

Politeness Strategy as Humor Etiquette in Crazy James's Humorous Postings on YouTube

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ABSTRACT

Today's Internet users engage in humorous exchanges on a daily basis, and the risk of misunderstanding extends from personal interactions to broader societal implications - from workplace collaboration breakdown to cross-cultural diplomatic frictions to algorithmic amplification of polarized humor communities. This urgency requires us to decode the contextual alchemy of humor through interdisciplinary synergies that bring together sociolinguistics, media ecology, and conflict resolution research. In this context, we analyze the language of YouTube creator Crazy James, apply Bauman's behavioral theory and Brown & Levinson's politeness theory to study how humor and politeness jointly construct online identities, and investigate whether humorous utterance is a politeness strategy or a potential conflict trigger. Using a hybrid approach, we quantify the video language of Douyin blogger Crazy James, summarized as instances of polite and impolite humor. This paper will combine the context of the blogger's content, audience perception and performance style to analyze the politeness strategy embodied in Crazy James's humorous YouTube microblog as humor etiquette. Our results highlight the impact of blogger language on audience diversity and cultural recontextualization under platform norms, suggesting practical strategies for humor grooming across digital and cultural boundaries to promote inclusive, context-sensitive communication.

Keywords: Humorous Communication, Politeness Construction, Context-dependency, Group Identity, Cross-cultural Communication

INTRODUCTION

Humor in the digital age is no longer just a source of entertainment; It has evolved into a sociolinguistic tool, a cultural bridge, and sometimes even a weaponized form of discourse, with humorous content now crossing linguistic, national, and ideological boundaries. Content creators such as Crazy James, with millions of followers, use humor to project identity, critique social structures, and foster para-social intimacy.

Nowadays, Internet users around the world engage in humorous exchanges every day, and humor has become a ubiquitous discourse type in online communication. However, the inherent ambiguity and contextual dependence of humor have a paradoxical effect on digital etiquette. On platforms such as YouTube, humor can promote social connections with the risk of offending people, especially between cultural or ideological divides.

In the field of digital communication, humor is a powerful tool for inclusion and exclusion. In today's digital media ecology, humor is both a lubricant and a disruptor of online communication. Platforms such as YouTube have become vibrant Spaces for user-generated humor that is simultaneously performative and political. In this context, the tension between humor and politeness presents a paradox: while humor tends to strengthen group cohesion and soften discourse, it can also lead to misunderstandings, offenses, and even cultural clashes. This study centers on YouTube content creator Crazy James, whose content is known for satire and highly performable humor, investigating how his humorous language constructs politeness or impoliteness in different contexts.

This duality raises important theoretical and practical questions: how is politeness conveyed through humorous discourse? Under what circumstances does humor promote social harmony and under what circumstances does it undermine it? This study aims to explore these questions by examining the YouTube content of Crazy James.

Digital humour complicates this idea with its multimodal, performative, and cross-cultural features. Previous research has frequently framed humour as a "positive politeness strategy" (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Comedy must negotiate difficult standards of decency, identity, and reception in the YouTube ecosystem, where algorithmic amplification and performance are paramount.

The focus of this study is Taiwan-based YouTuber Crazy James, who is well-known for his highly stylised humour and satire. We examine how his humorous discourse serves as both etiquette and possible provocation by utilising Brown & Levinson's (1987) politeness theory and Bauman's (1977) performance theory.

The following enquiries serve as the foundation for this study: First, what role does Crazy James's humour play in the construction of relational meaning and digital identity through politeness strategies? Second, how does humorous discourse in a cross-cultural digital space either foster interpersonal conflict or social harmony? Thirdly, how is the audience's perception of humorous politeness mediated by platform-specific features?

We seek to understand how humour functions as a strategic communicative act in performative digital environments by employing a hybrid methodology that combines qualitative discourse analysis and quantitative content analysis. In the context of modern media ecology, this study advances a nuanced understanding of humour and digital politeness as cultural etiquette.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Humor in Digital Communication

The digital domain provides a rich context for humorous interaction, but removes many contextual cues such as tone and facial expressions (Reyes et al., 2012). Memes, GIFs, and irony all constitute multimodal problems for understanding intent and politeness (Dresner & Herring, 2010). The politeness model of Brown & Levinson (1987) distinguishes between positive politeness, which emphasizes solidarity, and negative politeness, which respects autonomy. But digital humor tends to undermine these distinctions. Although Dynel (2009, 2016) argues that online forms of sarcasm, sarcasm and snarks can be considered impolite, depending on the viewer's inference. Piskoska (2021) claims that the Internet has become a medium and presence for humor, with a deeper cultural importance.

Cross-cultural studies of digital humor further reveal that what is considered humorous and polite in one context can be offensive in another. Shifman & Blondheim (2021) examines how Western humor values subversion and irony, while many Asian cultures value harmony and indirection, leading to conflicting interpretations. Rhee (2023) similarly highlights how Korean netizens use honorific words and sarcasm in ways that Western viewers might completely misread.

Moreover, the interpretation is further complicated by the concept of "contextual collapse" (Marwick & boyd, 2011). Content creators must channel audiences of diverse cultural backgrounds, social status, and familiarity, all of which are compressed into a single imaginary audience. This complicates the intent of humor and the strategy of politeness. According to Liles (2024), humor on social platforms is increasingly used as a form of simulation - the implementation of imagined social interactions for entertainment and engagement.

Digital humor also incorporates an element of algorithmic visibility. For example, TikTok's For You Page (FYP) promotes content that engages users - often with provocative or ambiguous humor. This dynamic affects the style decisions of creators, and humor is adapted for shareability rather than interpersonal clarity. Graham (2022) notes that TikTok humor is embedded in subculture "norm clusters" that reward fast-paced, over-the-top, and emotionally resonant content.

In addition, humor often blurs the line between private and public discourse. Holden and Lewis (2011) found that journalists and influencers on Twitter strategically use humor to humanize their brands or soften controversial messages. This concept is similar to Crazy James's approach to humor as a socially acceptable way to critique authority, express frustration, or invite solidarity.

Reframing Politeness Theory in Digital Contexts

The politeness theory of Brown and Levinson (1987) is still a cornerstone of language and social interaction research. Recent research, however, urges that the model be modified for use in media and performative contexts. According to Sapitri et al. (2019), politeness is a dynamic social practice that is influenced by cultural background, audience, and intention. Politeness tactics are applied and interpreted differently in different contexts rather than following set formulas.

Isabella et al. (2022) go on to show how multimodal texts, such as films, can help people internalise politeness. Their results demonstrate that politeness is not only linguistic but also performative, visual, and contextual—a fact that naturally translates to YouTube humour. To determine whether a message is courteous, rude, or ambivalently humorous, viewers use a mix of audiovisual cues, body language, and dialogue.

This multimodal interpretation of politeness is consistent with Dynel's (2016) idea of "pragmatic ambiguity," which holds that the politeness value of a humorous act frequently varies depending on the audience's interpretation as well as the creator's intent. Such ambiguity is increased in digital spaces due to the variety of audience backgrounds and the lack of real-time feedback.

Synthesis and Research Gap

Although recent research has examined politeness as a learnt, performative skill (Isabella et al., 2022) or multimodal humour (Bernad-Mechó & Girón-García, 2025), few have examined how humorous politeness is negotiated in cross-cultural, performative digital spaces like YouTube.

By combining Brown & Levinson's politeness model with Bauman's performance theory, this study aims to close that gap by investigating how a creator such as Crazy James constructs relational meaning through multimodal humorous strategies. It looks at how humour functions as both entertainment and a kind of online etiquette, especially when it comes to handling audience diversity, cultural sensitivity, and face issues.

This study does not explore the algorithmic mechanisms underlying content visibility or recommendation systems, despite the fact that platform affordances like comment visibility and engagement metrics probably affect how humour and politeness are performed and interpreted. By investigating how platform logic mediates the relationship between humour styles and perceived politeness, particularly in relation to content amplification and user exposure, future research may build on this work.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Bauman's Performance Theory (1977)

Bauman's theory of performance defines all speech acts as performance acts, assessed not only in terms of content but also in terms of delivery, context, and stylistic skills. Performance is, by its nature, an interactive achievement: speakers frame their utterances as artistic, labeled, or stylized in order to achieve a specific social goal. This lens is particularly powerful when analyzing online content creation, where performance is Paramount and audience feedback is instantaneous.

On a platform like YouTube, humor is not just "what to say," but "how to say it." Visual cues (such as clothing, facial expressions), audio cues (such as pitch, timing), and multimodal elements (such as subtitles, filters) all contribute to the construction of polite or impolite performances. Crazy James exploits these characteristics, exaggerated tone and copy, to make his satire both funny and readable.



Figure 1: Viewer reactions to Crazy James's satirical performance in the "India Series" video.

Crucially, Bowman highlights how the audience can actively participate in the interpretation, validation, or rejection of a performance. This communication is consistent with the evaluation feedback loop provided by YouTube comments. In Figure 1, we present a selection of audience comments on "India Series" video sketches by Crazy James. The responses range from appreciation to discomfort, reflecting the multifaceted nature of understanding humor and politeness in a digital context. Comments such as "so funny" and "same feeling" reflect the diverse interpretations of different audiences based on personal, cultural, and platform contexts. The audience's interpretation of Crazy James's intentions, whether amusing criticism or offensive mockery, captures the blurred line between politeness and impoliteness in performance communication.

In addition, Bowman's framework reveals the intertextuality of online humor. Performers often use shared formats or tropes to promote community recognition by echoing or mashup other digital content. In this process, humor is both a sign of cultural literacy and a form of entertainment.

Brown & Levinson's Politeness Theory (1987)

Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness remains a cornerstone for understanding how speakers deal with face in interactions. Central to this model is the concept of "face", "face-threatening behavior", and strategies to minimize social friction. The concept of politeness is positive (enhances solidarity) or negative (maintains autonomy).

Both strategies are visible in the Crazy James video. Positive politeness is achieved through inclusive humor, such as self-deprecating jokes or shared frustrations. Negative politeness appears in hedging strategies, such as using disclaimers ("Don't take it at me, but...") or exaggerates to distance the speaker from the literal intent. However, as highlighted by Dynel (2016), these strategies are not foolproof in digital environments where tone and intent can be misinterpreted.

The theory is also useful for analyzing impolite behavior, especially when the humor targets authority figures or social stereotypes. While bad manners can hurt face, it can also serve community building, especially when faced with common frustrations. James's taunting of middle management may thus simultaneously threaten and preserve face, depending on the orientation of the audience.

Scholars such as Culper (2005) have extended this theory by emphasizing "strategic disrespect" -intentionally provoking an emotional response or creating a social connection. This is consistent with algorithmic incentives in the YouTube ecosystem: provocative content attracts more attention and engagement, often obfuscating the distinction between offensive and entertaining.

Style and Ecology of the Platform

In any theoretical framework for digital politeness, the availability and limitations of the platform itself must be taken into account. What is "appropriate," "interesting," or "relevant" is determined by YouTube's algorithm, which favors short, emotionally impactful content. Bernad-Mecho (2023) argues that satire, exaggeration, and absurdity are often rewarded in YouTube humor norms, which is consistent with youth subculture and memetic aesthetics.

In addition, courtesy tagging is also affected by platform specifications. Subtitles, sound effects, and emojis are used to convey tone, discourage face-threatening behavior, or encourage affiliated reading. For example, a winking expression coupled with a sarcastic comment may imply sarcasm and allow the audience to read more kindly. The framework developed by Brown and Levinson extends to the vision-language domain with this multimodal politeness.

In another example (Figure 2), Crazy James uses a first point of view (POV) skit to talk about his cultural experience in Japan. The video's camera composition, body language, and background music work together to create a subtle and humorous expression, demonstrating how performance elements can reinforce the communication of politeness strategies in cross-cultural communication.

Moreover, "environmental belonging" -a sense of community built on shared ideals, symbols, or fads -is often encouraged by platform culture. To create politeness through stylistic consistency and familiarity, creators such as Crazy James combine their acting styles with popular forms such as POV sketches or "relevant moments".



Figure 2: A screenshot of Crazy James using POV sketch style in "My Flying Life in Japan 1."

In summary, understanding humorous politeness on YouTube requires an integrated framework that combines performance theory, traditional politeness theory, and platform-specific norms. These intersecting levels explain how creators can navigate social expectations while producing humor that is both context-aware and strategically represented.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, a hybrid approach combining quantitative content analysis with qualitative discourse analysis was used. The rationale for this hybrid approach lies in the need not only to identify humorous and polite/impolite expression patterns in Crazy James YouTube content, but also to interpret these patterns in the context of specific socio-cultural and performance contexts that affect audience perception. Given the inherently multimodal and performable nature of YouTube, a purely quantitative or linguistic approach would not capture the subtle interplay between verbal, visual, and contextual cues that constitute humor and politeness in this environment. Based on the above, hybrid research methods can achieve the purpose of effective data analysis.

Data Collection

The James channel focuses on his extensive flight experience and personal life. He combines expert aviation knowledge with light humor through short YouTube videos. His video content is mainly divided into the following categories: flight and aviation knowledge, travel and cultural experience, personal growth and inspirational stories, live and interactive programs, and aviation insider and commentary. James' channel is rich and diverse, combining expertise and personal experience to provide viewers with a unique perspective and value. His channel has a lot of influence and attention. Figure 3 presents the interaction data (number of views, likes, and comments) for the four most popular Crazy James videos analyzed in this study. These data visually corroborate the popularity and visibility of the selected samples on the platform, thus proving their analytical value.



Figure 3: Engagement metrics of Crazy James's four most viewed YouTube videos.

According to the public profile, Crazy James is the creator of YouTube and has more than 512,000 subscribers on YouTube's single platform. His channel has posted 662 videos with a total of more than 83 million views since its inception in 2011, and the average number of views per movie is about 92,475(Taiwan Observatory, n.d.).

Crazy James's video content is mainly divided into Flight Diaries, travel& Culture Commentary, Aviation Tips & Safety, Skits & Pilot Memes, Q&A & Myth-busting, Behind-the-Scenes & Daily Life, Trends & Collaborations seven main types. The sample selection of this study tends to select travel& Culture Commentary works with a large proportion of language and obvious personal style among all the most popular works of Crazy James for analysis. A total of five samples were selected for this study, and the average length of the sample was 20 minutes to ensure that the number of language samples available was sufficient. The videos were selected based on three criteria: high engagement (at least 100,000 views per video) and humorous style (such as sarcasm, sarcasm, exaggeration). Since all selected material is publicly available and in English, the analysis process is accessible and transparent.

This study analyzed five of the most popular travel& Culture Commentary Crazy James content videos on YouTube." India "Incredible Essence Edition Everything You Need to Know About Curry Country", (Middle episode) "India" Incredible Essence Edition All You Need to Know about Curry Country 2 ", "(Part 2)" India "Incredible Essence Edition All You Need to Know about Curry Country 3", "From Fans to Flight Partners: An Extraordinary Day in the Los Angeles Sky ", "(Part 1) [Essence] My Flying Life in Japan 1". The analysis includes linguistic cues of subtitles such as dialogue, intonation, emoji use, and background music, and detecting changes in intonation, polite words, and humor techniques is an important step in this process.

This three-content analysis of creator output, linguistic content, and audience acceptance strengthens the validity of the study and can infer how politeness and humor co-construct digital identity and relational meaning on YouTube.

Data Framework

Based on Dynel's (2016) pragmatic taxonomy of humor and Brown & Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, a two-level coding system was used to classify speech acts in transcribed texts. Humorous politeness is a friendly policy that promotes social cohesion, such as self-deprecating, including jokes or related situations (such as disasters or common work setbacks). Impolite humor is defined as humor that may be construed as offensive or threatening to others, including stereotyping, taunting, or exaggerated satire. Ambiguous humor mainly relies on phrases with tone, cultural allusions, or contextual cues. For example, the second subclass of impolite humor is defined as Sarcasm. The first feature is "superficial identification with irony, often accompanied by reverse tone or dry laughter". The second feature is Crazy James's phrasing habits, such as the habitual long "oh" and "ah" before sarcasm. These two features were used as sample lines in the coding process, and their keywords were identified as "Don't look at me..." in the Python script of the first round of information retrieval. ", "So this thing..." "Oh, so..." Etc. To ensure reliability, after script coding, the second round of retrieval was performed by extracting the related vocabulary of manually selected humorous sentences and politeness strategies from video captions, which were resolved by discussing and cross-referencing differences in the definition theories of politeness and humor.

Research Limitations

While the study provides insights into the intersection of humor and politeness in performative digital contexts, there are some limitations. Firstly, the dataset is limited to one content creator who is mainly from a background in Taiwan, China. Therefore, the findings may not generalize across creators with different cultural or linguistic norms.

Secondly, audience readings are inferred from visible comments that are self-selected and do not represent silent viewers or those who interpret the content differently but do not express an opinion. In addition, YouTube's algorithm manages the visibility of comments, which may bias explanation patterns toward more emotionally resonant or controversial responses.

Finally, the analysis is limited to Chinese and some English content, and does not include multilingual humor strategies that may introduce additional complexity to the perception of cross-cultural politeness. Future research could employ cross-language and cross-platform comparisons to validate and extend these findings.

RESULTS

Quantitative Results

To analyze Crazy James's use of humor, we first compared the frequency of different humorous expression categories in each video. Table 1 presents the number of these categories in the five videos.

| Frequency Statistics of Humorous Terms | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|--|---------------|--|---------------|--|---------------|---|---------------|--|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Video titles | | (Part 1) "India" Incredible Essence edition All you need to know about Curry Country | | (Middle episode) "India" Incredible Essence Edition All you need to know about Curry Country 2 | | (Part 2) "India" Incredible Essence Edition All you need to know about Curry Country 3 | | From fan to flying buddy: An extraordinary day in the Los Angeles Sky | | (Part 1) [Essence] My flying life in Japan 1 | | |
| Result sequence number | Category | Number of occurrences | Frequency (%) | Number of occurrences | Frequency (%) | Number of occurrences | Frequency (%) | Number of occurrences | Frequency (%) | Number of occurrences | Frequency (%) | Average frequency of occurrence |
| 1 | Irony | 8 | 20.00% | 18 | 10.53% | 16 | 16.33% | 6 | 5.00% | 8 | 8.20% | 12.01% |
| 2 | Hyperbole | 8 | 20.00% | 7 | 4.09% | 6 | 6.12% | 9 | 7.50% | 12 | 12.20% | 9.98% |
| 3 | A Parody | 2 | 5.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 3 | 2.50% | 5 | 5.10% | 2.52% |
| 4 | Sarcasm | 7 | 17.50% | 11 | 6.43% | 9 | 9.18% | 8 | 6.70% | 10 | 10.20% | 10.00% |
| 5 | Absurdity | 7 | 17.50% | 13 | 7.60% | 12 | 12.24% | 5 | 4.20% | 7 | 7.10% | 9.73% |

Figure 4: Frequency statistics of humorous expressions in different videos by Crazy James.

These data reveal patterns of usage of humorous expressions in Crazy James videos. As shown in Table 1, irony was used most frequently (56 times in total), followed by sarcasm (45 times) and absurdism (44 times). Exaggeration was also frequently used (for example, 12 times in video 5), while parody was least frequently used (0 in both videos 2 and 3, 10 times in total). In particular, Video 2 ("India... Irony (18 times) and absurdity (13 times) were used very frequently in Curry Country 2 ". In contrast, Videos 4 and 5 have a more balanced distribution of humorous expressions. This is consistent with research showing that irony and sarcasm are often the main elements of humor. For example, Figure 4 shows that video 4 has the lowest total number of humorous expressions (31), indicating that obvious humor is less used in this set; The Indian series (Videos 1-3) uses more humor.

Qualitative Examples

Polite Humor:

In one video, James talks about forgetting people's names at work and calling them "boss." This exaggeration elicited laughter and resonance in the comments: "Haha, I do it all the time!"

Impolite Humor:

A skit that satirizes "middle managers talking" uses exaggerated accents and smutty expressions. Viewers have commented on "accurate 🤖," while others have commented on "cringe" and "This is classism."

| Politeness Strategy Frequency Statistics | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---------------|--|---------------|--|---------------|---|---------------|--|---------------|---------------------------------|
| Video name | | (Part 1) "India" Incredible Essence edition All you need to know about Curry Country | | (Middle episode) "India" Incredible Essence Edition All you need to know about Curry Country 2 | | (Part 2) "India" Incredible Essence Edition All you need to know about Curry Country 3 | | From fan to flying buddy: An extraordinary day in the Los Angeles Sky | | (Part 1) [Essence] My flying life in Japan 1 | | |
| Result sequence number | Category | Number of occurrences | Frequency (%) | Number of occurrences | Frequency (%) | Number of occurrences | Frequency (%) | Number of occurrences | Frequency (%) | Number of occurrences | Frequency (%) | Average frequency of occurrence |
| 1 | Positive Politeness (positive politeness) | 0 | 0.00% | 1 | 0.58% | 1 | 1.02% | 12 | 10.00% | 6 | 6.10% | 3.54% |
| 2 | Fuzzy Strategy | 7 | 17.50% | 6 | 3.51% | 7 | 7.14% | 7 | 5.80% | 4 | 4.10% | 7.61% |
| 3 | Negative Politeness | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 0 | 0.00% | 9 | 7.50% | 8 | 8.20% | 3.14% |
| 4 | Bald-on-record (bluntness strategy) | 2 | 5.00% | 5 | 2.92% | 5 | 5.10% | 15 | 12.50% | 18 | 18.40% | 8.78% |

Figure 5: Frequency statistics of polite strategies used in different videos of Crazy James

Figure 5 shows the use of the politeness strategy humorously used in Crazy James videos: the fuzzy strategy appears evenly across all videos; Positive politeness was used more in video 4 and video 5 (12 and 6 times), and hardly used in the other videos. Negative politeness only appeared in video 4 (9 times) and video 5 (8 times); The explicit strategy increases significantly in video 4 (15 times) and video 5 (18 times). Table 2 also shows that the total number of uses of the politeness strategy for Video 4 (43 times) is much higher than for video 1 (9 times). These patterns indicate that more direct or facial threatening language is used in the Japanese themed videos. According to Brown and Levinson, friendly situations (such as humorous scenes in the Indian series) tend to use positive politeness strategies (ej-lang.org), while face-conscious situations (such as other travel videos) tend to use negative politeness or direct expressions (ej-lang.org).

Overall, these data suggest that Crazy James ADAPTS humor and politeness strategies to the context of the video. In the series of Indian tourism videos, humorous expressions are frequent and explicit politeness strategies are less. However, in Japanese videos, more direct politeness strategies are used. It shows that the balance: different India series humor to enhance intimacy (positive politeness) better (ej-lang.org5minuteenglish.com), and other video more resort to the traditional negative politeness or direct expression to maintain the "face" (ej-lang.org). This finding is in line with the expectations of politeness theory: relaxed, humorous interactions tend to reinforce positive interactions, while formal Settings place greater emphasis on respecting the negative face

of the listener. Each table clearly shows how Crazy James combines humor and politeness strategies in different situations to achieve the effect of humor etiquette.

Audience Interpretation Patterns

When facing the audience, Crazy James cleverly ADAPTS his humor style to suit different cultural backgrounds. First of all, he grew up in the Chinese community and has a natural sensitivity to the "soft and euphemistic" Oriental humor. And as a frequent captain on Western flights, he understands the power of direct sarcasm and slang in Western contexts.

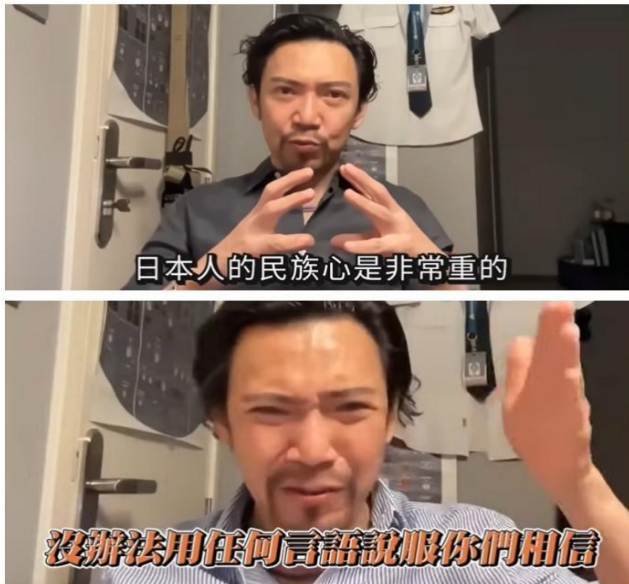


Figure 6: Crazy James is more reserved in the Japanese series of videos and more direct in the Indian series of videos.

In his videos for India, he brings the local food culture to life by incorporating a lot of over-the-top sarcasm, making humorous jokes about Indian food in a ridiculous and loving way. It vividly presents the exotic experience of "Curry Country" food, which is not only in line with the "respect and tolerance" emphasized by Taiwanese video creators, but also magnifies cultural differences by "absurdity". In the Los Angeles episode of The Flight Diaries, his style of humor is more American, using local slang and culturally relevant memes to effectively interact with the audience. On the Japanese leg, his humor became more reserved and observational, and because he understood that Eastern cultures generally appreciated implicit humor. For example, Figure 6 he relied more on body language, facial expressions and background sound effects to create "mildly absurd" situations rather than deliberately mocking people or institutions. This kind of humor overcomes language barriers through body movements, exaggerated expressions, and other nonverbal cues, allowing him to transcend cultural differences and bring smiles to audiences from different cultural backgrounds.

It is worth noting that this "cultural adaptation" strategy is not only rooted in Crazy James's personal cultivation of Taiwanese culture, but also constrained by the algorithms of platforms such as YouTube and international audience expectations - that is, his approach to some extent reflects how Chinese creators strike a balance in the global video ecosystem. Future research should further investigate: can other content creators with different cultural backgrounds (such as European, American, Japanese and Korean bloggers) replicate this "cultural awareness + platform adaptation" model? Or under the fast pace and recommendation mechanism of other short video platforms (such as TikTok and Instagram Reels), what are the limitations of the effectiveness and generalization of this dual adaptation strategy? These are key topics to generalize the conclusions of this study to a wider group of creators.

Besides, analysis of the 200 most liked comments revealed a pattern: viewers were more forgiving when impolite humor was aligned with a shared sense of frustration. For example, jokes about customer service or dating apps received more active engagement than jokes about race, gender, or authority. Comments such as "He is funny

but risky" and "crossed the line" reflect the audience's adjustment to the standard of politeness. Audiences interpret humor through their own personal perspective, indicating the necessity for humor to be adaptive.

In general, James's style of humor is strongly context-dependent: he is able to use appropriate techniques to provide an entertaining experience without causing offence, according to the specific cultural context and audience expectations. This adaptable form of humor can be seen as a form of social etiquette in the digital age, promoting harmonious communication between different cultures by transmitting joy and laughter.

DISCUSSION

The results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses shed light on the complex interplay between humor, politeness, and digital performance in Crazy James YouTube content. YouTube humor isn't just a means of communication; It is an interaction strategy deeply embedded in social, cultural, and algorithmic systems.

Humor as Performance

James's sense of humor is consistent with Bowman's (1977) view that speech is a social act. In each video, intonation, exaggeration, clothing, camera angles are purposefully chosen to create a social effect, which is a "performance event". James often plays a prickly employer, an inexperienced boyfriend, or a sarcastic social critic, engaging audiences with instantly recognizable character cliches. He mimicked in middle management or the date the application user sketch used in performing irony, suggests that how to become a kind of humor unity and alienation of the tool. While some viewers found the performances humorous and relating, others felt they crossed the line of insensitivity or stereotyping.

Bowman's emphasis on co-building performance became apparent in the feedback loop facilitated by the YouTube comment section. Audience reactions -from laughter expressions to critiques -are an assessment of performance quality, intent, and acceptability. These responses lead to future content that reinforces or challenges the stylistic boundaries of the creator.

In addition, the episodic nature of James's videos allows for the development of recurring themes that create a continuous acting identity. Audiences became familiar with his style of humor, increasing their tolerance for boundary-pushing content. However, people new to his videos may lack this contextual literacy and interpret the same joke as impolite or even offensive.

Humor and Politeness in a Platform Context

The theory of Brown & Levinson (1987) provides a useful framework for understanding the content and even nonverbal action management of Crazy James. He often uses constructive politeness techniques, such as making inclusive generalizations to promote unity, or making jokes about himself. For example, his catchphrase jokes such as "Don't we all do that? , draw on shared experiences and promote a sense of community.

However, negative politeness techniques also arise, especially when ambiguous phrases such as "I was just saying" or "no offense intended, but" are used to reduce the threat of possible exposure. This is especially important when discussing topics such as gender, race, or power dynamics, where misconceptions can lead to negative reactions.

James's rude humor is particularly relevant to Dynell's (2016) concept of "pragmatic ambiguity". His satirical sketches often strike a balance between humor and criticism. The manner of speaking and whether contextual cues, such as exaggerated expressions or humorous background music, make it obvious that the content is not serious are important factors for audience interpretation. Skip cuts, sound effects, and text overlaying's also act as "polite repair mechanisms" by conveying irony or self-awareness.

Crucially, YouTube's algorithmic reasoning encourages controversy and risk-taking. Videos that evoke strong feelings are more likely to be recommended and shared. Because of this, there is a conflict between platform visibility and politeness; In YouTube's digital economy, what is considered impolite by traditional standards may have a strategic advantage.

Cross-cultural and Identity Implications

Cultural schemas shape humor and politeness, but are not universally defined. As noted by Shifman & Blondheim (2021) and Rhee (2023), irony may be interpreted as clever by Western audiences and rude by Eastern audiences. Some of the comments on James' video shed light on this cultural divide, with some users praising his honesty and others criticizing his 'disrespect'.

Generational differences also play a role. Certain jokes, especially those involving parental roles or authority figures, are more likely to be deemed inappropriate by older viewers, even within the same culture. Statements such as "This might have been offensive in my day" highlight how standards of humor and politeness change across age groups.

Thus, the content of Crazy James becomes a venue for cultural negotiation. As he constructs a humorous everyman identity, audiences project their own cultural expectations onto his performances. This tension reveals the limitations of digital humor as a universal language and highlights the need for context-sensitive communication.

In addition, humor becomes a tool for identity affirmation. Viewers often express empathy with James's content through phrases such as "This is who I am" or "finally someone said it". These expressions act as micro-affirmations to solidify group identity. For others, however, the same humor may highlight exclusion, reinforcing their status as outsiders to the common cultural framework.

In sum, the discussion highlights that humor on platforms such as YouTube is a hierarchical phenomenon that simultaneously functions as performance, criticism, identity work, and algorithmic strategy. Politeness is not a fixed attribute, but a dynamic and context-dependent response to the social and technical conditions of communication.

Future Research Directions

Although the focus of this study is on a single YouTube content creator, cross-platform comparisons could be used in future studies to look at humour and politeness tactics on Facebook Shorts, Instagram Reels, and Tik Tok. These platforms vary in terms of algorithmic exposure, audience interaction, and content length, which could influence how creators handle politeness and perform humour.

The diversity of humorous politeness techniques across various cultural, linguistic, and stylistic backgrounds may also be further clarified by multi-creator comparative studies. To better understand politeness as a global, yet culturally embedded, digital practice, we should look into whether creators from different regions (such as Southeast Asia versus North America) exhibit similar patterns of audience interpretation and digital etiquette.

Theorising humour as a sociolinguistic and performative act across different media ecologies would have a stronger empirical foundation thanks to these avenues.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study shows how humorous content, especially on YouTube, operates in a complex network of performance, politeness, audience expectations, and algorithmic visibility. Crazy James uses humor to connect and excite viewers, striking a balance between face-saving and face-threatening behavior.

Expanded Practical Recommendations

- 1) .Establish a common humor baseline: Start with universally related topics (e.g., pets, the weather, embarrassment).
- 2) .Using a digital repair sign: add emoticons, disclaimer or title, such as "just kidding!" "To make the intent clear.

- 3) .Thinking platform incentive: please note that algorithm reward participation, and is not always clear. Resist provocative tactics for the sake of opinion.
- 4) .Priority on cultural generality: focus on common struggle (for example, to look for a job, the daily frustrations), rather than the identity of the sensitive issue.

Humor literacy should be embedded in digital communication courses, especially for cross-cultural professionals. Learners should be trained to recognize ambiguity, interpret contextual cues, and apply the politeness framework in creative expression

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