A Lexical Analysis of Censor-evading Codewords Employed by Japanese YouTubers

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▶キーワード

codewords; vocabulary coinage; Internet lexicon

▼SUMMARY

To avoid censorship and punishment, some netizens employ codewords in their social media posts. This paper will lexically analyse a sample of Japanese codewords from YouTube. Comparisons will be made to codewords used by Chinese netizens. It is shown how Japanese is highly susceptible to codeword creation.

I. Introduction

For many years, the ubiquity of the Internet and social media has allowed *netizens* – citizens of the Internet – to bypass media conglomerates and mass distribute information in a peer-to-peers fashion. However, with society's recent focus on "fake news," corporate media have been mandated to be information gatekeepers. This has not been without debate, and there are numerous claims of arbitrary overreach by social media giants such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Some Japanese netizens have taken to coding their language to avoid censoring algorithms, censure, and possible platform ejection. This subterfuge has been common in China since virtually the advent of social media. It is an increasingly common tactic of those wishing to post subversive content.

1. The Use of Social Media by Citizen Activists

For those dissatisfied with the authorities and the media they control (e.g., newspapers and television networks plus their Internet appendages), online social media have become a means for activists and netizens to interact. For instance, in recent uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, and Turkey, social media played a central role in organizing citizens to act collectively (Al-Ani et al., 2012; Wulf et al., 2013). In response, cell phone service and the Internet are being increasingly restricted. For example, the Internet was shut down during the 2021 democracy protests in Cuba. Various countries have considered the use of Internet "kill switches" (Newcomb, 2017).

Activists have tended to use public platforms as they are harder for the authorities to extinguish. Increasingly, however, social media platforms have begun actively policing the content they host.

2. Big Tech's Crackdown on Fake News

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent 2020 US presidential election saw the emergence of proactive measures against *fake news* – false or misleading information presented as news (Higdon, 2020). These measures have largely been applied through Big Tech social media.

Big Tech is a name given to the five largest and most dominant companies of US information technology. They are Alphabet (Google), Amazon, Apple, Meta (Facebook), and Microsoft. Each are among the most valuable companies and have market capitalizations larger than the economies of most countries.

To steer the information narrative on sensitive topics, Big Tech employs "terms of service" and "community standards." In the case of Facebook, these "create a place for expression and give people a voice." They contain criterion for prohibited content that is vague and flexibly applied. The ambiguity of boundaries encourages individuals to self-censor as examples are made of violators. Rules and penalties can be applied to both individuals and alternative media organizations.

Until recently, alongside the canard of yelling "Fire!" in a crowded theater, the limit of free speech has been *hate speech* – abusive or threatening communications that express non-inclusive ethnic, religious or gender prejudice. Today, however, the threshold is any sensitive content that runs counter to the official consensus, whoever the source (see AAPS, 2021).

Content policing takes myriad forms. Officially, there are warnings, strikes, (viewer) age restriction, and *demonetization* – suspension or termination of the ability to raise funds. Subscription-based revenue portals such as Patreon and fact-check organizations such as the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) cooperate in these efforts. Meanwhile, there have been claims of YouTube freezing subscriber counts, and subscribers being unsubscribed or failing to receive upload alerts. The ultimate penalty is suspension or permanent *deplatforming* – officially

ejecting disruptors from a website. The entirety of some YouTube channels, and their years of accumulated content and followers, can be deleted in an expedient process that does not require explanation or employees with relative expertise.

The highest-profile deplatforming incident was when incumbent US President Donald Trump received a "permanent suspension" from Twitter (see Godwin, 2021). This social media had been critical to his 2016 victory and subsequent communications with the public. Twitter's rationale for suspending Trump was his support for rioters who stormed the US capital; although Trump was eventually acquitted of this charge, social media companies, including Facebook and YouTube, continued to ban him.

The search engine Google owns the video platform YouTube. Google's system for controlling information has been described in depth by Vorhies and Heckenlively (2021). It involves target words and algorithms that suppress certain news stories and amplify others, based on the Google corporation's socio-political ideology. Such systems effectively guide search results and choke off traffic to anti-consensus content.

The official YouTube Japan account (2021, September 11) features a simpatico "talk" between YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki and the then Minister charged with Japan's COVID-19 vaccination campaign, Taro Kono. Prompted by the Minister to explain YouTube's global success, the CEO credits its ability to "offer so many different points of view." She then explains:

> We take down and remove information that would be false or misleading or dangerous to our users in any way. So we updated our policy many times with regard to Covid. And at this point we have removed almost a million videos ...

On the morning of its upload, this YouTube video had around 54,000 views, garnering 836 "Likes," and 154 "Dislikes."

3. The Use of Codewords by Chinese Netizens

The People's Republic of China has been a pioneer and prototype of information control. Only domestic social media are allowed behind the country's "Great Firewall," and communications are scrutinized by government officials. The Chinese Communist Party routinely uses targeted keywords to censor public discussion and locate and punish political dissenters (see Si, 2017). According to King et al. (2013), automated review through keyword matching (i.e., target words) and a massive number of human censors are involved.

Chinese netizens are thus veterans at linguistic stratagems that evade censorship. For instance, when prominent democracy advocate Liu Xiaobo died in prison in 2017, the largest Chinese social media site Sina Weibo blocked all mention of his name, "R.I.P.," and even the candle emoticon. Netizens therefore began to use the derivation "Teacher Liu," which was

sufficiently commonplace to avoid censor.

> It may seem like a convoluted system of doublespeak to some, but for Chinese netizens, this is the norm – and always has been. Much of Chinese Internet lingo involves codewords, and the corpus of codewords is constantly changing to accommodate new topics and avoid smarter, stricter censors (Si, 2017).

Chinese netizens devise codewords via the following three linguistic strategies.

(1) Homophonic Codewords

Because of the four "tones" of Chinese, around 80% of all monosyllabic sounds can be matched to multiple meanings. This pronunciation ambiguity allows Chinese netizens to easily construct sound-alike codewords. For instance, "river crab" or "héxiè" (河蟹) was created as a mockery of former president Hu Jintao's "harmonious society" initiative against dissent. "River crab" is a near-homophone for harmony, or "héxié" (和諧).

> Homophones have now become a weapon of the resistance, a way for context-sensitive Chinese netizens to speak about taboo content. It remains one of the most popular methods for creating codewords, as almost any netizen with an ear for recent events can sound out the words and match them to a blocked keyword (Si, 2017).

(2) Logographic Codewords

Chinese is a logographic language as is Japanese to an extent. Many Chinese characters appear so similar that native speakers confuse them in writing. The visual similarities of the characters – borrowed by Japanese as *kanji* – provides another way for netizens to discuss banned concepts.

For example, "eye-field" (目田) is a codeword for "freedom" (自由), which are differentiated by only one brush stroke in each character. This codeword is effective despite the disparate pronunciations of the two words. It was created by World of Warcraft players whose in-game chats were being censored. The Chinese characters are evocative because "eye-field" visually resembles a decapitated "freedom"; Si (2017) points out that because of their relative obscurity, such codewords may long evade censors.

(3) Allusory Codewords

The Chinese language is context rich, and allusory codewords take advantage of shared cultural knowledge.

Recent codewords often exploit topical words and phrases. For instance, "hide-and-seek" ("*duǒmāomāo*," 躲貓貓) originated from a 2009 police report explaining that a jailed farmer had died due to an injury from playing the game. Other codewords take the form of ordinary

Chinese phrases inserted into unconventional contexts. For example, "checking a water meter" ("*chāoshuǐbiǎo*"; 抄水表) can also mean a home visit by police officers, who sometimes pose as water meter readers to gain entry.

Historical codewords employ people's historical literacy for their contrived meanings. For example, the anachronism "imperial capital" ("*dìdū*"; 帝都) criticizes the Beijing authorities by conjuring images of an undemocratically appointed ruler with absolute power. The term was added to Sina Weibo's list of words to block (i.e., target words) from 2015.

Among these three strategies, homophonic codewords are particularly opaque to algorithms while being transparent to netizens, according to a Georgia Tech study (Hiruncharoenvate et al.). These researchers estimated that if Sina Weibo were to add all possible homophones for sensitive topics to its algorithms, 20% of posts would be flagged as false positives, crippling the platform.

This leads Si to optimism about the future.

> ... With a language so colorfully versatile, steadily increasing Internet access, and only the world's biggest population, the underground lexicon of China's Internet still has much more room to grow and adapt to whatever situation the filters may throw at it next (Si, 2017).

II. Codewords Employed by Japanese YouTubers

Japanese YouTubers are subject to scrutiny as their Chinese-speaking counterparts are. And some are, likewise, employing codewords in their posts.

A native informant scanned YouTube banners for codewords on August 12, 2021 (see appendix for examples). The first step was to enter コロナ ウイルス (corona virus) into the YouTube search box. After scrolling past much conventional content, from sources such as Japan's public broadcaster NHK, banners with codewords eventually appeared. Clicking on such content led to higher ratios of unconventional content. Codewords appeared either in the colorful banners, in the text summaries alongside, or both.

The search was terminated with 22 Japanese codewords, indicating 10 discrete referents for persons and objects.

1. Persons

The six people (including one set of people) indicated were: Nancy Pelosi; Bill and Hillary Clinton; Kamala Harris; Joe Biden; Bill Gates; and Donald Trump.

2. Objects

The four objects indicated were: the COVID-19 vaccines; the COVID-19 virus; the medicine Ivermectin; and the Big Tech corporation Apple.

Although the referents were more often than not people, the greatest variety of codeword variation in this sample was for Covid *vaccines* and *COVID-19*.

III. Analysis: Classifying the Japanese, YouTube Codewords

This section classifies the 22 Japanese codewords (and their 10 referents) into the above three categories of Chinese codewords (Si, 2017) as summarized in the Table.

Table: The sample of codewords and their classification

codewords and variants	**reading**	**literal meaning**	**English referent**	**codeword category**
ナンシイペロペロ	*nanshii pero pero*	"Licking Nancy"	Nancy Pelosi	homophonic
クリキントン夫妻	*kurikinton fusai*	"sweet walnut paste couple"	Bill and Hillary Clinton	homophonic
カマハリ	*kama hari*	(abbreviation)	Kamala Harris	logographic
梅爺 梅さん	*umeji/baiji* *umesan*	"plum grandpa" "Mr. Plum"	Joe Biden	allusory allusory
びる (おじさん) ビル (おじさん)	*biru (ojisan)* 〃	"(Uncle) Bill" 〃	Bill Gates 〃	allusory allusory
トラさん 寅さん	*torasan* 〃	"Mr. Tiger" 〃	Donald Trump	allusory allusory
ワンワン🐶 ワクワク ワクワクさん ワクチソ ワク〇ン お注射	*wan-wan* *waku-waku* *waku-waku san* *wakuchiso* *waku_o* *ochuusha*	(dog bark + emoji) "excited" "Mr. Excitement" (nonsense) (missing letter) "injection"	vaccine	homophonic homophonic homophonic logographic logographic allusory
ウイちゃん コロちゃん 567 コ〇ナ コロヌ ころすけ	*ui-chan* *koro-chan* *go rok(ku) na(na)* *ko_na* *koronu* *korosuke*	(person's nickname) "little Koro" "five six seven" (unreadable) (nonsense) (male name)	COVID-19	homophonic homophonic homophonic logographic logographic allusory
イベメク	*ibemeku*	(abbreviation)	Ivermectin	logographic
りんごの電話会社	*ringo no denwa kaisha*	"the apple telephone company"	Apple, Inc.	allusory

In the analyses that follow, Japanese codewords will appear italicized and within quotation marks (e.g., "*kurikinton fusai*"). Normal Japanese words will be italicized (e.g., *kurikinton*).

Literal English equivalents will appear within quotation marks (e.g., "sweet chestnut paste couple"). The original Japanese scripts will usually appear in parentheses (e.g., クリキントン夫妻). And conventional English lexical items (e.g., vaccine) will be underlined.

1. Homophonic Codewords

Homophonic codewords exploit like-sounding words. Of the 22 Japanese codewords, eight could be categorized as purely homophonic. The abundance of homophonic codewords reflects that found in Mainland China. Indeed, many of the Japanese codewords categorized as allusory (and analysed below) were homophonic in the initial step of their creation.

(1) Nancy Pelosi

There are many colloquial expressions in Japanese with repeated, sometimes onomatopoeic, elements. These expressions were often employed in homophonic codewords; they can give a codeword a farcical and derogatory air.

Nancy Pelosi's name is normally transliterated (and rephonalised) as *nanshii peroshi* (ナンシー　ペロシ) in Japanese. "*nanshii pero-pero*" ("licking Nancy") approximates the name phonologically and adds ridicule by replacing "pero" with the onomatopoeic *pero-pero,* which refers to licking.

(2) Vaccine

The onomatopoeic *wan-wan* in Japanese refers to the bark of a dog or a dog, itself. Thus the phonetically obscure codeword "*wan-wan*" would indicate a canine except to an alternative information audience. The addition of a dog emoji can be seen as a wink to the vaccine hesitant and a taunt to authorities.

In Japanese, onomatopoeic *waku-waku* refers to excitement. As vaccine is transliterated as *wakuchin* (ワクチン), it is the basis for the sarcastic codeword "*waku-waku*" for COVID-19 vaccines, one that relies heavily upon context.

Also in Japanese, there are common, final suffixes added to names, in the manner that Mr. and Ms. precede names in English. They include the honorific *-san* for adults, *-kun* for young males, and the playful *-chan* for young children and women. "*Waku-waku-san*" adds the suffix *-san* as if referring to a person, which makes the codeword even more slippery to algorithms.

(3) Corona

"*Ui-chan*" (ウイちゃん; see appendix) combines the first sound of the transliterated virus (*uirusu*; ウイルス) with the honorific *-chan* to express endearment. Thus, the codeword is both difficult to block and sardonic. Alongside "*ui-chan*" in the banner appears the non-codeword "*imifu*" ("meaning unclear"; イミフ), a common shorthand for *imi fumei* (意味不明).

The playful codewords "*koro-kun*" (コロ君) and "*koro-chan*" (コロちゃん) apply cute names — better suited to promotional mascots — to the COVID-19 virus. Moreover, the Sino prefix *shin-* (新) can be added, creating "*shin-koro-kun*" ("new Koro-*kun*": 新コロ君), to more smartly parody the Japanese *shingata korona uirisu* (new-type corona virus; 新型コロナウイルス).

As Koro is a common dog name, all related codewords are resistant to algorithms. Meanwhile, the explicit use of the *katakana* script rather than the *hiragana* script (i.e., コロ rather than ころ) implies the foreign origin of the codewords' concealed meaning.

Japanese numbers have numerous readings. As Japanese borrows a great deal from English (see Daulton, 2020), *5* can be pronounced as *faibu*. Furthermore, *5* can be read as *go* or *itsutsu*. (More on *onyomi* and *kunyomi* readings later.) The codeword "*567*" can denote corona because of the alternative readings that were the basis of communication for "pocket bells" (i.e., pagers); *go* (5) can become *ko*, *rokku* (6) can become *ro*, and *nana* (7) can be *na* – *korona*.

(4) Bill and Hilary Clinton

As with many codewords, "*kurikinton fusai*" ("sweet chestnut paste couple"; クリキントン夫妻; see appendix) employs the *katakana* script to reflect the foreignness of the Clintons despite the codeword's Japanesque camouflage of "sweet chestnut paste." The normal transcription of *kurikinton* (栗きんとん) includes a Chinese *kanji* followed by the *hiragana* script. Couple appears in its regular Japanese form of *fusai* (夫妻). The codeword's literal meaning is whimsical and likely disparaging. As a *kurikinton* couple is a novel concept, it is not allusory despite its imagery.

Appearing alongside "*kurikinton fusai*" in the banner is yet another wordplay swipe at the Clintons, "*satani_to fusai*," ("Satanist couple"; サタニ〇ト夫妻). This *logographic* codeword (see below) appears gratuitous, as Satan worship is not censorable content, per se. It is, rather, a pseudo-codeword (where the *katana* for "*su*" is replaced by a circle) likely intended to heighten the banner's sensationalistic appeal.

2. Logographic Codewords

Logographic codewords exploit a language's script(s). Chinese and Japanese use logographic *kanji* characters. Japanese, moreover, employs the *hiragana* script for "native" words and necessary grammatical elements and inflections, and the *katakana* script, which distinguishes nouns of occidental origin. Use of the Roman alphabet is also common.

Of the 22 codewords, six could be categorized as logographic codewords if one includes any orthographic manipulation.

(1) Kamala Harris

"*Kama hari*" (カマハリ) has no meaning in Japanese. Therefore, this shortening of the transliteration of the name *kamara harisu* (カマラ　ハリス) can be seen as purely logographic. Such shortenings are applied to celebrities as a convenient shorthand and to express affection {e.g., *burappi* (ブラッピ) for Brad Pitt}. However, given the controversial context of "*kama hari*" on YouTube, the shortening is for subterfuge.

(2) Vaccine

Codewords for vaccine use innovative orthographic manipulations. The codeword "*wakuchiso*" switches the final *n* sound (ン) of the loanword *wakuchin* (ワクチン) with the visually similar *so* (ソ) *katakana*. The resulting "*wakuchiso*" is a nonsense word that communicates vaccine.

The codeword "*waku○n*" (ワク○ン; see appendix) replaces the *katakana* letter *chi* in *wakuchin* with a circle. A variety of circles (e.g., ○●◎◉) are standard options of Japanese keyboards.

(3) Corona

While the codeword "*ko○na*" (コ○ナ) also employs the circle key option, it is more an adulteration of the Japanese script than a redaction. In this case, the cubical *katakana ro* (ロ) morphs into a circle. As the codeword is malformed, its reading is unclear while its meaning is obvious in context.

The codeword *koronu* (コロヌ) cheekily replaces the *na* (ナ) in the normal transliteration *korona* (コロナ) with *nu* (ヌ). Although *ni* (ニ) follows *na* (ナ) in the natural order of the *katakana* script, it is skipped and *nu* (ヌ) is used to create a more aesthetic and phonetically balanced codeword.

(4) Ivermectin

The codeword "*ibemeku*" (イベメク; see appendix) is a reduction of the loanword *iberumekuchin* (イベルメクチン) corresponding to the controversial medicine Ivermectin. Normally, clipping would occur at the end of loanwords when they are created (e.g., makeup becomes *meeku*). However, this codeword atypically removes the medial *katakana ru* (ル) as well, which further conceals the taboo referent.

3. Allusory Codewords

Allusory codewords take advantage of shared, cultural knowledge by juxtaposing it with unlikely contexts. They were also found to be common; of the 22 codewords, eight could be categorized as allusory.

(1) Joe Biden

Kunyomi readings are generally the first to be learned by children, as they are used in freestanding nouns. *Onyomi* readings are learned later, as they are relevant when *kanji* are combined to describe more complex referents.

The impudent codeword "*umeji/baiji*" ("plum grandpa"; 梅爺) involves both the *kunyomi* reading of the *kanji* (*ume*), and also the correct but more difficult *onyomi* reading of *bai* {e.g., *bairin* ("plum field"; 梅林)}, the latter approximating the initial syllable of Biden. While the less literate might read 梅爺 as *umeji* and be challenged to decode its meaning, most will read it as "*baiji*" and decode it more easily.

Meanwhile, the related codeword "*ume-san*" ("Mr. Plum"; 梅さん) requires the reader to note the alternative, *onyomi* reading of *bai*, a step facilitated by the codeword's proximity in YouTube banners to images of Biden or other codewords.

The codewords' allusory goal is to evoke the image of an elderly character from a Japanese folk tale. Given that Biden is nearly an octogenarian, audiences can wryly enjoy the subtext of someone whose advanced age disqualifies him from high office. The codewords' counterintuitive retention of *kanji* and *hiragana* (used for native words) adds ironic juxtaposition.

(2) Bill Gates

Also pointedly featuring both *hiragana* is the chummy codeword "*biru ojisan*" ("uncle Bill"; びるおじさん; see appendix), which also employs the conventional, *katakana* rendition of ビルおじさん in the accompanying text description. This irreverent wordplay evokes the satirical image of a friendly uncle — more likely to take one fishing than to distribute vaccines in developing countries. Some YouTubers simply employ the insolently familiar "*biru*" ("Bill"; びる) to indicate the software entrepreneur turned biotech crusader.

(3) Donald Trump

The codewords "*tora-san*" ("Mr. Tiger"; 寅さん and トラさん; see appendix) are used to refer to former President Donald Trump. *Tora* constitutes the first two *katakana* in the standard Japanese rephonalisation "*toranpu*." Not coincidentally, *Tora-san* is a famous hero in a long-running series of Japanese movies. He is highly likeable and given that Trump has been the recipient of Big Tech deplatforming, the codewords reflect Trump as an admirable underdog. Originally, *tora* (寅) connotes a tiger, a bold, orange animal.

(4) Vaccine

In Japanese, the honorific prefixes *o-* and *go-* are generally reserved for culturally sacrosanct objects such as green tea (*o-cha*) and rice (*o-kome*). The codeword "*o-chuusha*" ("honorable injection"; お注射) juxtaposes an honorific prefix with the modern, foreign technology of injections.

(5) Corona

The codeword "*korosuke*" (a Japanese male name; ころすけ), as with the codewords for Biden and Gates, avoids the *katakana* script in order to retain the codeword's native, homey feel. Being a common name, this codeword is opaque to censors. Its personifying of COVID-19 is ironic, and its decoding depends on context.

(6) Apple, Inc.

The anachronistic "*ringo no denwa kaisha*" ("apple telephone company"; りんごの電話会社), evokes a Showa era telephone maker. It avoids the *katakana*-rendered rephonalisation that is used for "Apple Inc.," which is *appuru* (アップル).

IV. Analysis Summary

Codewords cluster around controversial topics such as COVID-19 and vaccines — where the risk of censure is high — and related people and things.

The 22 Japanese codewords (for 10 referents) in this YouTube banner survey displayed both characteristics common to Chinese codewords and those unique to Japanese. Combined, these characteristics give Japanese considerable cryptographic potential. The Japanese codewords fit proportionally into the three categories of Chinese codewords noted by Si (2017): homophonic, logographic (i.e., orthographic), and allusory, albeit it with some overlap.

Homophonic codewords were a particularly productive category of Japanese codewords. Eight of the 22 codewords could be categorized as (purely) homophonic. In both Chinese and Japanese, the ambiguity of pronunciation offers a powerful tool for codeword creation, context guiding the reader to the intended meaning. Many allusory codewords were also by their nature homophonic

Logographic codewords were roughly another third of codewords. Rather than the alteration of a character, Japanese YouTubers typically swapped one *hiragana* or *katakana* letter for another. Uniquely to Japanese, in all categories, the use of the *katakana* script could provide a clue to the foreignness of referents. Overall, the many script options (i.e., *kanji*, *hiragana*, *katakana*, and the Roman alphabet and English numbers) make Japanese highly flexible. Swapping and mixing these greatly multiplies the codeword options and enriches the nuances. Japanese codewords furthermore exploit various shapes and emojis.

Allusory codewords were perhaps even more commonly used by Japanese netizens than Chinese ones. While typical Asian countries possess "high context" cultures (Hall, 1976), the Japanese have a particular affinity for vague language understood via shared life experiences. The use of ambiguity is especially widespread where individuals fear public ridicule (see Barton, 2016) or conflict. Thus, many of the codewords used online are likely employed in hushed conversation as well. In contrast to logographic codewords, with allusory codewords, *kanji* and *katakana* scripts were idiosyncratically retained, and the conventional *katakana*

script eschewed, for greater emotional impact.

More generally, by means of the common suffixes, there were many instances of the personification of codeword referents. This unique and ironic personification is also present in everyday communications {e.g., *oshikko-san* meaning "(Mr.) pee-pee"}. This alacrity for honorific affixes is quintessentially Japanese. Also unique to Japanese codewords were the many colloquial expressions with repeated, sometimes onomatopoeic, elements; their intrinsically playful nature supports their lampooning intent.

In addition to algorithm evasion, codewords serve ulterior purposes. Given the colorful banners for YouTubes (see appendix), codewords are also a promotional tool — a tabloid-style click bait. This is made obvious by the unnecessary use of pseudo-codewords. Moreover, codewords offer fun as word puzzles; this is especially true with opaque codewords such as "*ume-san*" ("Mr. Plum"). Although fun is not the purpose of codewords, it is certainly a feature.

V. Future Research

English has the slang "the rona" for corona and the accidental meme "Let's go Brandon" that obliquely derides the U.S. president (2021). However, English codewords on YouTube may be comparatively rare. If so, why?

Is it because America, for instance, is a "low-context" country (see Barton, 2016)? Or because English is limited to the Roman alphabet, and that there is little precedent for altering its letters? Or is it that English, having 42 distinct phonemes — around twice as many as Japanese or Mandarin — makes codeword creation harder? Given the many examples made of dissident YouTubers, why are they not stealthier? Is it because it is easier to relocate to the numerous, anti-censorship platforms recently launched and to wear YouTube ejection as a badge of honor?

This study focussed on foreign topics. The survey began with the search term *korona uirisu* (corona virus), and the persons and objects referenced by codewords were of foreign origin. However, another likely pseudo-codeword "*NhK*" (see appendix), replaces the middle, uppercase letter of the national broadcaster NHK with a lowercase one. If there are actual Japanese taboo topics, is there evidence for them being censored, and for YouTubers' using codewords?

VI. Conclusion

Different linguistic cultures are evading high-tech Internet censorship. Humans have an innate capacity to adaptively use language. However, despite Si's (2017) optimism, advancing technology may ultimately sterilize information and minimize subversive discussion. Already, many of the YouTubes referenced in this article have been successfully purged from the Internet.

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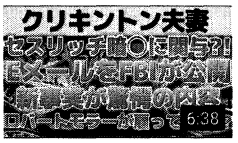
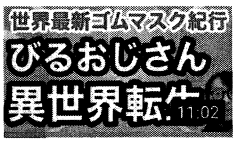
Appendix

Some of the YouTubers' banners sited above appear below. They refer to: Bill and Hillary Clinton; Bill Gates; Donald Trump; COVID-19 vaccines (two); and Ivermectin. Given the extensive context in the banners, codeword deciphering is straightforward.

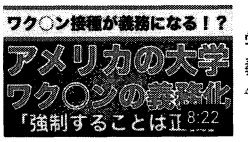


【※投稿し直し：2016年の悪夢はやはりあのサタニ●ト夫婦によるものだっ...
2万 回視聴 · 1 か月前

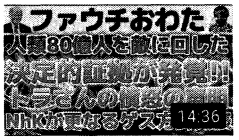
【2019年より盗聴監視：例のウィちゃんが人工物である証拠がまたも見つか...
1.2万 回視聴 · 2 か月前



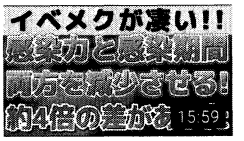
【下念司ニュースの猫側】ビルおじさん異世界転生してきたって本当？まつこ...
おみそちゃんねる【世界どん...
3.9万 回視聴 · 1 週間前



【強制スタート】全米の大学が相次いでワクoン接種義務付け開始！ヨーロッ...
4901 回視聴 · 4 か月前



【衝撃：もう流石に逃げられない。人類全てを敵に回した国と男。約1,100兆円...
2.6万 回視聴 · 2 か月前



【イスラエルでの臨床試験結果：イベメクが安い・早い・凄い！！入院期間や...
2.7万 回視聴 · 1 週間前