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Park Jin Young's Politeness Strategies in The America-to Korea (A2K) Survival Show

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ABSTRACT: This study investigated the politeness strategies used by Park Jin Young when commenting on the American contestants' performance in the A2K show and its factors. The aim was to find what types of politeness strategies Park Iin Young used and the factors that influenced him to choose those in the A2K show. The method used is a qualitative method using Scollon et al.'s (2012) politeness theory. The result showed that Park Jin Young used more involvement than an independence strategy. The factors influencing it are the power and distance factors, revealing his implementation of a hierarchical politeness structure. In addition, the weight of imposition factor reveals that even though Park Jin Young tries to adapt to American politeness when commenting on American contestants' performances, he still maintains his identity as a Korean by using independent strategies.

Keywords: Politeness Strategies, Judges, Survival show, Comments, Contestants.



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INTRODUCTION

Politeness is a social phenomenon that is important to achieve good interpersonal relationships (Huang, 2008). Since politeness plays a big role in human life, every person in the world must recognize politeness. However, there is less research on politeness used by Koreans despite politeness in Korea is highly valued and always becomes the main attention in their culture. The underlying reason is the implementation of honorifics in their language (Rosalina, 2024). Honorific is a word, phrase, or grammatical form conveying respect, especially when addressing a social superior (Rejeki & Zamzani, 2015). In Korean society, honorifics serve as a linguistic tool that reflects the existing hierarchical culture. As stated by Wong (2011) Koreans implement a hierarchical culture in which social factors such as distance and status determine how to express politeness. Thus, honorifics in the Korean language are a means of showing respect and a manifestation of the deeply ingrained hierarchical structure in Korean culture.

Unlike Korean, honorification no longer exists in English, particularly American English. It is influenced by the Americans' individualistic culture, where people tend to speak directly and informally (Huang, 2008). It contrasts with Korean culture, which tends to be indirect and formal, reflecting the hierarchical nature of Korean culture (Song, 2014). This cultural discrepancy in

politeness norms can lead to challenges in intercultural communication, as behaviors considered polite in Western cultures may be seen as impolite in Korean culture, and vice versa (Lee & Ramsey, 2000). Since politeness norms and conceptions vary among cultures, individuals can choose and apply different strategies to express politeness depending on their situation (Jakučionytė's, 2020).

Relating to the politeness phenomenon across different cultures, this article explores the politeness strategies used by native Koreans when speaking English in America. Park Jin Young (J.Y. Park) is a Korean judge on the survival show called America to Korea (A2K). A survival show is a reality television program where individual contestants or groups compete against each other and face elimination rounds one by one until one or more winners remain (Bosch, 2021). The America to Korea (A2K) survival show aims to create the first American girl group using a Korean training system. (Fiba, 2022). Throughout the show, Park Jin Young communicates in English, his Second Language (L2), as all contestants who participated are Americans. Since the politeness system between American-English and Korean is different, the researcher is interested in finding out what kind of politeness strategies are used by Park Jin Young while commenting on the contestant's performance in English (Deschouwer, 2013; Hirscher et al., 2018).

Several studies have explored the use of politeness strategies. Lin (Lin, 2020) and Torres (Torres, 2020) Judges use politeness in compliments and criticism, with gender and cultural values influencing their approach. Hosni (2020), Chang and Ren (2020), and Jauhari and Purnanto (2022) Highlighted factors like social status, distance, and power. Western cultures emphasize individualism and equality, while Eastern cultures follow hierarchical norms. However, most of the previous studies's subjects are still native speakers of each culture. They have not explored how politeness strategies are used by people when they interact using a second language (L2) in different cultures. To address this gap, this recent study intends to find what types of politeness strategies were used by Park Jin Young, a Korean judge, while commenting on the contestants' performance in English and what factors influence the choice of the strategies (Karachalis, 2021; Yari Eili & Rezaeenour, 2023). This recent research adopted the theory from Scollon et al. (2012)The results of this study are expected to assist the reader in obtaining more data about the possible politeness technique used by judges while commenting on a performance using English as a second language in American culture.

Politeness in Korea and America

Politeness comes from the behavior of society. According to Huang (Huang, 2008)Politeness can be viewed as a social behavior that fosters good interpersonal relationships and is a standard dictated by societal norms. So, politeness is designed and controlled by society's values to create comfortable interactions.

As constructed by societal concepts, politeness in one culture can be viewed differently in other cultures. For example, Koreans prefer an indirect rather than a direct statement to show politeness, while Americans tend to convey their meaning directly and informally. (Huang, 2008). It is influenced by their culture, in which Koreans implement hierarchical politeness while Americans apply an individualistic culture. As a result, Americans can choose how polite they want based on their perception of the addressee and situation. It is different from Korea, which tied to social factors such as distance and status to express politeness (Song, 2014).

Politeness Strategies

Someone needs a strategy to create a good interaction with others. Hence, Scollon et al. (2012) outline two politeness strategies to perform polite behavior. The first is the involvement strategy. It involved demonstrating a high interest in someone's matters and attraction to common things. Scollon et al. (Scollon et al., 2012) classified this strategy into ten sub-strategies which include: noticing or attending to hearer; exaggerating; claiming in group membership with hearer; claiming common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and empath; being optimistic; indicating speaker knows hearer's wants and is taking them into account; assume or assert reciprocity; use given names and nicknames; be voluble; and use hearer's language or dialect.

The second is independent strategy. It emphasises the participants' individuality because the speaker will respect the right of the hearer's independence and not interrupt it (Witczak-Plisiecka, 2010). Scollon et al. (Scollon et al., 2012) also classified this strategy into ten sub-strategies, those are: (1) Make minimal assumptions about hearer's wants; (2) Give hearer the option not to do the act; (3) Minimize threat; (4) Apologize; (5) Be pessimistic; (6) Dissociate speaker, hearer from the discourse; (7) State a general rule; (8) Use family names and titles; (9) Be taciturn; and (10) Use own language or dialect.

Factors influencing the choice of politeness strategies

Scollon et al. ((Scollon et al., 2012) noted three factors that influence the choice of politeness strategies. The first is power. It refers to the vertical distinction between the participants in a hierarchical structure (Scollon et al., 2012)Interaction between participants with different social statuses reflects high power (+P), as in most business and governmental structures. On the other hand, an egalitarian system or low power (-P) exists between participants with equivalent ranks, as in a teacher talking to another teacher.

The second is distance. It can be determined by participants' factor perception such as age, intimacy, familiarity, or gender (Suh(Suh, 1999). Scollon et al. (Scollon et al., 2012) Divide the distance into the high distance (+D) and the low distance (-D). If two students are familiar with each other, their distance will be considered low (-D). However, it will be (+D) if they do not know each other or are unfamiliar.

The third is the weight of imposition. It depends on the importance of the topic to the speaker and the hearer (Fatkhurozi, 2022). Scollon et al. (Scollon et al., 2012) also divide it into the increased imposition (+W) and the decreased imposition (-W). For example, Mr. Hendry is a manager while Evan is an employee. When Evan wants to talk to Mr. Hendry about getting a promotion, he can employ a more respectful tone and a higher degree of independence strategies. So, the weight of imposition in this context is high (+W). However, if Mr. Hendry is going to give bad news to Evan, such as his position will be eliminated, he will use an involvement strategy to approach him. So, the weight of imposition became decreased (-W).

Scollon et al. (Scollon et al., 2012) Also, politeness is about being kind, managing social distance, and having the power to build social harmony. Therefore, he proposed three politeness systems that consider power and distance factors. The first is the deference politeness system (-P, +D). It refers to participants who are equals or near equals in power (-P) but interact with each other at a

distance (+D). The politeness strategy used in this system is the independent strategy. This system can be found between the presidents of companies who do not know each other well.

The second is the solidarity politeness system (-P, -D). It refers to participants considered equals or near equals in power (-P) and have close relationships (-D). The politeness strategy used in this system is the involvement strategy.

The last politeness system is the hierarchical (+P, +/-D). In this system, the participants pay more attention to social differences, which rank one in a higher position and the other in a lower position. The main characteristic of this system is the different status of the speaker and the hearer (+P). The person with a higher position or superordinate applies involvement strategies when interacting with those in lower positions. In comparison, those in lower or subordinate positions communicate independently with those in higher positions. Therefore, the relationship between speakers is asymmetrical because they use different politeness strategies when interacting. Moreover, the presence of distance is less important because its presence (+D) or absence (-D) does not play a big role so it symbolizes "+/-D".

METHOD

The researcher applies a qualitative approach to explore Park Jin Young's politeness strategies and the factors influencing their choice. This approach was chosen considering that the research focuses on utterances and interpretation. Furthermore, as stated by Ugwu et al., it does not require numerical or statistical data (Ugwu, Chinyere. N. and Eze Val, 2017) qualitative research involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data like text, video, or audio.

The research data were utterances by Park Jin Young when commenting on the contestant's performance in the America to Korea (A2K) survival show. America to Korea (A2K) is a survival show that aims to form the first American girl group using the K-pop training system. In the show, contestants not only compete to be members of the debut group but also undergo dance and vocal training for a long time since it applied the K-pop training system. Therefore, 21 episodes showed how they trained and were evaluated to pass in the next round till they became the debut members. The data is transcriptions of Park Jin Young's utterances taken from YouTube, particularly JYP Official YouTube. This study was limited to Park Jin Young's utterances since it focuses on politeness strategies that he conveys as the judge in the A2K survival show and the factors that influence his choice of strategy. Furthermore, the data was limited to episodes 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, and 21, which were chosen using probability sampling, namely random sampling. Researchers used this sampling technique to generalize the politeness strategies used by Park Jin Young during the show. Using this technique, researchers could prevent bias in certain videos.

In collecting data, the researcher used content analysis. As stated by Herman and Hasibuan (Herman & Hasibuan, 2020), Content analysis focuses on analyzing and interpreting recorded material such as videos, tapes, and public records. Since the data was taken from utterance transcription in America to Korean (A2K), it is appropriate to use content analysis in collecting data. The writer took several steps. The first is visiting the YouTube website. The second is searching the movie by typing A2K in the search bar. The third is clicking the A2K survival show published by JYP's official channel. The fourth is watching the selected videos individually and

directly taking the transcription after finishing watching the video. The last step is checking transcription accuracy by listening to the audio several times.

To analyze the data, the researcher used content analysis because this research analyzed text-based data to identify and interpret patterns or meanings within the data (Azizan et al., 2018). Since this research used transcription of utterances, content analysis is appropriate. The researcher did it in several steps. Firstly, the researcher identified utterances based on the politeness strategies by Scollon et al. (Scollon et al., 2012); involvement strategy and independent strategy. Secondly, the researcher classified the types of politeness strategies based on Scollon et al. (2012) in a table. Thirdly, by counting these frequencies, the researcher found the most used one of each politeness strategy. Fourthly, the researcher interpreted the classified data and underlined the factors by looking at its context, which revealed the use of politeness strategy types. Fifthly, the researcher concluded the findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Type of Politeness Strategy used by Park Jin Young

Politeness strategy is classified into two types based on Scollon et al (2012). Theory, namely involvement strategy and independent strategy. According to Table 1, Park Jin Young used both politeness strategies. Of the 267 utterances, he applied the involvement strategy in more than half (87,6%), and the remaining (12,4%) used the independence strategy. He tends to use an involvement strategy to respect and support the contestants' abilities and effort when they perform so he can fulfill the contestant's positive face. According to (Yule, 1998), Positive face is an individual's desire to be liked and accepted by others. Therefore, by utilizing the involvement strategy, Park Jin Young can express friendliness and support to contestants to build social relationships, which aligns with Hosni (2020) studies. The dominance of the involvement strategy in Park Jin Young's utterances while commenting on the contestant's performance also supports the findings of Torres (2020).

Table 1. Politeness Strategies Used by Park Jin Young in A2K Survival Show

Strategies	Frequency of utterances	Percentage
Involvement Strategy	234	87,6%
Independence Strategy	33	12,4%
Total	267	100%

According to Scollon et al. (Scollon et al., 2012) The involvement strategy is divided into 10 substrategies. Table 2 presents the details of the sub-strategies used by Park Jin Young. Of the 234 utterances, the notice and attending to the hearer sub-strategy was the most frequently used (22.2%). An example is in excerpt 1 below.

Excerpt 1 from episode 5 "Dance Evaluation Continues"

J.Y Park: "...now I can see you're more comfortable dancing and that's a great start.

Alright"

KG: "He'em, Thankyou"

In the excerpt above, Park Jin Young demonstrates notice and attends to the hearer because he recognizes her improvement in dancing. "I can see" indicates that he observes and notices her performance. The word "more" is used by Park Jin Young to compare his dance with previous dances, where Park Jin Young recognizes a change in his dance, which refers to her improvement. In addition, the phrase "That's a great start" compliments her effort in improving her dancing. So, the use of notice and attending to the hearer by Park Jin Young is to praise the improvement made by KG so that he can create a friendly atmosphere in the judge's session and strengthen his relationship with her.

Table 2. The Detail of Realization of Using Involvement Sub-strategies by Park Jin Young

No	Involvement Sub-strategies	Frequency	Percentage
		1 7	O
1	Noticing and attending to the hearer	52	22,2%
2	Exaggerating	51	21,8%
3	Claim in group membership with H	21	9,0%
4	Claim common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge	14	6,0%
	and empathy		
5	Be optimistic	12	5,1%
6	Indicate S knows H's wants and is taking them into account	12	5,1%
7	Assume or assert reciprocity	1	0,4%
8	Use given names and nicknames	37	15,8%
9	Be voluble	34	14,5%
10	Use H's language or dialect	-	0%
	Total	234	100%

Besides the involvement strategy, Park Jin Young uses an independent strategy while commenting on the contestants' performances. From ten independent sub-strategies, he only used making minimal assumptions about the hearer's wants (12,1%), minimizing threat (69,7%), and being pessimistic (18,2%) sub-strategies, as shown in Table 3. Park Jin Young employed an independent strategy to avoid any comments that have the potential to threaten the hearer by expressing requests in an interrogative form "Can you...?" and using hedging "a little more", such as in excerpt 2.

Excerpt 2 from episode 5 "Dance Evaluation Continues"

J.Y Park: ".... Can you relax a little bit more?" Mischa: "Yeah"

He applied a minimize threat strategy using the interrogative form with the modal "Can you…?" He wants to make his request softer since it could be seen as a challenge to competence. He also involves hedging "a little bit more" to make Melissa, the contestant, not feel pressured or defensive.

Table 3. The Detail of Realization of Using Independent Strategy by Park Jin Young

No	Independent Sub-strategies	Frequency	Percentage
1	Make minimal assumptions about H's wants	4	12,1%
2	Give H the option not to do the act	-	0%
3	Minimize threat	23	69,7%
4	Apologize	-	0%
5	Be pessimistic	6	18,2%
6	Dissociate S, H from the discourse	-	0%
7	State a general rule	-	0%
8	Use family names and titles	-	0%
9	Be taciturn (speak little)	-	0%
10	Use own language or dialect	-	0%
	Total	33	100%

Factors that influence the chosen strategy

Scollon et al. (Scollon et al., 2012) identified three main factors that influence the choice of politeness strategies. These are the weight of imposition, power, and distance. The first factor is the weight of imposition. This factor depends on the importance level of the topic. The more important the level of the topic, the more pressure it has.

Excerpt 4 episode 1 "The Start of A2K"

J.Y Park: "Can you work on those powerful high notes with full voice, instead of singing falsetto?

Camila: "I will work on that. I, um, completely understand and I will work on that. I promise."

As shown in excerpt 4, Park Jin Young employed an independent strategy, specifically minimizing threat, when requesting Camila, the contestant. He uses an interrogative form with the modal "Can you...?" to soften his request. This approach reduces the directness of his demand, acknowledging that his request might pressure her due to her incompetence. As the task had potential pressure on the contestant, the weight of imposition increased (+W).

In contrast, Park Jin Young adopted an involvement strategy (a sub-strategy involving claims of a common point of view, opinions, attitudes, knowledge, and empathy) when the weight of imposition was low (-W).

Excerpt 5 episode 13 "The Showcase Begins"

J. Y Park: "All right, I think it's just a matter of practice. The four of you look so well harmonized and **look great together**. So that's **the most positive thing** right now okay all right see you tomorrow

Kendall, Melissa, Savanna, Kaylee: "Thank you"

As shown in excerpt 5, he stated, "I think it's just a matter of practice" to reduce the pressure on her even though she failed to follow his instructions to reach the right note. Since he focuses on giving praise rather than criticizing her to reduce pressure on her, his approach reflects a low weight of imposition (-W). and he utilized the involvement strategy.

So, Park Jin Young is known to use the independent or involvement strategy depending on the weight of imposition contexts. He would use the independent strategy for high-imposition contexts (+W) and the involvement strategy for low-imposition contexts (-W). This is aligned with Scollon et al.'s (2012) theory.

Power and distance factors also affect the use of the politeness strategy. The relationship between Park Jin Young and the contestant in the power factor is asymmetrical because they have different social statuses or responsibilities.

Excerpt 3 episode 1 "The Start of A2K"

J.Y Park : "...Even though you're so lacking in skill, I think you might have what it takes. Passion and understanding of this culture, so I have **to give you a chance**. Come here!"

J.Y Park: "So, I'll see you in LA, alright?"

Kendall: "Thank you"

As shown in excerpt 3, Park Jin Young has special privileges as a judge. By saying, "I got to give you a chance", he explicitly demonstrates his power to determine whether the contestant can proceed to the next round. It underscores his role as a decision-maker which impacts the contestants' futures. While the contestants responded "Thank you", which means they passively accepted his decision without further responses or questions. It suggests their position lacks influence in the situation. As a judge, this implies that Park Jin Young holds authority over the contestants, who are positioned in a subordinate role. Therefore, their power relationship is a high power (+P) or asymmetrical system.

While power depends on the speaker and the hearer's social status or responsibilities, the distance factor refers to closeness or familiarity. The use of a given name or nickname takes an important role in determining the distance between two participants because it is suitable to use when the relationships are close, like family and close friends (Kizi (Kizi, 2022).

Table 4. Using given name and nickname sub-strategy

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Episode	Title	Frequency
1	The Start of A2K	-
5	Dance Evaluation Continues	2
9	Star Quality Evaluation Rankings	2

13	The Showcase Begins	16
17	Individual Performances Continue	3
21	The Grand Finale Begins	14
	Total	37

As presented in table 4, the first episode is the start of A2K, indicating Park Jin Young and the contestant are meeting for the first time. During this episode, Park Jin Young did not use a given name or nickname when addressing the contestant, which suggests they were not close and unfamiliar. This formality suggests a high distance (+D) between Park Jin Young and the contestant. However, Park Jin Young began to use contestants' nicknames in the following episodes. This shift in communication strategy reflects a reduction in their relationship distance, becoming closer and more familiar. As a result, their relationship in these following episodes is considered a low distance (-D). This change is likely facilitated by the ongoing nature of the competition which some contestants from the previous episode appeared again in the subsequent episodes. The repeated interaction between Park Jin Young and the contestants throughout the show, from the first to the final episode, transitions their distance from a high distance (+D) to a low distance (-D).

By analyzing the power and distance situation above, Park Jin Young was known to employ a hierarchical politeness system. According to Scollon et al., the hierarchical politeness system happens when the power is high (P) and the distance is insignificant (+/-D). So, it is suitable with Park Jin Young, where the power between Park Jin Young and the contestant is high (+P) because he holds authority over the contestants, and the distance is insignificant because of his transition in addressing the contestant's nickname over time.

According to Scollon et al., Park Jin Young's use of hierarchical politeness explains why he utilizes an involvement strategy when interacting with the contestant, as shown in Table 1. (Scollon et al., 2012)A person in a higher or superordinate position tends to apply involvement strategies when interacting with those in lower positions. In comparison, those in the lower or subordinate positions communicate using independence strategies with those in higher positions. In addition, in Korean society, Park Jin Young, as a judge, is expected to show care and responsibility for the contestant. To demonstrate his supportive and benevolent senior figure, he needs to use involvement strategies more than involvement strategies.

CONCLUSION

This study investigates the politeness strategies used by Park Jin Young as a judge in the A2K survival show and the factors that influence his choice of strategy. The findings show that he used both strategies proposed by Scollon et al. (Scollon et al., 2012), namely the involvement strategy and the independent strategy. The dominance strategy he used as a judge is the involvement strategy.

This study also found that the weight of imposition, power, and distance factors significantly influenced Park Jin Young to use certain politeness strategies. In the context of the weight of imposition, Park Jin Young employs involvement and independent strategies because of the

potential pressure that may arise from the topic. He used involvement strategies to satisfy the contestants to be liked and admired, which reduced the pressure on the contestants. Conversely, he uses independent strategies to maintain his respect for the contestants when the topic has a high potential to pressure them. As a result, Park Jin Young needs to employ both involvement and independent strategies to adapt to certain situations.

Besides the weight of imposition factor, the power and distance factor shows that the hierarchical politeness system plays a role in why the involvement strategy is used more frequently than the independence strategy while interacting with the contestant. Since Park Jin Young's position is judge, he has power over the contestants. In addition, whether close or not, the relationship between him and the contestant doesn't significantly impact. Thus, he considered using the hierarchical politeness system, and the characteristic of this system is using an involvement strategy for the subordinate.

In conclusion, Park Jin Young was known for using politeness strategies while commenting on the contestant using his second language (L2), English, from both strategies proposed by Scollon et al. (Scollon et al., 2012)The dominant one is an involvement strategy with goals to build friendliness and reduce informality, which is in line with American culture. However, he still adopts an independent strategy because some situations must be met to maintain his respect for the contestants, which aligns with his Korean nature. Therefore, there are pros and cons by netizens to Park Jin Young's politeness when commenting on contestants' performance because he tried to adapt to American culture but couldn't leave his identity as Korean. While

Since this research will not cover the politeness strategies used by Park Jin Young while commenting on a contestant from his country and speaking in his native language (Korean), it is recommended that future researchers conduct a comparative study to analyse the politeness strategies when using a second language (L2) in commenting on a performance.

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