An Analysis of Politeness Strategy Done by North Koreans Seen in *"My Brothers and Sisters in the North"* Documentary

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ABSTRACT

It is a study on politeness strategy proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). It focuses on the utterances spoken by North Koreans. Negative and positive politeness strategy are found in the study. North Koreans perform negative politeness when dealing with the things related to works or their leaders. It shows by the use of the word "please" to give a command, pronoun "we" to indicate exclusiveness which exclude the host as a person comes from different land, pronoun "our" to show their possession towards a particular thing, and the use of specific names to refer to their leaders. It is applied to present their professionalism towards their works and loyalty to their leaders. It aims to create distant to people outside the country in dealing anything related to the nation. Positive politeness is used to reveal their solidarity towards the host. It indicates that they share the same origin and personalities. It functions to convey their feelings to the host towards particular things. Telling their feelings to people from different place suggests that they trust the host and want her to understand them. It gives an affirmation that even they live in isolation, they can be close to people they barely meet.

Keywords: North Koreans, politeness, negative, positive

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INTRODUCTION

Communication is an essential element among people in a particular society. Through some expressions, it enables them to transfer their ideas, feelings, or emotions. The forms of communication are varied such as in the spoken and written form. However, the purpose is still the same which to deliver and receive messages. Miller (1963) clarifies that in doing a communication, the speakers must send the information which will be received by the addressees. In other words, in having a communication, there must be the source and destination. The source is the communicant whereas the destination is the communicators.

It is clear that people engage to other people in the communication. Hence, Revita, Trioclarise, & Anggrainy (2017) argue that attitude becomes an important factor in conducting a social relation. Having a good attitude can be shown by being polite to other people. The standard of politeness is determined by the customs in the society. Reiter (2000) clarifies that politeness is not a part of natural phenomenon, instead it is set in terms of social norms that influences how individual acts. Therefore, what is considered polite in a particular society will be different in other places since the social norms or rules are different. Besides, politeness is

related to individual In other words, having an open-minded perspective is really crucial in order to maintain the relation.

However, the understanding of politeness is not only related to the behaviors such as letting people to go first or bowing to the elder people, but also in the form of the utterances that are being produced. In other words, it deals with the selection of the words which aim to be spoken to the communicators in a particular society. It determines how the utterances are accepted by the communicators. Hence, selecting the right utterances is significant since it might avoid the misunderstanding or miscommunication. By choosing the wrong utterances can possibly lead the communicants into troubles. It happens because the communicators might feel insulted. Revita, Trioclarise, & Anggrainy (2017) clarify that people can get out of control when they feel insulted or hurt. Besides, Ilmiani, Wijayanto, and Hikmat (2016) consider that the one of the ways enhancing the understanding of politeness is through language learning.

North Korea is the most isolated country in the world. It even avoids the citizens to travel to other places due to the restricted rules. The tourists can only visit the capital city. According to a survey done by Freedom House, North Korea is regularly ranked into the very least free country in the world. Due to the dictatorship in the country, according to the Ministry of Unification (2019), more than 33.700 North Korea citizens recently reside in South Korea. Hough and Bell (2020) convey that their escape is to seek for freedom either freedom of speech or act. Hence, it can be concluded that freedom in North Korea still needs to be evaluated.

The North Korean defectors who can land safely into other places can continue their lives by the freedom they have. However, the concern is now on the people who still live there. Some questions raise such as how do they survive there or how do they express their thoughts. Hence, the researcher is interested in conducting a research on the daily life of North Koreans. By doing this research, then it will get a greater understanding on how people there choose the utterances to express their ideas in the communication. In other words, the researcher analyzes the politeness strategy of the people there shown through the data selected. The focus of the research would be discussing the politeness strategy done by the North Koreans in the daily conversation found in *"My sisters and brothers in the North"* documentary.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this case, the researcher analyzes the data which is the documentary by applying politeness theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). It is a part of showing an awareness of the public self-image, the sense of self, and the people that we address. It is relevant to the data since most of the utterances are spoken to address the leaders in North Korea. Hence, they will try to keep the public image. Brown and Levinson (1987) define politeness as the thing that should be acknowledged when we enter a social relationship. The way it is addressed is by avoiding Face Threatening Acts (FTAs). However, if the FTAs are unavoidable, Brown and Levinson suggest to redress the threat with the negative and positive politeness. They also describe other alternative strategies such as bald on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off record. Further, socio-pragmatic dimension should be deliberated in selecting the strategies. Bald on record is a direct strategy. It reveals the fact that the speaker is higher than the hearer. For example: "Send us the offers!" Positive politeness appeals to friendship or solidarity. For example: "Heh, mate, can you lend me a dollar?" It shows both speakers are close since it contains many strategies solidarity such as nickname and shared dialect or slang. Negative politeness shows a distance relationship. Sometimes, it signs with a word "please." For example: "Could you lend me a pen, please?" Off record it is an indirect strategy. The relationship might be varied. For example: "Perhaps someone should have been more responsible."

It is mentioned in the previous paragraph that politeness is defined as the selection of the utterances. It determines how the utterances are perceived by the communicators. There are also several other theories related to politeness strategy. According to Yule (2002), politeness deals with the notion of face. It focuses on respecting other's self-image. In other words, it reveals the emotional and social sense in which someone expects other people to recognize it. How politeness is addressed based on this view is by avoiding Face Threatening Acts (FTAs). However, if the FTAs are unavoidable, it is suggested to redress the threat with the negative and positive politeness. Negative politeness shows a distance relationship among the speakers which marks with a more polite way in the utterance. For example: "Would you mind turning off the fan?" Positive politeness appeals to friendship or solidarity. For example: "If you wash the dishes, I'll vacuum the floor."

Furthermore, Leech (1983) reveals that politeness conveys a constraint found in the human communication which aims to avoid communication discord (incompatible goals) and maintain the communicative concord (ex/implicitly pursue each other's goals). The way to look at for politeness is through pragma-linguistics (keeping context invariant) and socio-pragmatics (relative to norms in a society). Leech classifies politeness into 10 categories, namely generosity, tact, approbation, modesty, obligation, agreement, opinion, sympathy, and feeling. The previous view deals more on the form of formal and informal whereas this perspective focuses on the personal's preferences such as generosity is related to the promises, offers and invitations, sympathy, and feelings.

Besides, Lakoff (1975) states that politeness is related to the understanding of other's cultures by providing a comfortable condition to the addressee. In other words, it aims to avoid a conflict with the addressee. Based on Lakoff's ideas, there are 3 strategies of politeness, namely do not impose our ideas, give options to the addressee, and create a friendly atmosphere. Further, it is considered as the strategies of distance, deference, and camaraderie. According to Lakoff, the sentence of, "Would you mind turning off the fan?" is polite since it gives the addressee the freedom to either accept or refuse the request. Besides, it also shows the closeness of the relationship which is not that close. In other words, the definition stated by Lakoff is can be considered of formality.

Other researchers have done researches on politeness as well with different types of data and theories. Revita, Triclarise, Anggraini, and Gunawan (2020) conducted a research on politeness particularly focuses on the forms of politeness in domestically verbal violence. It conveys the politeness in the conversation among couples in Sumatra Barat, Indonesia especially in the anger situation. It answers how husbands in the anger condition may maintain the politeness aspect when they communicate to their wives. It includes politeness in request which the hearer has the right to either fulfill or reject it. It also includes politeness in refusal which indicates the denial of fulfilling the request. Further, politeness in promise is also one of the types in this strategy in which it is considered as a form of violence against women when the speakers are promising something in the future to the hearers. Lastly, it is called politeness in expressiveness. It helps the speakers express their feelings such as sadness, anger, or happiness. It aims to release the burden in the heart. Besides, this research develops the factors influence the use of politeness which are participants, ends of the conversation, topic of the conversation, and the preventive strategies of being impolite in the activities of verbal violence. The result in this research shows politeness in requests frequently occurs in the verbal violence found in the data since the husbands want the wives to do as what they expect.

Further, Rahayuningsih, Saleh, and Fitriati (2020) conduct a research on politeness by applying theory proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). It specifically studies the politeness strategy and sociological factors influencing the use of politeness. The data is taken in the interaction between teacher and students in SMP Semesta Bilingual School. The background of studying politeness strategy in the education area is due to the fact that the implementation

of curriculum 2013 requires the emphasis on the character education. To conclude, all types of politeness strategy proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) are found in the research. Positive politeness is dominantly used by the teacher which indicates showing solidarity and maintaining close relationship to the students. Bald on record is frequently used to give a clear explanation or instruction in the learning process. Meanwhile, the negative politeness is crucial to minimize the pressure to the students. Besides, off record is used to give clues. For the sociological factors, distance, power, and degree influence the implication of politeness.

Suriadi (2017) also conducts a research on politeness strategy particularly focuses on the theory stated by Brown & Levinson (1987) and Leech (1983). The study mainly discusses about politeness and its measurement scale rating found in Ahok's statements as Jakarta's governor. The data presents most of the time, the governor applies negative politeness which indicates that he emphasizes the speaker image without considering the interlocutors. Further, the statements are classified into declarative and assertive dominating statements. On the scale of decency, the statements on authority are performed in the less face.

METHODOLOGY

The research aims to study the politeness strategy found in the daily life of North Koreans. Since the focus of this research is only the utterances spoken by the North Koreans, the utterances spoken by the host will not be considered as the data. In this case, the documentary is in Korean, but there is subtitles provided in the film. Hence, the researcher analyzes politeness strategy on the subtitles. It is considered valid since the host is a Korean who speaks English fluently due to the fact she is a journalist who lives abroad. Further, the theory which will be applied in this research is proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). The data is taken from a documentary which is entitled *"My sisters and Brother in the North."* It is directed by Cho Sung Hyung. She is the first filmmaker with South Korean roots who receives permit to film in North Korea. This documentary is released in 2016. There are several reasons of choosing this documentary. Firstly, it is because this is the only documentary which previews the life of the North Koreans who live not only in the city, but also in the countryside. Secondly, since it films the citizens there, then it brings knowledge to the audience about the people there –how they survive or what job they have. Thirdly, it will also give a greater understanding to the audience related to how the people there select their utterances in order to communicate to the hearers. Besides, the study related to North Korean in terms of the language is quite rare. Hence, it will be beneficial for the development of the theory on politeness.

In order to collect the data, there were several steps done by the researcher. Firstly, the researcher watched the movie on YouTube for 3 times in wocomoHUMANITY channel. Secondly, the researcher found out the full script of the movie in https://subslikescript.com/movie/My_Brothers_and_Sisters_in_the_North-5115676 to make the analysis easier and shorter. Thirdly, the researcher the researcher copied the script into tables to make it easier for the analysis of the politeness categories based on Brown and Levinson (1987). The researcher put the setting of the place to show where the conversation occurs. The name of the speakers were also mentioned in the whole conversation. Fourthly, the researcher divided the table into 5 columns, namely data, positive politeness, negative politeness, bald on record, and off record. Then, the researcher used a tick symbol to indicate that the data were classified into a particular category. At the end of the data, total occurrences for each of the category was also presented. Besides, for the data analysis, the researcher counted the percentage for each of the politeness occurs in the data. Then, the researcher narrated it one by one based on the highest percentage by explaining some samples of the data to make the explanation easier.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis, the researcher finds out that the highest type of politeness strategy proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987) is negative politeness which is followed by positive politeness strategy. The total number of negative politeness found in the documentary entitled "My Brothers & Sisters in the North" is 117 data with 55.40 % total percentage. Meanwhile, for the number of positive politeness found in the data is 94 or 44.60 %. Further, through the analysis it is clearly shown that there is no occurrence for bald on record and off record. The distribution of the data is displayed in the table below.

Table 1. Data Distribution

No	Politeness Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Negative	117	55.40
2.	Positive	94	44.60
	TOTAL	211	100

Further, the description for each of the strategy will be presented below.

Negative politeness strategy

It is mentioned previously that negative politeness refers to the distant relation between the speakers and hearers. In other words, this strategy is used in communicating with strangers, elder people, or people who have higher status and position. This strategy is applied to make the utterances sound more polite such as the use of the word "please" in giving a command so that the hearers who do not have a close relationship to the speakers will not feel offended. In this case, it is pretty normal to see that the highest data is negative politeness since North Koreans rarely meet or even communicate to other people from different countries due to the restricted rules. Hence, the way they communicate to the host who comes from different nation would be applying negative strategy since the host is a stranger to them. Besides, negative politeness can be found during the conversation among North Koreans. It happens since they do not close to one another. It can be due to their position such as the employee and the boss. The specific explanation will be presented below.

The use of the word "please"

1) You have done a good job today. It was a new product. Nevertheless, you have understood it fast and performed well. Comrade Ri Gum Hyang. **Please stand up.**
2) **Applause, please!** Comrade Hong and comrade Hwang haven't quite understood the process today, so they have caused a bit of chaos.
3) **Please rest tomorrow.** We'll call it a day now. You've worked hard today.
4) **Please help this dream to come true. Please do your best.**

Through the data samples above, it shows that the use of "please" is to make the utterances sound more polite. The use of the word "please" for samples number 1 to 3 is to request for a command which are asking to stand up, giving applause, and taking a rest. The utterances are spoken by the boss of the production in the cloth company. Hence, it shows that

the relation between the employees and the boss are distant. Besides, the boss is the one who has a higher position compare to the employee so that she holds the power to give a command. Further, for the fourth sample, it is not only a command, but it also considers as a hope which the grandma wishes for the host to make the reunification happens.

The use of pronoun "e"

1) **We provide a service, so we are working today.** But today is "Political Day" for everybody else, **so we have fewer visitors today.**
2) **We are not allowed to wear bikinis**. It doesn't fit to our customs.
3) **We wanted to reach reunification during our military service too.**
4) **We artists aren't robots.**
5) **We charge solar energy with it and use it for lighting and television.**

Based on the samples above, it shows that the pronoun "we" is used to indicate inclusiveness. It does not include the host. As in the first data, the pronoun "we" refers to the speaker and the other North Koreans who work in the same place as the speaker. In the second and fifth sample, the use of "we" refers to the speakers and North Koreans in general. It does not specifically refer to the North Koreans who work in the same place as the speaker. For the third sample, the pronoun "we" refers to the speaker and the army who want to reach for reunification during their military service. Further, for the fourth data, "we" used to denote to more specific area which is people who work as artists.

The use of the pronoun "our"

1) **Our Great Leader** fought to the east, west and north of Baekdu Mountain and wrote the history of our liberation.
2) **Our Mother Kim Jong Suk** lived here until spring 1943. From here she organized the revolutionary actions at home and abroad.
3) **Our people come on all other days.** On Saturdays foreigners and natives are here together.
4) The Pyongyang International Soccer School was founded by **our revered Marshal Kim Jong Un.**

The 4 samples above show that the use of pronoun "our" indicates possession. In the first data, pronoun "our" refers to their leader. It indicates that they admit the fact that they have a great leader. The same case occurs in the second sample which they, North Koreans, accept that Kim Jong Suk is their Mother who brings revolutionary for the country. Further, for the third data, pronoun "our" refers solidarity among the North Koreans. Meanwhile, for the fourth data refers to the possession that they agree Kim Jong Un is their leader.

The use of modal auxiliary

1) Who learned it best? **Who would like to volunteer?** What is your name?
2) If international economic sanctions were lifted, **it would get even better.**
3) There are people in charge of foreign trade. **Of course we would like that.** But for various reasons, the path is blocked, so it has stopped.
4) **I think that economic possibilities would be very high.** But firstly, the Leader and the General think of reunification very often too.
5) Actually, **on the label it should say:** "Made in Korea." If the economic sanctions were removed, then we could do that perhaps.
6) **In socialism, a person who doesn't work should not think he can eat.**

7) Here, **where you can feel the love and care of the Marshal**, people can enjoy a better cultural life.

Based on the samples above, modals used to perform negative politeness. It uses to show possibility. The first data, the conversation occurs in the class which it is spoken by the teacher. The modal "would" is applied to show possibility. In this case, the possibility is to be the volunteer in the class. The second until the fifth samples are the utterances spoken by the boss of the production in the cloth company. She uses modal specifically to communicate the things related to the work. The sixth sample shows that the modal is used to talk about the system in the country. Lastly, the modal is used to refer possible feelings to the leader.

The use of specific name

1) **The great Marshal was pleased** when he heard about its completion, and named it "People's Amusement Park."
2) **The beloved Leader Kim Il Sung,** the revered General Kim Jong Il and the revered Marshal loved the children.
3) Especially the last song was about the deceased **General Kim Jong II**. It's deep in the hearts of the children.
4) **Through the support of the General,** we designed the house this way, so we can feed the rabbits inside.

Through the data above, the way people communicate about their leaders to other people is by referring to some specific names such as "the great Marshall," "the beloved Leader Kim II Sung," and "General." It shows their respect to their leaders. It also attempts to perform that the leaders have higher position than them due to their powers. In other words, those specific names show the negative politeness since they show the distant relationship between the people and the leaders. If the people do not regard that way, then it will be sound rude.

Positive politeness strategy

It is mentioned previously that positive politeness refers to the opposite of negative politeness. In other words, it shows closeness among the speakers. It can be said that this strategy aims to share sympathy and solidarity among the speakers. In this case, through the documentary, it shows that even North Koreans rarely meet other people with different nations, they still can get along with them. Besides, they show closeness to the host or to other people they are talking to by referring to their feelings. Communicating feelings can be considered as applying positive politeness since they share the same feelings or thoughts. The detail explanation is presented below.

Showing empathy and solidarity

1) But if we, the people, feel as one, we will overcome the problems. **We have the same blood, the same skin color and the same customs.**
2) **Since we are one people by nature,** we won't feel like strangers if we meet each other after reunification.
3) **Your character is a little bit masculine.**
4) **We are a little bit similar, aren't we?**

5) **We're both very tough.**

The samples of the data above display that by performing positive politeness, North Koreans, as the speakers show empathy and solidarity to the hearer. In this case, the hearer is from different nation that they never meet, but they do not feel awkward when talking about personalities or daily life. The first and the second samples are spoken by the grandson, the one who also works in the park. This conversation occurs in the house so that the nuance is rather informal. Through those utterances, he mentions that he, as a North Korean, shares the same historical background with the host who originally from South Korea. In other words, he shares solidarity to the host and considers that they both are actually related. Besides, he uses the pronoun "we" which shows togetherness to the host in terms of background or origin.

Further, the third until the sixth samples are spoken by grandmother in the house. It represents the personalities that grandmother and the host share. It considers as positive politeness since by sharing the same personalities, both the speaker and the hearer are considered having a close relationship. Again, it involves the use of pronoun "we" which indicates their closeness. Besides, the expression, "aren't we?" spoken by the grandmother aims to support her statement. In other words, it aims to make sure the host agrees with the statement she utters. In this case, the host replies, "Yes, I'm very active" which means that she approves grandmother's utterance that they both share the same character.

Expressing feelings

1) We are the hosts. **I'm very pleased you have come to meet us.** Unfortunately, we cannot travel to the South.
2) Therefore **I am happy you are visiting us** here in the North.
3) **I guess I would be happier** to meet Koreans from the South than the neighbours on our block.
4) When I was younger, before the military service, **I was really scared of her.**
5) She has also a very high voice, and when she curses, **I don't like her anymore.**
6) **I don't like to paint nasty things.**
7) It is nice to do something together. **You get lonely when you're alone**. If one is together with people one can share the joy. It is better to laugh together. Perhaps the geezers like to be alone.
8) How can I put it...He was able to do everything. He could drive a tractor very well. **His will is very strong. He was able to do anything that a man can do, so...**

The samples of the data above present the feelings North Koreans found in the documentary towards particular things. Naturally, describing feelings to other people even they have different background or common knowledge means that the speaker trusts them to know the feelings s/he experiences in that particular moments. The first until the third samples represent the happiness they feel towards the host's present in their place. It means that they welcome the host because it is a rare opportunity for them to encounter people from different country. Hence, they are happy since it brings a new experience for them. In the fourth data, the speaker aims to present his fear to his grandmother. It also shows closeness since share the fear to other people means the speaker believes in them to know what s/he fears of.

Moreover, the fifth and sixth samples represent the things that the speaker dislikes. Sharing the things the speaker hates to other people means s/he hopes other people understand her/him. In this case, in the fifth data, the grandson shows the fact that he dislikes his grandmother when she gets angry by increasing her volume. Meanwhile, the sixth data represents the things the painter hates in painting which what he considers as nasty things. Further, the seventh sample shows the feeling of lonely that the speaker hates. It refers to the

implication that the speaker loves being in a group. Lastly, it represents the feeling of proud of someone. When a speaker expresses that s/he is proud of someone due to his/her personalities or achievement, it implies that the person s/he is talking to should admit that fact. It also implies the fact that the hearer must understand the perspective of the speaker. In this case, the wife of the tractor driver displays the fact which makes her falls in love with her husband. It allows the host to understand the reasons that makes her doing so. Hence, it is considered as positive politeness strategy.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, this study is about the use of the politeness strategy found in the documentary entitled *My Brothers and Sisters in the North*. The politeness theory used in this study is proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). Based on the analysis, it shows that there are only 2 types of politeness strategy found in the data, namely negative and politeness strategy. Negative politeness occurs 117 times with 55.40% total percentage. Meanwhile, positive politeness occurs 94 times with 44.60% total percentage.

Through the analysis, it clarifies that the negative politeness occurs in some cases such as the use of the word "please" to indicate a command, the use of pronoun "we" to perform exclusiveness since it does not involve the host as a stranger coming from a different land, the use of pronoun "our" to reveal possession, and the use of specific names to indicate that the addressees have higher position to the speakers. Surprisingly, the use of negative politeness here is only applied whenever the North Koreans in the documentary talk about their work and their leaders. The formality performs in those situations aims to show their professionalism towards their works and loyalty towards the country. Hence, by applying negative politeness, they create distant to the host or other people to make their works or anything related to the country personal. It proves by the fact that North Korea is an isolated country which has many things to keep private.

Besides, positive politeness which aims to perform closeness to the hearer is considered as the second highest in this study. Generally, positive politeness found in the data purposively used to show empathy and solidary to the hearer. In this case, in sharing empathy and solidary shows through the fact that the speakers and hearers have the same origin and personalities, for example "since we are one people by nature," and "we are a little bit similar, aren't we?" Hence, by having the same background and personalities make them closer since they are related to one another. In this positive politeness, North Koreans often use pronoun "we." However, the purpose is the opposite of the negative politeness since in this case the pronoun "we" indicates closeness between the speakers and hearers. The pronoun "we" involves both the hearers and speakers.

Besides, positive politeness found in this study also represents the feelings of the speakers towards the hearers. By describing the feelings to other people even they have different background or nation, it means that the speakers trust the hearers to know the feelings they experience in some particular moments. It also implies the fact that the speakers let the hearers to understand them. Fortunately, positive politeness is found in the informal situation such as in the house. In other words, it refers to the phatic communion. The North Koreans feel close to the host who comes from different place when they talk about their personal lives including their feelings and personalities. In discussing about their lives, they do not feel awkward to the people who they barely meet. It gives an understanding that North Koreans who live in isolation can be close to other people. For the future researches, this theory is definitely can be applied in different objects such as social media platforms or people's daily conversation.

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