

**THE PHONOLOGICAL STUDY OF ENGLISH VOWEL ERRORS OF  
KOREAN SPEAKERS' PRONUNCIATION IN "DESCENDANT OF THE  
SUN" KOREAN DRAMA**

**THESIS**

*Submitted as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements to Obtain Strata One (S1)  
Degree in English Department*



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## ABSTRACT

**Nurhijatul Kania, Annisa. 2022. “The Phonological Study of English Vowel Errors of Korean Speakers’ Pronunciation in “Descendant of The Sun” Korean Drama”. Thesis. Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni. Universitas Negeri Padang.**

English is used by many non-native English speakers from all around the world. Because of that, the mother tongue influences when they speak foreign language or their second language. Thus, this research analysed the error of English vowels pronounced by Korean Speaker based on the phonetic properties. This research used descriptive method which according to this research means collecting language symptoms in the form of words. The data were collected from a Korean Drama entitled Descendant of the Sun in several episodes in a form of words. To obtain the data, this research used listening method which listened directly by the researcher and then validated by a native speaker. The finding shows that there are six monophthongs and three diphthongs of English vowel which are incorrectly pronounced by the Korean Speakers. Those errors are / /, /e/, /ei/, /æ/, / /, / /, /ɪ/, /i /, and /o / which are substituted by / /, /o/, /ɪ/, / /, / /, /u/, /ɪə/, /ɪ/, / /, / /.

**Key Words:** vowel, phonological error, Korean Speaker

## ABSTRAK

**Nurhijatul Kania, Annisa. 2022. “The Phonological Study of English Vowel Errors of Korean Speakers’ Pronunciation in “Descendant of The Sun” Korean Drama”. Thesis. Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni. Universitas Negeri Padang.**

Bahasa Inggris digunakan oleh banyak penutur bahasa Inggris non-pribumi dari seluruh dunia. Oleh karena itu, bahasa ibu mempengaruhi ketika mereka berbicara bahasa asing atau bahasa kedua mereka. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini menganalisis kesalahan vokal bahasa Inggris yang diucapkan oleh Penutur Korea berdasarkan sifat fonetiknya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif yang menurut penelitian ini berarti mengumpulkan gejala bahasa berupa kata-kata. Data dikumpulkan dari Drama Korea berjudul *Descendant of the Sun* dalam beberapa episode dalam bentuk kata-kata. Untuk memperoleh data, penelitian ini menggunakan metode mendengarkan yang disimak langsung oleh peneliti kemudian divalidasi oleh penutur asli. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa ada enam monoftong dan tiga diftong vokal bahasa Inggris yang salah diucapkan oleh Penutur Korea. Kesalahan tersebut adalah /ɪ/, /e/, /ei/, /æ/, /ʊ/, /ɔ/, /ʌ/, /iə/, dan /oo/ yang diganti dengan /ɛ/, /o/, /ʌ/, /ɔ/, /ʌ/, /u/, /iə/, /ɪ/, / /, / /.

**Key Words:** vokal, kesalahan fonologi, penutur Korea

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the Research**

Nowadays, Korean Drama is loved not only by Korean but also by people all around the world. In their study, Pramita and Harto (2016) said the intensity of Korea's popularity is so big in Asia, even now it has become a kind of influence global. Also, it is supported by private television which broadcasts more foreign programs than local programs with a composition of 80% foreign impressions and 20% impressions local (Adi, 2019).

Korean Drama is becoming the world's interest right now. As time goes by, the development and technology are increasingly advanced, the world of film is also growing in every country, especially drama producing countries, one of them is Korea. As the observation, around 2014 until now, many countries are currently blooming on the Indonesian screen, especially Korean drama (Maryam, 2017). Because of that, conversation in Korean Dramas gradually use more English words than before considering the audiences are from around the world. However, because Korean is not the native speaker of English language, sometimes their pronunciation is different than the original one or the proper English words' pronunciation. When speaking English words in their native dialect, users will experience several common challenges. According to Brown (2007), phonological differences between their native language and their second language/foreign language cause issues. In a daily conversation, it is not a problem when a non-

native English pronounces English sounds incorrectly. However, in the field of phonetic phonology, if pronouncing sound is not according to the standard, it is a problem.

Pronunciation is the way the word is pronounced or how the sound is when the word is uttered. Pronunciation is the manner in which a language is spoken; the manner in which a word is spoken; the manner in which a person speaks the language's words (Hornby, 2008). However, because of many factors, pronunciation can be different for several people. Because English is an International Language, there is a theory about the standard pronunciation which refers to the native speaker's pronunciation. Thus, it should be based on the standard one. However, there are a lot of English speakers from different countries. With their mother tongue, it may influence their pronunciation in English.

To be clear about the problem of this research, here are several examples provided. The phonetic transcription of the right pronunciation of word "sure" is / ʃʊə/, but Korean actor in the Drama pronounce it / ʃʊr/. Another example, the phonetic transcription of the right pronunciation of word "that" is /ðæt/, but the Korean actor pronounced it /d t/. After classifying the data based on their episode, the researcher makes the phonetic transcription of the vowel that is error. Based on those transcriptions, the researcher will categorize the words based on the same error. Then, the researcher makes the substitution of the vowel that is error using the formula as follows:

[æ]	→	[ ]
+Front		+Front
+Low		+Mid
-Rounded		-Rounded
+Lax		+Lax

Several studies about pronunciation have been conducted in the previous. Also, there are several focuses that is studied such as pronunciation error (vowel and consonant), pronunciation problem and vowel or consonant changes. Hartoto (2010) studied the error of vowel and the intonation and found that there are substitutions of vowel to other vowel and diphthong and rising and falling intonation. Next, Umami (2017) studied the vowel error in English department students in Tapanuli and found most of the error vowels were affected by the mother tongue which included to Interlingual error.

Asma (2018) which studied about the error of vowel and diphthong found that vowels were more difficult to be pronounced than consonants among the students. Next, Harwadi (2019) studied the changes of diphthongs among Javanese students. Harwadi (2019) stated that there are changes from diphthong sounds became vowel and diphthong to another diphthong. Then, Nisa (2020) studied the error of voiceless plosive consonants and found that the common type of errors among the students' pronunciation are omission, misordering, addition and misformation.

Next, several research that focus to pronunciation problem which the analysis is focus to classify the data based on their problem such as substituting, inserting, etc. Habibi (2016) and Tralala (2021) studied the pronunciation problem

and found several problems in consonants, vowels and diphthongs. Next, Latif (2019) which focused on the error of consonant stated that position of the consonant is crucial role to the Arabian students' pronunciation. Thus, all of those researches' objects are students and learners. Then, Akis (2019) which focused on the vowel only found that several errors were discovered in students speaking English as a foreign language who were influenced by Indonesian

There are several researches about pronunciation that have been conducted before which the objects are no longer students or learners but they are as non-native speakers who speak English as foreign language. The closest studies to this study are Wisung's study (2016) and Halimah (2019). Wisung (2016) also focused on vowel change but in Colombian speaker which is a Spanish native. Then, Halimah (2019) also used Korean speaker as the object to analyse the mispronounced words, both consonants and vowels. The results showed one of the changes is vowel [ ] becomes [ ] in word 'just'. However, the data were collected from an interview. In an interview, the word is said spontaneously while in a drama or a play it is scripted. So, the actors and actresses are able to practice first which means it is more well-prepared than in an interview.

Then, Ismartono (2009) studied phonological analysis of Black English in a song and found several phonological processes. Next, Leinonen (Leinonen, 2011) studied the vowel sound in Swedish dialects but more focused on the acoustic analysis which was the waves of the sound. The results showed that there was a significant linguistic gap between older and younger speakers. Next, Anindita (2017) studied mispronunciation, both consonants and vowel in Javanese and



Sundanese radio announcers. The result showed that the most often sounds mispronounced are [ð] becomes [d] and [i] becomes [e].

Also using Korean language as the data, Nabila (2016) focused in phonetic and semantic changes of borrowing word that was used by Korean speaker in variety shows and Korean dramas. The results showed that the changes in consonants and vowels happened because they try to adjust English pronunciation. Then, Boestra (2020) studied related to English vowel change on Dutch speakers which focused on acoustic analysis. The results showed that the vowel spacing in American English is generally more frontal and lower than its Dutch counterpart. Langstrof (2006) also studied related to English vowel change in New Zealand English which focused on also on acoustic analysis. The results showed that the short front vowels /ɪ/, / /, and /æ/ proceeded through the Intermediate Period for both non-high vowel raising and high vowel centralisation. While, Melienia (2021) focused on auditory analysis of the vowel change of Filipino speakers in short movie.

In short, there are several studies that already analysed Korean speaker mispronunciation but in different media and also different focus: Park (2021) who focused studying the stress and vowel reduction; Nabila (2016) focused on English borrowing words in Korean language; Halimah (2019) focused on the mispronunciation words by Korean singers in an interview. So, that is why the researcher decided to study the English vowel errors of Korean speaker in a different media, Korean Drama. Because as we all know that a drama, movie or a play has the scripts which means the actors and actresses do not speak

spontaneously but it can be said as they all are well-prepared with their scripts. So, they can practice their best to pronounce the English words and sentences.

## **1.2 Identification of the Research Problem**

In the field of phonetic and phonology, there must be a standard of a pronunciation which one correct and incorrect when it comes to the phonetic properties of the sounds. However, because of many factors that influence the sound production of the speaker, the sound may be produced incorrectly by the speaker. For instance, Chinese will pronounce phoneme /r/ becomes /l/ such as in word 'rice'. While /f/ will becomes /p/ when pronounced by Sundanese. Then, identifying the vowel error, for example phoneme /æ/ becomes / /. Therefore, those problems can be studied using phonetic and phonological study of pronunciation error by analysing their phonetic properties and their phonological environment.

## **1.3 Limitation of Research Problem**

Based on the identification of the research problem above, this research is limited to focus on the vowel error of Koreans who speak English in a Korean Drama named "Descendant of the Sun".

## **1.4 Formulation of Research Problem**

According to the limitation of the research problem above, the formulation of the problems are: "What are the error vowel sounds pronounced by the actors and actresses in the Korean drama?", "How are the phonetic properties of the error

vowel sounds?” and “How is the Korean Vowel system influence the English Vowel of Korean actors and actresses’ pronunciation in the drama?”

### **1.5 Research Questions**

There are three research questions as follows:

1. What are the error vowel sounds pronounced by the actors and actresses in the Korean drama?
2. How are the phonetic properties of the error vowel sounds?
3. How does the Korean Vowel system influence the English Vowel of Korean actors and actresses’ pronunciation in the drama?

### **1.6 Purposes of the Research**

Based on the research questions above, the purpose of the researches are:

1. To find out the error vowel sounds that are pronounced by the actors and actresses in the drama.
2. To find out the phonetic properties of the error vowel sounds.
3. To find out the influence of Korean Vowel system to English Vowel of Korean actors and actresses’ pronunciation in the drama.

### **1.7 Significances of the Research**

The research must show various results that can be implemented, so they can contribute to increase the quality of science, especially in this study, identifying vowel error in non-native English speakers, Korean, in a Korean Drama. The results of this research are also expected be able to give explanation about the vowel error phenomenon by Korean when pronouncing English word. In this

regard, the findings of this research are expected to provide theoretical and practical significance.

1. Theoretically, the research findings have the capability to expand and enrich the information in linguistic field related to the influence of Korean mother tongue vowel system to the second language or foreign language.
2. Practically, the findings of this research are expected to provide a new contribution to the influence of vowel distribution on the speaker's second language.

### **1.8 Definitions of Key Terms**

The definition of key terms of this research is elaborated as:

1. Pronunciation: The way sounds are pronounced.
2. Pronunciation Error: Pronouncing or uttering sounds in a wrong way.
3. Vowel: A, i, u, e, and o are letters that indicate vowel sounds.
4. Vowel Error: Pronouncing or uttering vowel sounds in a wrong way.
5. Phonological Environment: A description of the sounds that occur in the surroundings of a certain sound.
6. Korean Drama: A Play produced by South Korea entitled Descendant of the Sun.