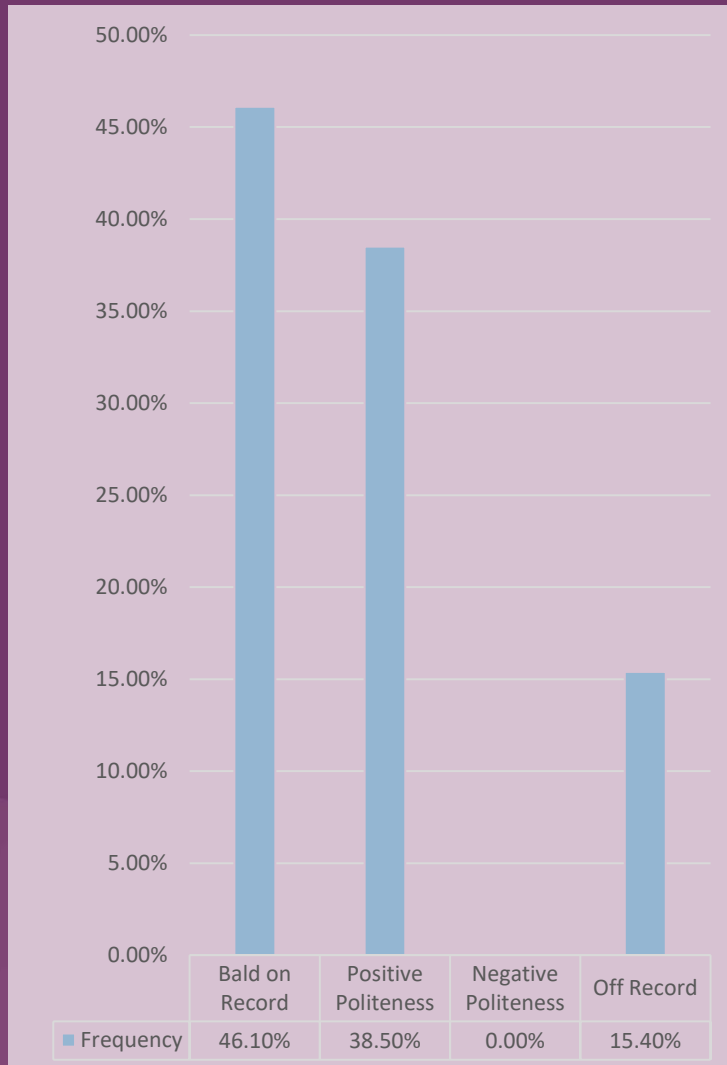
FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Politeness Strategies Usage:

1. **Bald on Record:** 24 comments (46.15%) – Most frequent; direct and candid communication.
2. **Positive Politeness:** 20 comments (38.46%) – Empathy and support; fosters social bonds.
3. **Off Record:** 8 comments (15.38%) – Indirect expressions and metaphors.
4. **Negative Politeness:** Absent – No signs of minimizing coercion or showing respect.

Implications:

Anonymity leads to less accountability, reducing the use of Negative Politeness. Increased directness (Bald on Record) and emotional support (Positive Politeness) observed.



FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Off Record

[OR-3]

「闇より出でて闇より黒くその穢れ
を禊ぎ祓え」

*Yami yori idete yami yori kuroku sono
kegare o misogi harae*

“Come forth from the darkness,
darker than the darkness, and purify
that which is tainted.”

- Comments use metaphors and hypothetical scenarios to convey messages subtly.
- Poetic language suggesting "purification," metaphorically addressing Mikeneko.
- Metaphors and poetic language allow for indirect communication and avoid direct confrontation.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Connection Between Politeness Strategies and Anonymity Theory:

1. Increased Directness: Anonymity leads to more **Bald on Record** strategies; users are blunt and less concerned about social repercussions.
2. Positive Interaction: **Positive Politeness** thrives; anonymity allows for empathy and community building without judgment.
3. Absence of **Negative Politeness**: Reduced use of indirectness and politeness due to lack of social pressure.
4. **Off Record** Strategies: Indirect language and metaphors used to avoid confrontation.

CONCLUSION

- The objective of this research is to analyze politeness strategies in YouTube comments on Mafumafu and Mikeneko scandals and their relationship to anonymity theory.
- Key Findings:
 1. Bald on Record: Most frequent; anonymity fosters direct communication.
 2. Positive Politeness: Prominent; anonymity enables empathy and social bonding.
 3. Negative Politeness: Absent; reduced need to minimize coercion.
 4. Off Record: Used for indirect expression of complex ideas.
- The implication of this research is anonymity significantly influences politeness strategies, leading to direct interactions.

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