

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

Politeness is an important element in communication and is highly influenced by social norms and the cultural values of each society. Choosing the right words in communication is very important to avoid misunderstandings. In Japanese language, it is known to have a highly structured politeness system, that is *keigo* (敬語), which is divided into *sonkeigo* (尊敬語) respectful language, *kenjougo* (謙讓語) humble language, and *teineigo* (丁寧語) polite language.

Those forms are not merely linguistic choices but reflect the hierarchical social structure of Japanese society. Those forms like age, status, and social context influence language use. For example, when speaking to a senior, Japanese speakers use *sonkeigo* (尊敬語) to show respect, and *kenjougo* (謙讓語) to humbly refer to their own actions, thereby maintaining social distance and minimizing imposition on others (Ide, 1989; Okamoto, 1999). In addition to linguistic expressions, nonverbal behavior such as bowing, *ojiki* (お辞儀), also plays a crucial role in demonstrating politeness and respect. Bowing is deeply embedded in Japanese culture and much like *Keigo*, reflects values of deference, conformity, and the maintenance of group harmony (Matsumoto, 1988).

Pragmatics, as a subfield of linguistics, deals with how context influences the interpretation of meaning in communication. It focuses on the ways in which speakers and listeners use language in real-life situations and how meaning is negotiated based on the context of the conversation. According to Yule (as cited by Ardita, 2025), pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker and interpreted by a listener, emphasizing the interaction between language and context. Pragmatics goes beyond the literal meaning of words to

consider factors such as the speaker's intentions, the relationship between the interlocutors, and the social and cultural norms governing communication.

Politeness can be generally defined as the use of language strategies to avoid conflict and maintain social harmony during communication. According to Yule (as cited by Ardita, 2025), politeness is about showing awareness and consideration for another person's face. The norms of interactions that Goffman are primarily concerned with are proportions of effort individuals that maintain towards protecting and enhancing social order during interactions (as cited in National Institutes of Health by Johnson, 2021).

The politeness theories proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987:317-318) build on this concept and clearly distinguish between positive politeness, which affirms the relations between interactants and negative politeness, which is oriented toward respecting the interlocutor's desire for independence. This approach does not only emphasize the choice of language but also tries to capture the values and culture of a society which creates a very vast area of research in linguistics and sociolinguistics. The choice of language can happen on any media platform including LINE.

LINE is a communication platform developed by NHM Japan, a subsidiary of the South Korea IT company NAVER Corporation, and it was created in response to the Great East Japan earthquake in 2011. When traditional communication tools such as phone calls and emails became unreliable during the disaster, LINE attracted attention as a means of quickly and stably connecting people through the internet, which led to its rapid spread in Japan. Its popularity was further supported by features such as free usage, group chats, and stickers that fit well with Japanese communication styles.

Today, LINE has evolved beyond a simple messaging app to include functions such as news distribution, cashless payment, online shopping, and even official information from governments, making it an essential part of daily life and social infrastructure in Japan. So, I want to explain about the use of positive politeness strategies by Japanese users in chatting platform "LINE" to show that

politeness used differently depending on the hearer or the participants during the conversation.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the problem, this study identifies that we encounter different personalities when conversing with others. These differing characteristics lead to different responses in interpreting the utterances. In chatting platforms such as LINE, speakers often employ politeness strategies, especially positive politeness strategies, to maintain harmony and reduce the risk of misunderstanding. When the context of interaction and the relationship between participants are not properly understood, the intended politeness strategy may be misinterpreted, leading to communication breakdowns.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problem above, the limitation of this research is to analyze the positive politeness strategies employed in Japanese chatting platform, LINE, using Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory, with a specific focus on their functions in maintaining social harmony, expressing closeness, and minimizing potential misunderstandings during interaction. This study focuses on LINE chat data collected during the period from August 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025.

1.4 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the limitation of the problem above, the problem of this research can be formulated into the following questions:

1. What are the positive politeness strategies used in utterances in Japanese chatting platform, LINE?
2. What are the utterances and their contexts that reflect the use of positive politeness strategies on the Japanese chatting platform, LINE?

1.5 Objectives of the Research

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the objectives of my research are:

1. To analyze the positive politeness strategies used in utterances in Japanese chatting platform, LINE.
2. To explain the contexts of the utterances that reflect positive politeness strategies used in Japanese platform, LINE.

1.6 Benefit of the Research

There are two kinds of benefits expected from this research, which are theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the fields of pragmatics giving an analysis of positive politeness strategies in Japanese digital communication platform called LINE. Practically, I wish it could be reference for students, languages learners, educators, and professionals in developing more effective and culturally sensitive communication strategies when using digital communication platforms like LINE.

1.7 Systematic Organization of Research

The framework of this term paper which is titled, “Positive Politeness Strategies Used in Japanese Chatting Platform”, is explained as follows:

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes the stages of the research structure, such as the background of the problem, identification of the problem, Limitation of the Problem, formulation of the problem, objectives of the research, benefits of the research, and the systematic organization of the research.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter includes the theories about my research, such as the definition of pragmatics, context, and explanation of

positive politeness strategies based on Brown and Levinson theory. It also includes reviews of relevant previous studies.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter describes the method used in this research. It includes the time and location of the study, research approach and type, data collection techniques, and data analysis techniques.

CHAPTER 4: POSITIVE POLITENESS STRATEGIES USED IN JAPANESE CHATTING PLATFORM

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected. It explains about positive politeness strategies used in Japanese chatting platform, LINE, and explains the contexts underlying the use of these strategies.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the conclusion of the analysis that has been done in the previous chapter, and it also presents suggestions for future research.