

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND METHOD

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study uses two main frameworks supported by the conceptual framework of English and Korean phonological systems to analyze phonological interference in the speech of the actors portraying Yi family in the film. This study's first theoretical framework is the theory of phonological interference originally proposed by Uriel Weinreich (1979). Despite being introduced decades ago, the theory remains relevant and has been applied in recent studies, such as the research conducted by Yatmikasari, Hidayati, and Sulaeman (2023). The second framework is the Theory of Distinctive Features, originally proposed by Chomsky and Halle (1968) in *The Sound Pattern of English (SPE)*. This theory has also been further refined by Schane (1973) and Odden (2005), as described in Supriadi (2014).

2.1.1 Phonological Contrast Between Phonological Systems of English and Korean

The fundamental difference between the phonological systems of Korean and English is the basis for sound changes. Korean has approximately 19 consonants and 8 monophthong vowels (Sohn, 1999:153 ; Chang, 2017). In contrast, American English has about 24 consonants and 12 core vowel along with several diphthongs (Chomsky & Halle, 1968). The table of Korean and English consonants and vowels can be seen below:

The Table of Korean Consonants and Vowels

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|----------------|----|---|----------------|----|---|----------------|----|-----|------------------|------|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| Consonant | p | p ^h | p̥ | t | t ^h | t̚ | k | k ^h | k̚ | t͡ʃ | t͡ʃ ^h | t͡ʃ̚ | s | s̚ | m | n | ŋ | l | h | |
| Vowel | i | e | ɛ | a | ʌ | o | u | ɯ | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Adapted from Sohn, Ho-Min (1999:432)

The Table of American Consonants and Vowels

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|---|---|---|---|
| Consonant | p | b | t | d | k | g | m | n | ŋ | f | v | θ | ð | s | z | ʃ | ʒ | h | tʃ | dʒ | l | r | j | w |
| Vowel | i | ɪ | e | æ | ɑ: | ɒ | ɔ: | ʊ | u: | ʌ | ɜ: | ə | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Adapted from Peter Rouch (2009)

Korean does not have the interdental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/, does not recognize complex diphthongs such as /eɪ/ and /oʊ/, and very rarely places consonant clusters at the beginning or end of words; when they do occur, they are usually limited to simple clusters such as /lk/ or /lm/ at the end of syllables (Sohn, 1994; Chang, 2017). Furthermore, English allows complex consonant clusters, both at the beginning of words (e.g., /str/ in street, /spl/ in splash) and at the end of words (e.g., /mp/ in lamp, /rld/ in world, /sts/ in texts) (Roach, 2009). Such clusters do not exist in Korean phonotactics, which generally allows only one consonant at the beginning of a word and a maximum of two specific consonants at the end.

2.1.2 Phonological Interference

The grand theory of phonological interference by Weinreich (1979, as cited in Yatmikasari et al., 2023) explains that it "concerns the manner in which a speaker perceives or reproduces the sound of one language, which might be

designated secondary, in terms of another, to be called primary" (p. 3). As cited in Yatmikasari et al. (2023), Weinreich (1979) classifies this phonological interference into four basic types:

- Under-differentiation of phonemes - Speakers equate two different sounds in the second language because the first language does not have that distinction. For example, Weinreich illustrates this through Romansh speakers who confuse the distinction between Schwyzertütsch phonemes /t/ and /ð/. Consequently, they pronounce both as /t/ (e.g., pronouncing /tɛnka/ instead of /ðɛnka/) (p. 4).
- Over-differentiation of phonemes - Speakers bring the phonemic distinctions characteristic of their first language and apply them excessively to their second language. Weinreich's example regarding the interpretation of the word /'lada/ (meaning 'wide'). A Schwyzertütsch speaker might pronounce it as /'la:da/, adding an extraneous phonemic length that is not necessary in the original language (p.4).
- Reinterpretation of distinctions - Speakers interpret sound features that are merely additional or redundant in the second language as meaning-distinguishing features. For example, Weinreich mentions the Romansh word /'messa/ that means 'mass', which can be interpreted by Schwyzertütsch almost as /'mesa/, where /ss/ does not occur in Schwyzertütsch phonological system (p. 4).
- Phone substitution - the sound of the second language is replaced with the most similar sound in the first language, even if the phoneme is the same

by definition. Weinreich mentioned an example that Romans /ɛ/ and Schwyzertütsch /æ/ as the front vowels of maximum openness. The /æ/ in Schwyzertütsch phoneme is pronounced more open, while Romansh pronounced both in the same way (p. 4).

2.1.3 Phonological Process

Phonological processes refer to changes in sound patterns that occur during the acquisition of both first and second languages (Rattanasak, 2025). Further, according to Diani & Azwandi, 2021 as cited by Hara et al., 2024, p. 317, “phonological process occurs when a speaker pronounces a word in a certain language by changing, adding, inserting a sound at the beginning, middle, and end of a word” which used to analyze all data on the differences in English pronunciation used by actors playing the Yi family with the standard pronunciation by the Cambridge Dictionary (AmE). In this study, the following phonological processes were analyzed: (1) Plosivisation, (2) Vowel Substitution, (3) Devoicing, (4) Monophthongization, (5) Vowel Epenthesis, (6) Rhotic Deletion, and (7) Vowel Lowering. Further details are provided below.

First, according to Williamson (2010) as cited by Pratidina and Subiyanto (2024, p. 15), Plosivisation or better known as stopping is the replacement of continuant consonants such as fricatives, nasals, affricates, or approximants with stop/plosive consonants (/p, b, t, d, k, g, ʔ/). Second, Vowel Substitution is defined by Hussain et al. (2011), as cited by Kennedy (2017, p. 30), as the replacement of a sound with the phonetically closest phoneme in the inventory of the recipient

language. Third, Devoicing is a phonological process in which voiced consonants such as /b/, /d/, /g/ at the end of a word become voiceless [p], [t], [k] due to the loss of vocal cord vibration (Hara et al., 2024). Then, according to Pratidina and Subiyanto (2024, p. 16-17), Monophthongization is the process of transforming diphthongs into monophthongs, as opposed to diphthongization, which also occurs in Korean due to the absence of certain diphthongs and Vowel Epenthesis is a linguistic phenomenon in which a vowel is inserted into a segment to separate a consonant cluster. Next to the definition of rhotic deletion, rhotic deletion is a phonological process in which the rhotic consonant /r/ is omitted in certain environments, resulting in a non-rhotic form in spoken language. As noted by Hall and Hamann (2010), “In languages that avoid sequences such as /rj/ or /ri/, one possible strategy is the deletion of the rhotic, yielding a non-rhotic outcome in that context.” Last, Vowel Lowering is a process involving a change in the pitch of a vowel sound within the vocal tract, whereby the vowel is articulated at a lower position than usual (Rose, 1996, cited by Yaseen, 2023).

2.1.4 Distinctive Features

A change in one or more features is sufficient to explain why one sound differs from another. To examine each sound change in detail, this study uses the distinctive feature theory. According to Chomsky and Halle's (1968), theory of distinctive features refined by Schane (1973) identifies the following four main categories:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| front | + | + | + | + | + | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| back | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| round | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | + | + | + | + | - | + |
| tense | + | - | + | - | - | + | - | - | + | - | + | ± | + | + |

The table presents the feature grid for consonants and vowels, which serves as the primary analytical tool for identifying phonological distinctions in this study.

2.2 Research Methods

The research methods used by the author are described in this chapter, which are divided into four sections, including type of research, data and data source, methods of collecting, and methods of analysing data.

2.2.1 Type of Research

This study employs descriptive-explanatory qualitative research to describe patterns of phonological interference and phonological processes that appear in the data. This design aligns with the research objectives of classifying English pronunciation deviations as types of phonological interference according to Weinreich (1979), as well as interpreting these deviations based on the differences between the phonological systems of Korean and English through the phonological processes that occur.

The primary research data are segmental phonetic realizations produced by the bilingual actors who played the Yi family in the film *Minari* (2020). Thus, this study is intended for theory-based linguistic analysis rather than experimental testing. Thus, a descriptive-explanatory qualitative approach is the most

appropriate method for answering this study's objectives and questions (Yuliana, 2018).

2.2.2 Data and Data Source

The data source for this study is the English dialogue from the film *Minari* (2020) along with its official script, which is identical to the dialogue in the film. The unit of analysis consists of every English word spoken by the actors portraying members of the Yi family (Jacob, Monica, David, Anne, Soonja). In terms of the research population, this study encompasses all English utterances spoken by the actors portraying the Yi family.

To narrow the focus, a sample was selected consisting of all utterances that show differences in the pronunciation of vowels or consonants when compared to the American standard pronunciation according to the Cambridge English Pronouncing Dictionary. Furthermore, this study employs a purposive sampling because only data containing phonological interference phenomena were selected.

Although the dialogue in *Minari* (2020) is scripted, the pronunciation is not constructed, because the sounds are naturally produced by the bilingual Korean-English actors based on their Korean phonological background. This study analyzes the actual phonetic realization heard in the film through repeated listening and phonetic transcription, therefore the segmental deviations remain valid indicators of phonological interference.

2.2.3 Methods of Collecting Data

During the data collection stage, researchers first watched the film *Minari* (2020) repeatedly while paying close attention to the official script containing the characters' dialogues. This process was carried out to ensure consistency between the speech in the film and the written text, as well as to accurately capture the nuances of pronunciation. Every English word spoken by the actors portraying Yi family members was then carefully noted, and if a pronunciation deviated from standard American English (based on the American edition of the Cambridge English Pronouncing Dictionary), it was marked as potential data. After the initial identification process, researchers copied and wrote down phonetic transcriptions of each utterance using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Transcriptions were carried out meticulously to ensure that every sound difference—both in vowels and consonants—was accurately recorded. The result of this entire process was 74 pronunciation data that showed indications of phonological interference and were ready for further analysis in the classification and interpretation stage.

2.2.4 Methods of Analysing Data

Each piece of pronunciation data collected was analyzed through the following three steps. Begin with identifying and classifying deviation (with external pronunciation validation). To determine whether an utterance deviates from standard American English, each token was compared directly with the phonetic transcription provided by the Cambridge English Pronouncing

Dictionary. A deviation is identified when the sound produced by the actor differs from the standard IPA notation in terms of place, manner, or voicing.

As a methodological verification step, the pronunciation patterns in the film were compared with non-scripted English speech data from Steven Yeun's (the name of actor playing Jacob Yi) interview in the A24 Youtube video Steven Yeun Answers the Web's Most Searched Questions (2021), which showed natural deviations such as truth /tru:θ/ realized as /tru:t/ at minute 13:48, within /wɪ'ðm/ as /wɪ'θm/ at minute 14:32, and think /θɪŋk/ as /tɪŋk/ at minute 14:51. The consistency of this pattern confirms that the analyzed deviations reflect the actors' L1–L2 phonological system, rather than being the result of dialogue construction, and is not intended to generalize the findings as it only serves as a verification tool to support the consistency of the actors' phonological patterns between scripted and non-scripted contexts. Only after this comparison is established does the utterance get classified into one of Weinreich's four interference types (under-differentiation, over-differentiation, reinterpretation, or phone substitution), based on the specific pattern of differences.

Building upon the previous step, the writer classified all pronunciation differences into four types of phonological interference and identified the most dominant type based on its frequency of occurrence which was under-differentiation. All data included in this category were analyzed for phonological processes using a distinctive approach. This leads to the subsequent analysis of distinctive features. Each sound that experiences interference is identified using distinctive feature theory to identify segmental features that are

changed, lost, or added. Researcher used a binary representation of English consonants and vowels based on a feature grid developed by Brinton and Brinton (2010). The purpose of this stage is to systematically and measurably trace the phonetic mechanisms underlying the interference process.

