

HUFFING AND PUFFING ABOUT /f/-ING EVERYTHING:
LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES AND PHONOLOGICAL BORROWING IN SOUTH KOREA

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THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in Linguistics
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2013

Urbana, Illinois

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ABSTRACT

Scholars have noted that English usage in Korean society is laden with indexical value. On the one hand English is linked with modernity (Lee 2005), chicness (Park H.J. 2004), and global cosmopolitanism (Park J.K. 2009). On the other hand, for a long time it has also been linked with negative values, such as immodesty, pretentiousness, and being a traitor to the nation (Park J. 2009). While the traditional linguistic ideologies are still very much alive and in circulation, I argue that recently a new language ideology has been forming, which I call phonological accuracy. This shift occurs along with the changes in social climate and as Koreans are no longer viewed as citizens of what used to be the “hermit kingdom”, but see themselves as global citizens. As a result, phonemes from foreign languages which used to be markers of immodesty are now finding their way into everyday spoken Korean. By using a foreign phoneme, a speaker of Korean can position themselves as either a trendy global cosmopolitan, an elite snob whose loyalty to the nation is suspect, or a poser. In this paper, I focus on the phonological borrowing of /f/ and what it means to the modern day Korean, who is no longer limited to speaking “pure” Korean.

Keywords: language ideologies, phonological borrowing, hypercorrection, South Korea

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In any society, there are always multiple language ideologies in constant competition (Kroskrity 2000). In this paper, I will discuss three such prominent language ideologies surrounding English and English pronunciation in South Korea. One ideology paints speakers of English as Koreans who are not loyal to their true selves, or even as traitors to the nation (Park J. 2009). Another language ideology sees English as the ticket to modernity and globalization (Lee 2005, Park and Abelman 2004). A newer language ideology is one that not only tolerates, but encourages phonological accuracy because it recognizes the power of English as a tool for improving international relations and reinforcing Korea's place in the world economy. This last language ideology is manifested through the increasingly widespread use of borrowed phonemes not found in the Korean language in modern day Korean speech.

Among these phonemes, /f/ is one window into a new ideology of phonological "accuracy", where pronouncing words that are thought of as/enregistered as "English" or foreign should be pronounced as they are imagined to be spoken by (White) monolingual "native speakers" of American English (Bonfiglio 2002), with negligence to the many varieties of English spoken in North America (Carver 1987, Lippi-Green 1997). The act of pronouncing words that "should" have /f/ with /p/ has an unsettled indexical value. It can place the speaker into 3 different models of personhood. The first of these is the fabulous global citizen who has a good command of English, and is able to incorporate this sophisticated knowledge into his Korean, as if it is necessarily and uncontrollably spilling out of him. The second is an elite person who "flaunts" his privilege over people who are decidedly less privileged. In the case of this second type, in some extreme cases, the speaker's loyalty to the nation can be suspect depending on who the audience is, because of the association of the phoneme with what is foreign. Finally, he can be interpreted as someone who is striving for cosmopolitanism, but ends up coming off as a poser as someone who does not know when, where or how to use /f/.

CHAPTER 2

LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES

Silverstein (1979) first brought scholarly attention to language ideology as “any sets of beliefs about language articulated by the users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use.” Later scholars reassessed this definition: Irvine (1989) said it is “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests,” and Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (2006) defined it as “ingrained, unquestioned beliefs about the way the world is, the way it should be, and the way it has to be with respect to language.” Kathryn Woolard defines language ideology as “representations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world (p.3).” Essentially, the framework of language ideology contributes to the analysis of the way people believe things to be in this world and their linguistic representations of it, or the way society and language affect one another (Woolard and Schieffelin 1994, Gal and Irvine 1995, Schieffelin et al. 1998).

Earlier academic models of sociolinguistics asserted a simple correlation between linguistic form and social meaning (Labov 1972, Eckert 2008). The framework of language ideology expanded on this idea, and believes the correlation comes from the intersection of a linguistic form and a belief about a particular group of people who uses that form. A core belief of variationism is that different phonemes can carry different social values, or be conveyers of language ideologies. Each individual holds a unique system of values and social practices, which show a strong correlation with differences in the language that these individuals use. In other words, language becomes a key ingredient in the way one expresses and establishes one’s identity, and by the same token, strives to understand others.

However, there is no inherent value to phonemes. It is when they are tied systematically with stances and beliefs that they take on a life of their own. In the earlier days of sociolinguistic inquiry, scholars aimed to establish an account of linguistic forms linked with meaning. Hence Eckert’s study of jocks and burnout has been criticized for supplying too simplistic a model for the distinguishing among the varying high school students, and Bucholtz has noted an implication of a “natural” connection between a particular linguistic form and a community (Bucholtz 2003). More recent studies have argued for a more complex model, echoing Bakhtin’s claims of words having multiple meanings that evolve over time (Bakhtin 1981). More often than not, linguistic signs carry numerous indexical meanings in addition to their referential meanings (Silverstein 2003). In the same way, words and linguistic structures come to

index social meanings and become building blocks of social identity through their repeated and widespread use (Wortham 2006). In fact, Wortham states that signs of identity only have meaning when they are construed into models, and that models of personhood cannot come into being nor stand alone without the emblems that index them in various media (Agha 2007, Besnier 2011, Bourdieu 1977b), making them intrinsically interdependent (2011).

Borrowing (Hock, 1991) is a linguistic phenomenon that occurs frequently in many linguistic contact situations (Bynon 1977, Hock and Joseph 1996). Though borrowing happens most commonly at the lexical level, phonological borrowing is also a well-recognized phenomenon. One of these borrowed phonemes in particular, /f/, has been given a lot of attention by speakers of Korean in recent years. Native speakers of Korean are incorporating /f/ into their Korean speech, which is a display of foreignness that used to be unimaginable just a decade ago. It has become reindexicalized through the changes in language ideologies, and has come to represent what it means to be a Korean in modern day Korea: modern, cosmopolitan, educated, and globally aware. Before the wave of globalization hit Korea, and even in the earlier days of globalization, there were at least two stances the use of English would evoke. One was jealousy towards proficiency, and the other was the disapproval stemming from nonconforming attitudes. These ambivalent responses were the common reaction towards using English in public.

The most important factor that drives direct adoption of the foreign phoneme /f/ is the changing attitude of the people towards English and its new speakers in the mainstream culture. Scholars who research English in Korea have argued that English has become the language of “power and prestige which implies an ideological and political agenda in that those who have access to the language will gain the power and prestige in the society (Kim Y-M. 2002:27).” However, as we will examine in the examples to come, English is not always indexical of high-class prestige. To understand how English has come to enjoy the popular understanding its hegemonic status despite its various situational meanings and the role of English in Korea as a value-laden social tool, it is imperative that we understand the nature of any language beyond that of a linguistic communication system.

Linguistic ability is not merely a technical ability, but a statutory ability, which can translate into social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Bourdieu (1977a) prescribes several reasons as to how English gained this prestigious status as a desirable language in Korea. He claims that language is more than simply a means of communication, but further on an instrument of power. This authority is gained through manipulation of the language habitus, the specific language market, and the expressive market (Bourdieu 1991). He also argues that phonetic properties are better indices of identifying a speaker’s social class than syntax, which so many Koreans have traditionally strived to master in the case of English. The goal of English education in Korea has long been the learning of grammar, mainly

achieved by memorizing grammatical rules, followed by vocabulary. As the need for English as a method of communication grew in the late 1990s, pronunciation became an impending issue, and there were more efforts for accurate pronunciation. This demand in turn raises the market value of accurate pronunciation, and the higher social value of foreign phonemes spilled over into the realm of loan words used in Korean.

This notion of linguistic capital, when understood together with Kachru (1986), becomes the foundation upon which we can examine the elevated status of English in contemporary Korea. In his discussion of factors that aid English in its ascent to global lingua franca status, Kachru emphasizes the attitude of its speakers toward the language itself, “creating ‘identity’ with the language and contributing to the belief in the ‘alchemy’ of English (Kachru 1986).” This claim helps us to understand that the manifest power and higher economical rewards of English may affect the English speaker to feeling superior about his language, in turn leading to the social and cultural change in his surrounding environment that involves cultural adaptation from the non-English speaking natives.

CHAPTER 3

ENGLISH IN KOREA: THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE NOT SO NEUTRAL

English is a sign that is saturated with multiple indices, which take on their meaning and their meaningfulness from their surrounding context. Though the indexical values of variables are complicated, unsettled, and ever-changing (Eckert 2008), English in Korea has positive indexical values such as modernity and global citizenship, and can also be a marker of tenacity, a virtue that is especially valued in traditional Korean educational and workplace culture, as it is considered the product of many long hours of dedicated study.

As Korea became more prominently thrust into the global market in the late 1980s, English ability, or more accurately, high scores on standardized English tests, became a valuable commodity for college graduates seeking employment in international firms (Crystal 2003). Until then, standardized tests such as the TOEFL were utilized mainly by students who applied to study abroad. As the trend of considering standardized English test scores became the new norm in Korean society, the TOEIC test arose as the golden standard¹. As a result of the popularity of standardized English exam scores as a measure of not only academic prowess but also as of integrity and future potential, the English education boom in Korea began. In order to get a job, high scores on these exams were indispensable, and the English education boom in Korea began, with the purpose being high standardized test scores, rather than fluency.

However, as time passed, the rapid development of the internet, the influx of foreign culture, and the migration of foreigners and return of expatriates, spoken and written English came to be identified as lacking in the English of Koreans. Especially, as direct communication with foreigners in English increased, the need for better pronunciation was highlighted. The period of economic hardship from 1997 to 1998 commonly known as the IMF crisis, further fanned the 'English fever' (Jeong 2004). Such a frenzy to learn English stems from the widespread belief that Koreans can't speak English despite many years of English education, and that this lack of English prohibits Korea from becoming a competitive nation, both economically and politically, in the global arena. Some critics even went so far as to blame at least part of the economic troubles on poor English delivery, counting it as a top reason as to why investors were hesitant to pour funds into the Korean market.

¹ Since the TOEIC and the TOEFL are administered by the ETS, and the fees to take the tests are quite expensive, there were efforts to create domestic standardized English tests. The most well-known of these is Seoul National University's TEPS, and there is a state-governed exam planned in the works for 2015.

Amidst such social context, a newer, newly forming language ideology that stresses phonological accuracy as an index of the speaker's access to "authentic English" as opposed to those who only know "Konglish (**K**orean + **E**nglish)" started to take shape. This is linked to an image of personhood. The person who has access to "authentic English" is imagined as someone who has traveled out of the country, who has early and frequent access to superior "native speaker teachers" (as opposed to South Korean teachers of English who have poor pronunciation), and who has experience of extensive international travels or living abroad experience. In this sense, a mastery of accurate pronunciation indexes not only a speaker's to a plethora of English-related resources, but also a modern, globalized lifestyle associated with such opportunities (Besnier 2004). Just as Japanese forms are chronotopically associated with the past and become indexical of all that is dated and out of vogue, English, when used in a restrained manner and in contexts that are acceptable to Koreans, is closely tied with images of modernity (Lee 2005, 2006). This new ideology of phonological accuracy relies on the speaker's supposed first-hand acquaintance with *salaissnun yenge* "breathing, living English", a variety of English that many Koreans believe can only be learned through direct contact with high status native speakers in sites of privilege.

These sites of privilege are popularly imagined as venues outside of Korea. There is a clear difference between English that was learned through the traditional education system in Korea or "picked up" in Itaewon, and "living, breathing English" that is supposedly "acquired" while living in an English-speaking country; the latter is perceived to have a much higher communicative value when put to the test during interactions with foreigners. By using the original phoneme accurately, one implies that he has the direct contact to this "living English" that speakers who learned English within Korea do not.

There has thus been a marked shift in how Eng in Korea is viewed. In the 1980s, the person who spoke English was seen in a mostly negative light. You stood out if you used English, and by extension, used English phonemes. You would be perceived unique at best, always as standing out of the crowd. However, what was once considered cocky and distasteful is becoming more accepted and desirable. During the mid 1990s, uniqueness becomes positively identified, and the "new generation" with their *kayseng* 개성 'uniqueness' became buzz words. As need and prestige are claimed as the major reasons for borrowing (Hock & Joseph 1996), as well as cultural contact, it can be said that the positive values of English overcame the negatives, motivating people to use what used to be a forbidden phoneme. As Joseph Park (2009) notes, English in Korea was an "unspeakable tongue" not only because of the Korean people's self-deprecation when it comes to foreign languages, but also because of the connotations of the Other that English brought as a foreign language in regards to the nation's sensitive modern history of Japanese colonialization. However, lately English has become more an index of high class, power, and

global cosmopolitanism. English is now seen as a tool for national development, an essential skill of the modern Korean who is loyal and useful to the nation was born. Using English phonemes and loan words mixed into Korean speech, is now seen as prestigious and classy, or in some cases, even unnoticeable or unremarkable. English in Korea has become the language of “power and prestige which implies an ideological and political agenda in that those who have access to the language will gain the power and prestige in the society (Kim 2002:27).” The contemporary Korean is no longer afraid to flaunt his neoliberal ideas and lifestyle.

This shift can be seen in the explosion in the numbers of South Koreans who migrate to English speaking countries. Stevens et al. (2006) mentions strong desires for Koreans to learn English as the reason for increased short-term migration to English-speaking countries. Cho (2004) reports of college-level students deferring their degree program to take time off earning English certificates overseas. With the purpose of leaving the country to study abroad shifting from being mostly to acquire knowledge in one’s academic field to procuring a higher level of English competence, we see a drop in the average age for studying abroad; whereas the majority of *yuhaksayng* “study abroad student” used to be graduate students, many are now undergraduates or younger, bringing the rise of *chokiyuhaksayng*, or early study abroad students. Study abroad has become so wide spread that students who missed the opportunity in college are now joining the bandwagon even after graduation, as they realize during the job search process the need to include some kind of overseas experience which presumes one’s superior English skills, since they don’t want to be the only ones without it on their resumes. All of this stems from the belief that English is unquestionably the most widely used language in the fields of international commerce, politics, science, education, and fashion (Jeon and Lee 2006). The two articles in Appendix A and B demonstrate the extensive use of loan words in Korean, and the extent loan words in Korean originate from English².

This trend can also be seen in the ways that Koreans use social media. A recent trend among Korean office workers is to maintain an active page on Facebook, the online social networking site popular in the U.S. With more people using online mediums as a way of expressing their individuality, online representation has become a key facet in the complex, multi-modal structuring of identity. Cyworld (www.cyworld.co.kr) used to be the online networking site of choice for most South Koreans in the early 2000s, boasting a membership rate of over half the Korean population. Recently, through the influx of study abroad students who wish to maintain their foreign contacts, and office workers who work in

² Only the general topics of the articles have been outlined before the beginning of the article. Translations of the articles are not included because the actual content of the text itself is irrelevant to the discussion, other than the topic, genre, and register.

international corporate settings, Facebook and Twitter are becoming popular online networking media in Korea. The use of Facebook is a public display of epistemic stance, showing how many foreign friends or friends living abroad one has, and how comfortable the user is with the all-English interface of Facebook. It also demonstrates the speaker's direct access to English and English websites, hence broadening the user's world to include American society in addition to the Korean society where the person is physically located. Such a blatant display of English would have been unthinkable just a decade ago, at least without facing serious criticism from native Koreans (Park Y.H. 2009). Nowadays, South Koreans are eager to show that they belong to the same community of practice (Wenger 1998) as their American "friends", which ties into personal narratives that see the actors as modern cosmopolitans (Wortham 2001).

As seen above, English has long enjoyed a reputation of being a "cool" language in Korea, at least since the Korean War, when English, especially American English, was synonymous with small luxuries such as chocolate and candy, which provided a temporary escape from the bleak reality of the war. But American English wasn't only accepted in a positive light, as most of the speakers of American English in Korea were GIs. As language does not travel independently from the speaker (Agha 2007), English became indexical of the blasé disrespect for Koreans that was the attitude taken on by a number of GIs. In addition, the majority of Koreans who had access to the GIs and the English they spoke were Korean women who worked in the military bases, either as entertainers or prostitutes, or as it is often perceived, both. The mixed-race children from even the most legitimate of these relationships were put down and ignored as much as possible through the decades afterwards (Koshy 2004, Lo and Kim 2011). Though the recent growing influx of foreigners has caused textbooks to be rewritten to accept people of various races into Korean society, Koreans have traditionally been taught from early on that Korea is a nation of one race and one language. Because of this prevailing notion, Koreans have been wary of foreign power and culture, especially coming from nations that are considered to be economically stronger and pose a possibly threat of colonization, such as Japan, China, or the United States. This caused English to also become indexical of the American military presence and perceived oppression of the Korean people.

Under the ideology of externalization (Park J. 2009) English is seen as innately foreign, the opposite of all that is Korean.. According to this ideology, the use of phonemes not found in the Korean phonemic inventory was looked down upon not only by language purists, but by the overall population as well, as it was thought to be the mark of a traitor to the nation.

In 1988, the Korean Ministry of Education set forth a new mandate in an effort to further standardize the Korean language. During its efforts, the Ministry of Education differentiated loan words into two categories: *oykwuke* 외국어 and *oylaye* 외래어. *Oykwuke* literally means “foreign language”, where as *oylaye* means “language from foreign origin.” For example, since there is no Korean word for ‘bus,’ Korean has taken on ‘bus’ /bʌsi/ 버스 as an example of *oylaye*. On the other hand, an example of *oykwuke* is ‘cookie’ /kuki:/ 쿠키, since there is an existing Korean word, 과자 /gwaca/, to represent the same connotation. In text books, students are asked to refrain from using *oykwuke* on the basis of existing words in Korean which can be easily substituted, whereas *oylaye* use is tolerated since there is no other replacement Korean word which can be used. Such distinction between Korean and foreign words sparked intense, but ultimately short-lived, Korean-only movements at the time. There were many attempts to revive pure Korean words that were lost, or to create new-fangled vocabulary that could replace foreign words, thereby eliminating them from the Korean lexicon. These guidelines and categories of loan words were established because of efforts to keep Korean clean from outside influence. Nowadays, young Koreans no longer place so much emphases on distinguishing between *oylaye* and *oykwuke*. As the distinction dies, so does the level of awareness for keeping Korean “pure.”

CHAPTER 4

THE BIG /f/-ING DEAL

When it comes to "English fever (Kim 2002)," English pronunciation is no exception. Many Koreans believe that English pronunciation is the most difficult to achieve or "conquer" among the categories of grammar, listening, reading, and speaking. Even among English phonemes, Cho (2004) reports a widespread belief that Koreans have to make extra efforts to pronounce English labiodental consonants such as /f/ and /v/, because the Korean language does not have them. Contrasts between /l/ and /ʎ/, and /θ/ and /ð/, and /s/ and /z/ also rank high on the list of phonemes that pose particular difficulty for Korean students of English, and are recognized as phonemes that are salient in the Korean imagination as "difficult" and "foreign". As this is stressed from very early on in both public and private English education systems, Korean students come to regard anything containing /f/ and other fricatives such as /z/ that are not found in the Korean alphabet to be an index of foreignness. Of these phonemes, my decision to focus primarily on the variations of /f/ and the contexts in which they occur among the many phonemes that could index foreignness stems from its salience for native speakers of Korean. Another advantage of focusing on /f/ is its inherently labiodental property that further facilitates identification and in some cases provides visual clarification when pronunciation alone is unclear, unlike many of the other phonemes which have places of articulation within the oral cavity.

The salience of /f/ and its notoriety in Korean culture is demonstrated perfectly in a scene from the Korean movie *Seducing Mr. Perfect*. Korean-American Daniel Henney stars with Korean actress Um Jungwha. Daniel Henney (Mr. Robin) speaks English during the entire movie, despite the setting being modern day Korea. Early on in the movie, there is a scene where Uhm's boss explains that Mr. Robin can understand Korean, but will speak in English, because he finds it challenging to speak it. As they are coming home after a corporate party where Daniel Henney's character demonstrates his Japanese skills, he corrects Um's character's English as she tries to explain in English to compensate for his lacking Korean listening skills.

Uhm: 백사리 낸 거죠, 뭐.

piksali nayn kecyo mye.

They made a *piksari* (= they made a mistake)

D.H.: **Piksari? What's that?**

Uhm: 실수 한 거라고요. **Pault.**

silswu han kelakwuyo. Poltu.

They made a mistake. **Pault.**

D.H.: **P- Sorry, I still don't...**

Uhm: **F. A. U. L. T. Fault.**

D.H.: **Oh, fault! Fault. F- You have to enunciate that.**

Uhm: 으이구, 이래서 내가 외국인을 싫어해요.

uikwu, ilayse nayka woykukinul silh-ehayyo.

Eww, this is why I dislike foreigners.

While this string of interaction is admittedly and obviously scripted, it is glaringly indicative of the Korean people's awareness of not only the many native English speakers working in Korea as language instructors (Lo & Kim 2011, Park J.K. 2009), but also the notorious issue of Koreans having difficulty with certain English phonemes. Henney clearly assumes the role of a teacher, having the audacity to not only correct Ms. Uhm's pronunciation, but going so far as to giving her direct metalinguistic feedback on how to say the word "properly." Ms. Uhm's ineffective attempts at repair situate her as a flustered, unsure speaker of English who has not yet mastered the language, and needs to spell out the target word because of her lacking oral communication skills. The interesting part of this conversation is that the focus is not on her poor lexical choice of 'fault' when she means 'mistake', but that her pronunciation is not good enough for successful communication with a native speaker of English. Such media portrayals both distribute and reinforce the language ideology that it is difficult for Koreans to attain good English pronunciation.

With this historical and social climate as the context, my analysis becomes an exploration of how the particular phoneme is taken up by modern Koreans, and serves as a small window into how

language contact is changing the Korean language and the language ideology that surrounds it. As it is a relatively new phenomenon, pronouncing words that "should" have /f/ with an /f/ instead of the /p^h/ demanded of standard Korean orthography has an unsettled indexical value. This "imagination" of /f/ includes words that contain a /p/ or /p^h/ in the original language as well as the hypercorrection of standard Korean words that have /p^h/ that are pronounced as /f/. This practice of /f/-ing can place the speaker into three different models of personhood, in relation to the targeted audience and its uptake.

Throughout the paper, I will draw examples from various printed and audiovisual media, as such mundane social discourse has the power to organize and regulate social relationships through the distribution and reproduction of shared meanings and values. Collectively, the examples constitute a set of real world data that is easily accessible to modern Koreans, and which seeps into their everyday lives and eventually affects one's own language.

CHAPTER 5

MODELS OF PERSONHOOD

5.1. The wealthy consumer/global citizen

As English was often imagined to be the language of middle class America, it has come to be associated with the image of the wealthy consumer, as the United States have fared better than South Korea economically in the 20th century. Many prominent words that are frequently pronounced with /f/ form a particular register linked to exotic high-end leisure activities such as golf or high-end products such as facial. Items that are of obvious foreign origin such as cafe, coffee, and flash drive are also used with /f/ with higher frequency than words that are decidedly unexciting and pedestrian. Words that these foreign phonemes occur in most frequently are usually words that markedly evoke exoticness or a luxurious, neoliberal lifestyle. i.e., golf, fashion, figure skating, fitness center, coffee, fancy, facial, etc.

In contrast, words that represent the /f/ sound in English with /h/ in Korean are usually not associated with globalization, sophistication, or high class. For example, fried chicken is a common snack or meal for Koreans. It is usually pronounced 후라이드 치킨 /huraidi ʧikin/ or simply 치킨 /ʧikin/. Similarly, the recreational drug, philopon 히로뽕 [hilopon] is represented with an /h/, not an /f/.

Often, words for items that are more technologically advanced use /f/, while older, less technologically advanced items have /h/. For example, a flash light in Korean is 후레쉬 /huleʃi/ whereas a flash drive is written 플래쉬 /pilleʃi/ and often pronounced as /pilleʃi/ or /filleʃi/ by office workers and students in Seoul. Here, modernity is directly indexed through the differing consonants used.

Similarly, the English word “wafer” is written with an /h/ in 웨하스 /weyhasi/ ‘wafer cookies’ but with a /p/ (often pronounced as /f/) in 웨이퍼 /weyip/ ‘(silicon) wafer’. In this case, the difference in phonemes is a tell-tale index of when and how the lexical item was borrowed into Korean, since /h/ is associated with an older, “Japanese” period.

As witnessed in the examples above, /f/ is not always nativized to /p/. But the application of /f/ in Korean is not an invariant phonological rule, but one which must be learned word by word. The ability to demonstrate one's knowledge of how, when, and whether or not to use /f/ is the mark of a sophisticated

Korean speaker, as not all /f/s from words of English or foreign origin which have an /f/ in the original form are kept in Korean loanwords.

The salience of /f/ as an important sociolinguistic marker can also be seen in its use in dramas. For example, in the drama *Boys over Flowers*, a group of friends are known by the name 'F4' meaning 'four boys who are as pretty as flowers (four flowers)'. All the characters who say the name pronounce it differently, and it is pronounced differently by the same character as well. Some students say /epɪ po/ whereas some others may pronounce it /efɪ fo/. Interestingly, there are many instances where the name is pronounced /efɪ po/. Even though both 'F' and the number 'four' have syllable-initial /f/s, I believe that the /f/ in 'F' is retained because of its sociolinguistic salience, whereas the number four does not carry the same value.

5.2 The suspect elite

Sometimes, however, the use of /f/ can be read negatively, not as an index of modernity but of slavish subservience. During the first years of his presidency, Korean president Lee Myung Bak pursued a heavily neoliberal policy, to the point where he was criticized of treating the nation as a business.

Part of his popularity stemmed from his image as an economically savvy businessman. Having decreased the city of Seoul's deficit from \$5billion to \$2billion, President Lee promoted himself as a cunning but competent steward of the Korean economy. His political support came mostly from hard core conservatives. So when he initiated his plans to make English into a second official language of Korea, he faced quite a bit of opposition and resistance from the working classes. Such incidents have been widely publicized in South Korean news media as evidence of his lack of pride in the Korean language.

In this context, the ex-president's use of /f/ in a speech given to the labor union workers at the Hyundai factory in Ulsan (Park Y.H., 2009), Korea became a flashpoint. In his speech, he pronounced 'business friendly' as /bijinisu fureynduli/, which the workers took up as a sign of the bureaucratic businessman who sides with the rich. This event was covered widely in several major newspapers and popular media, as well as numerous personal blogs. On the one hand, conservative major newspapers commended his interest in modernizing the Korean motor industry, and lauded his efforts to visit and encourage the workers, propelling them to make the nation stronger through economic means. On the other hand, the progressive news media focused on how the president was insensitive to the workers and their working conditions, and how out of touch with reality he was by focusing on his pronunciation of "business friendly." According to them, he was overusing unnecessary foreign words in his speech instead of the perfectly good Sino-Korean term, "*chinkiep*."

“이명박 대통령과 청와대가 문제의 출발점이다.

limyengpak taythonglyengkwa chengwatayka mwunceyui chwulpalcemita.

President Lee Myung Bak and the Blue House [the president's office and residence] are the root of the problem.

이 대통령의 연설에서도 불필요한 영어 사용이 자주 발견된다.

li taythonglyengui yenseleyseto pwulphilyohan yenge sayongi cacwu palkyentyointa.

Unnecessary English is often found in President Lee's speeches as well.

정부의 경제정책 기조를 설명하는

cengpwu-ui kyengceycengchayk kicolul selmyenghanun

It's the same with the term 'business friendly' that is used to explain

‘비즈니스 프렌들리(Business Friendly)’도 마찬가지다.

'picinisu pulentuli (Business Friendly)'to machankacita.

the direction of the government's economic plan.

친기업이란 용어의 부정적 이미지 때문에 영어를 사용한 것이다.

chinkiepilan yongeu pwucengcekin imici ttaymwuney yengelul sayonghan kesita.

English was used because of the negative image of the term 'chinkiep'

[Sino-Korean for business friendly]

-- Kyunghyang Ilbo (Park Y.H. Oct. 8, 2009)

Here, the use of English as a replacement for the Sino-Korean word is explicitly criticized. The news article goes on to denounce the excessive and even improper use of English by Lee's administration. When considering the fact that 'context' includes not only spacial location but also temporal circumstances (Erickson and Schultz 1981), his timing was unfortunate because this was during a period of heightening anti-Americanism in Korea due to the negotiations and applications of the Free Trade Agreement between Korean and the United States.

Not only was Lee's use of "business-friendly" condemned, but his pronunciation of it came under fire as well. His display of familiarity with using borrowed terms from English was to be seen as a

process of othering, of him claiming his superiority in social status. Furthermore, this happening was not seen as an isolated incident, but other members of his cabinet were also called out following this event on other words such as "infra" /inf[ɪ]ra/ and orange /[ʌ]rwinjwi/. In fact, a member of the opposing party called his administration the "orange administration." A critical article entitled "영어가 입에 붙은 아뢴지 정권 the "orange" administration is too familiar with English,"(Park Y.H., 2009) appeared in the (left-wing) newspaper Kyunghang Ilbo. As mentioned above, "orange" is a word that is already heavily linked with capitalist extravagance. In the title, orange is spelled not as its usual nativized form of 오렌지 *oleynji* /olenji/ but as 아뢴지 *alwuinci* /[ʌ]rwinjwi/, which can be read as an index of familiarity with English and how the word is originally pronounced in American English, but also as a demonstration of inclination to American culture and politics. Amidst such political tension, the president's speech at Ulsan garnered scathing editorials such as these:

자본가 놈들의 기름진 배를 채우기 위해 비즈니스프렌들리 앞세우며 착취와
기만으로 노동자를 탄압하는 이명박 정권이야말로 평등사회를 좀먹는
반사회적 범죄자다.⁴

The Lee administration, which oppresses workers through exploitation and deceit with their facade of "business-friendly" to fill the fatty stomachs of the capitalist pigs, is the real anti-social criminal that eats away at a equal society.

이쯤 되면 비즈니스 프렌들리를 외치는 대통령에, 사장님 프렌들리로
호응하는 공무원, 그리고 갈수록 참담해지는 이주노동자 현실이라고 할
만하다.⁵

We now have a president who demands "business-friendly," civil servants who cooperate with their "CEO-friendly" responses, and migrant workers who grow more and more miserable.

⁴ <http://swl.jinbo.net/bbs/zboard.php?id=st&no=71>

⁵ <http://media.daum.net/culture/others/view.html?cateid=1026&newsid=20081013111905097&p=ohmynews>

Both articles juxtapose the president, who is aligned with the rich, against the working class. The choice of words that they used for working class is both *notongca* (laborers), which has a direct connotation of blue-collared workers. It can be said that his plan to appear as an experienced modern leader who can take them to new levels of global export has completely backfired on the president, because he failed to consider his audience and the linguistic ideologies surrounding the English term he used.

5.3 The hypercorrecting "posers"/"strivers"

The more it becomes cooler to speak English and use loan words from English in everyday Korean speech, the more likely people are to hypercorrect. In fact, because English has come to index coolness and prestige, quite a bit of hypercorrection can be witnessed especially with older generations who lack the English skills to know the direct translations, but go by ear-borrowings. Though their understanding of English is limited to its symbolic value (Haarmann 1989), these people strive to be read as the sophisticated cosmopolitan through their language use but come across as someone who is striving to attain that image but falls short.

As this is the case, it is not difficult to hear cases of hypercorrection in real life in words that are thought to be of foreign origin. In the spring of 2003, I remember hearing an EBS (Education Broadcasting System, similar to PBS in the U.S.) radio newscaster saying platform as /filetpom/ as she was reading a story. It grabbed my attention because I first thought it was a slip of the tongue, but to my amazement she repeated the word several times using the same pronunciation, causing me to believe that she was hypercorrecting. It surprised me that a newscaster from such a station would not know the original English form, and also that she was reading from a Korean script and still pronounced the word with an /f/. Also, in the fall of 2012, the actress Kim Namjoo was in a TV commercial for the German detergent Persil. When the commercial first aired, she hypercorrected the name to "new /fʌsil/", but about a month later, the portions of the commercial had been remade with the pronunciation /pʌsil/. I argue that the shift from "p" to "f" was an effort to make the detergent appear high-end.

Even these days in some rural areas, it is possible to see café menus that list ‘화인쥬스’ /hwaincju:si/, a nativized and hypercorrected form of ‘pineapple juice.’ The menus would go so far as to reromanize the name and list ‘fine juice’ in English alongside the Korean. The pineapple example could be seen in coffee shops around Seoul as recently as 2010.

Table 1. How 'pineapple juice' becomes 'fine juice'

Pineapple juice > [contraction] > pine juice > [hypercorrection] > fine/fain juice

파인애플 주스

파인 주스

화인 주스

Speaking of coffee, even the noun commonly used to indicate coffee houses has changed. Traditionally called *tapang*, meaning 'tea house', coffee houses now make the distinction between cafes and *tapangs*. *Tapangs* are more old-fashioned and expected to serve traditional tea drinks and rice cakes and cater to an older crowd, whereas a "*cafe*" would serve espresso and macarons, signs that have come to be intertextually linked with the chronotope (Bakhtin 1981) of modernity.

Another example of hypercorrection of /p/ to /f/ can be seen in an episode of the Korean drama *White Tower*. The drama portrays a fictional top-notch hospital where doctors struggle for power in the hospital hierarchy. Though the story does not involve a foreign locale like many other popular dramas targeted to a younger audience, the status of doctors as high rollers in Korean society allows some of the actors to take on an air of confidence and prestige.

The conversation is between a doctor and his wife at a medical conference⁶, after the doctor meets with an influential board member, which was an opportunity carefully planned out by the wife. Upon her questioning after the meeting, he reports that they just played a game of baduk⁷ instead of talking about the hospital and a possible promotion, which is what the wife was hoping for. The wife is naturally upset at him, but when he adds that they made an appointment to meet one more time when they get back to work in Seoul, she instantly cheers back up and asks her husband for a high-five.

Doctor : 서울 가서 [바둑] 한 판 더 두자고 하더라고. 그 때 가서 병원
얘기도 더 하고.

He wants to meet again for another game [of baduk] when we get back
to Seoul. And talk more about the hospital.

⁶ Of course this scripted conference happens to be held at Jeju Island, the most exotic locale within Korea. In addition to the register of discourse the two speakers engage in, the location of this interaction adds to the development of semiotic register.

⁷ Baduk is a popular traditional game similar to chess, played with small black and white stones on a checkered table. It is most often played by older males, and also known in the western world by the Japanese name of Go.

Wife : 정말이예요?

Really?

Doctor : 으응 그렇게 말씀하시네.

Yes, that's what he said.

Wife : (raising both hands in the air) 한 번 쳐주세요.

Hit me.

Doctor : 뭐 하는 짓이야?

What's this nonsense?

Wife : 화이파이브⁸. 우리도 한 번 지금 같은 때 해보자구요.

/faipaibi/

High five. This is a good time for us to try (it).

Doctor : (laughter) 허허 사람 참.

Haha, you're too much.

Wife : 어서요.

Come on.

(from the Korean drama White Tower, episode 10 53:20)

⁸ Though it may be confusing for readers of Korean, I have used “ㅎ” in the Korean transcription of /faipaibi/ not only to distinguish her /f/ from the ensuing /p/, but also because as a native speaker I believe that is the best way to represent her speech in Korean. However, the IPA most accurately describes her actual utterance.

Lee (2005) observes how “Korean TV shows tend to highlight linguistic versatility of main characters in work places or academic settings. Bilingualism and multilingualism in lead characters in Korean TV shows are often translated into their confidence and capability that are necessary for their success in their social settings.” Sure enough, the drama draws a distinct division between down to earth, sensible characters with real talent, and social-climbing, nouveau-riche characters with a false sense of nobility and class. It is clear from the husband’s stern reaction that high-fiving each other is not a routine activity for them. His relaxed demeanor, calm voice, and easy-going yet successful business approach index security and confidence, juxtaposing him against his wife who walks too quickly for a more mature Korean woman, taking short strides with no composure. In addition to the body language, the use of the incorrect, hypercorrected form /faipaibi/ for ‘high five’ seals the actress’s portrayal of the wife character as a crude woman, far from the elegant high society lady she should be as a prominent general hospital director’s wife. She is to be read as someone who has married into money above her status, and is shunned by the other doctors' wives in the drama.

In the following transcript, we see another occurrence of hypercorrection. The transcript is taken from an episode of Couple of Trouble (episode 3, 2006). An administrative assistant (Mr. Kong) to the husband (Billy) of a globe-trotting CEO says he will run to the supermarket, which he pronounces /ʃwu:fʌ/ rather than /ʃwu:pʰʌ/, the standard K pronunciation.

Kong: 이 집이 장철수 집입니다.

This is Jang Chulsoo's house.

아까 사모님 목소리로 전화가 온 곳이 바로 여깁니다.

This is where the phone call with Ms. Anna's voice was traced back to.

Billy: 그럼 이 집에 안나가 살아 있다는 거야?

Are you telling me that Anna is alive in this house?

Kong: 요 근처 슈퍼/ʃwu:fʌ/ 아줌마를 통해 알아본 결과, 얼마 전 장철수가 애인이라며 이상한 여자를 데리고 왔답니다.

From what I've been told by the local supermarket/ʃwu:fʌ/ lady, Jang Chulsoo came back with a strange woman, and called her his girlfriend.

[Couple of Trouble episode 3, 1:00:45-1:01:05]

The administrative assistant is enacted by a short, balding, middle-aged man who is scrawny and waif-like. His demeanor and speech is very much like that of the doctor's wife: unsure of himself, flighty, fidgety, eager to please, overly volatile and obsequious, and uncouth overall. From his lacking ability to read social cues, it is quite clear he has not had extensive education, but aspires to match the taste of his employers by mimicking their language and lifestyle. Because he does not have the direct access to English that his superiors have, he tries to match their speech style through hypercorrection, but fails due to his ignorance.

The idea that English used inappropriately or excessively can be negative can be seen in this excerpt from *Style*, a Korean drama first aired in the summer of 2009. Here, an uptight fashion editor reprimands her staff for decorating an article with no substance using excessive English phrases.

Ja: 앞으로 모든 건 기사의 퀄리티만 가지고 판단할꺼야.

apulo modun ken kisaury kwuellitiman kaciko pantanhalkeya

From now on, I'm going to judge everything based on the quality of the article.

퀄리티 낮은 기사는 글짜 크기 확 줄여버릴꺼고,

kwuelliti nacun kisanun kulca kuki hwak cwulyebelilkkeko

I'll shrink the font size of articles with low quality,

영어만 잔뜩 갖다붙여서 폼 부린 기사도 전부 다 빼버릴꺼야.

yengeman canttuk kactaputyese pom pulin kisato cenpu ppaypelilkeya.

and I'll pull out any and all articles that try to look fancy by tacking on lots of English phrases.

이상.

isang.

That's all.

The statement is a jab at women's fashion magazines in Korea, which have been criticized for their excessive use of foreign words. Here the magazine editor who has been abroad is quick to criticize the tendency of the staff to "overuse" English. The staff are portrayed as people who have never been abroad, yet hope to climb the social ladder through their outward looks, fashion, and extravagant hair. While the savvy editor thus knows the "right" balance of English and Korean, the local Koreans are portrayed as people who try too hard to look cool through English.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Jespersen (1982) has said that “loanwords have been called the milestones of philology because ... they show us the course of civilization and the wandering of inventions and institutions and ... valuable information as to the inner life of nations.” The early 2000s in South Korea is just such a time, when phonological change is occurring at a rapid speed in Korean due to borrowings from western languages, especially English. This paper examines the recent urban phenomenon of a gradual replacement of traditional phonemes used for loan word phonology with a direct (albeit with some phonemic approximation) borrowing for /f/ in English and Japanese loan words in Korean, and the socio-political reasons behind the phenomena. Koreans have been adopting foreign phonemes not found in the Korean phonemic system. Of these, /f/ is one of the most salient and often used. It has become an index of modernity, hipness, and global citizenship when used appropriately. The foreign phoneme /f/ is slowly becoming integrated into the Korean language, and hopefully a more nuanced understanding of how and why Koreans are adapting foreign phonemes into their everyday speech repertoire can be gained through this study.

Susan Gal wrote “Scholars of multilingualism and language contact...have understood that choice of a language has political implications exactly because of speakers’ commonsense convictions about what...the use of a language is assumed to imply about political loyalty and identity. And historians of ideas have noted the important influence that linguistic theories and social movements have often had on each other.” (Gal 1998: 317) Replacing traditional Korean culture in which modesty is a capital virtue are neoliberal values, and it is becoming increasingly acceptable to publicly demonstrate the assets that one possesses, whether it is economic stability, class, or linguistic capital. As English has come to be recognized as a costly language to learn in Korean society, linguistic capital ultimately points to class for most Korean people. As English loanwords and phonemes becomes more commonly used, phonemes such as /s/ /z/, /r/, and /l/ are becoming emblems (Agha 2004) of phonological accuracy that in turn index class, modernity, and privilege in Korean society. The typical Korean, in the past, was afraid to meet foreigners on the street. They practiced giving directions over and over again, but would never actually have the guts to walk up to a foreigner and use it. The next generation saw English-speakers as free chances to practice their English. These days, it is not a surprise anymore to use English in the course of everyday life. Furthermore, in order to maximize distinction (Bourdieu 1979), speakers may resort to employing French or Mandarin rather than the plebian English. Quite frequently can speakers be heard

emulating the French pronunciation of the word /bwipey/ 'buffet' than the once-popular English form /bupey/ or /bufey/.

Joseph Park (2009) argued that while there is a balance of positive and negative values, the use of English marked the speaker as an immodest traitor to the nation who would not conform to traditional Korean norms. He also claims that “self-deprecation, along with other ideologies of English, is one way through which speakers formulate who has the right as legitimate speakers of English.” These days, the social climate in Korea reflects the economic and political changes of the past decade, and the linguistic ideology is changing along with it. While in the past Koreans were exempt from legitimate speakers of English, the social climate is changing to reflect the changing linguistic ideologies. Korean speakers are now not only expected to know basic English phonology, but to be thoroughly familiar with the various cultural implications the foreign language brings. English in Korea is no longer a “foreign” language, but one that is increasingly and undeniably becoming an inseparable part of being a modern Korean in the chronotopic linguistic landscape.

This phenomenon is reflected in the linguistic choices of the South Korean people, and the expanding repertoire of acceptable Korean phonemes are linguistic markers, and a reminder, that language is like a river that never sits still for long. As /f/ becomes an allophone of the Korean /p/, in the future, it will be interesting to observe how the people react to this disparity of sound and orthographic representation. Though it is not possible to make predictions about the future fate of the English /f/ in Korean, it seems futile to deny the strong evidence that point to the psychological reality of the phoneme /f/ in the minds of modern speakers of Korean. We have also seen several examples of Koreans having demonstrated creative solutions to lack of orthography and phonemic elements in the past; it will be interesting to observe future developments in this quickly unfolding phenomenon. From the evidence gathered, it may be reasonable to project that in the case of modern day Korean, /f/ will be further incorporated to distinguish loanword minimal pairs from the original language.

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APPENDIX A: FASHION MAGAZINE EXCERPT

Loan words from English are underlined with the English translation below; Sino-Korean loan words are in **bold** script. It can easily be seen that loan words comprise a large part of the modern Korean lexicon.

The following excerpt is from the 2006 May issue of Vogue Korea. It is the first paragraph of an article on the latest fashion.

이번 시즌 쇼윈도를 **점령**한 웨지힐 슈즈들은 한번 신어보고 싶은 **유혹**을

season show window wedge heel shoes

넘어서서 어느새 **지갑** 속 크레딧 카드로 손이 가게 만드는 **지경**이다. **영화**
credit card

와호장룡의 결투 장면을 연상시키는 대나무 숲처럼 만들어진 프라다의

와호장룡=Hidden Tiger Crouching Dragon (movie title) Prada

웨지, 칼날 같은 창키힐로 만들어진 이브 생 로랑의 골드 펌프스, 커다란

wedge chunky heel Yves St. Laurent gold pumps

웨지 굽 가득히 컬러풀한 벌룬 프린트가 그려진 펜디의 샌들, 밀짚 **소재**로

wedge colorful balloon print Fendi sandals

한결 가벼운 웨지를 가진 에르메스의 에스빠드류, **호신용** 무기로 **사용**해도

wedge Hermes espadrille

될 만큼 **육중**한 **부피**를 가진 **근엄**한 **뿔 소재**의 디올 웨지까지... 이

Dior wedge

화려하고 시크한 굵들의 움직임에 매료되지 않을 여자가 어디 있으랴!

chic

하지만 그 굵을 막상 내 것으로 만들면 슈즈를 신은 첫날부터 패션과

shoes

fashion

편안함을 좇고 싶은 가련한 마음 사이를 넘나드는 줄타기가 시작된다.

나 역시 S/S 슈즈 룩 북들을 보고 웨지힐에 눈독을 들이던 차에 지난 달,

S/S shoes look book

wedge heel

회사 아래 도타의 슈즈 코너로 달려가 금세 웨지힐 한 켤레를 똑딱

Doota (short for Doosan Tower) shoes corner wedge heel

사버렸다. 명품 브랜드의 그것에 비할 바는 못 되었지만 데님 소재 펌프스에

brand

denim

pumps

우드 웨지가 박힌 이 슈즈는 이번 시즌 트렌드에 딱 맞는 근사한 셰이프를

wood wedge

shoes

season trend

shape

가지고 있었다. 트렌드도 좋지만 문제는 해결되어야 했다. 나는 곧장 'OSS

trend

OSS (Initials of head doctor Sang Seok Ong)

풋&앵클 클리닉'을 찾았다.

foot & ankle clinic

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

The following is an excerpt from an interview with the chief director of a prestige marketing research center, showing the prestige of English in modern Korean society. Notice the large percentage of English loan words; although there are less English loan words than in the Vogue article in Appendix A, the names of luxury apartment complexes (Tower Palace, Acrovista, and I-Park) are all from English origin, and most of the content word he uses are Sino-Korean loan words with Korean syntax/morphology applied.

INTERVIEW| 귀족 마케팅 연구소 소장 이기훈

Interview marketing

Title : “VIP는 관심 없다, VIC가 돈 된다”

“더 이상 VIP가 화두가 되지 않습니다. 대신 VIP들의 모임을 일컫는

VIC(Very Important Community) 공략이 귀족마케팅의 관건으로 작용됩니다.”
marketing

때문에 타워팰리스·아크로비스타·아이파크와 같이 고급 주택에 거주하는
Tower Palace · Acrovista · I-Park (trendy apartment complexes in Seoul)

사람들의 모임을 찾아서 그들의 니즈를 충족시키는 마케팅이야 말로 귀족
needs marketing

마케팅의 가장 큰 이슈라고 설명했다
marketing issue

“현재 다양한 산업 분야에서 프리미엄 브랜드화 되었다. 하지만 부자들이
premium brand

원하는 니즈는 단 하나입니다. 그들만의 리그를 위한 특별함이 바로
needs league

그것이죠. 해서 국내 귀족 마케팅은 개인별로 퍼스널한 마케팅이
marketing personal marketing

이루어집니다.” 특히 이 소장은 무엇보다 국내 부자들의 경우 자신들보다

자녀들의 상류 사회 진출에 관심이 많다고 설명했다

“타워팰리스만 해도 의·치대 진학 설명회에 폭발적인 관심을 보일 만큼
Tower Palace

자녀들의 상류 사회 진출에 지대한 관심을 보입니다. 더 이상 돈으로

치장하는 것으로 부를 과시할 수 없음을 깨달은 것이죠.” 이 소장은 부자들의

이러한 현상은 점차 강화될 것이라고 설명했다. 때문에 이 소장이 대표로

있는 프레스티지&co에서는 해외 유수의 고급 서비스를 도입, 고급 주택
Prestige service

입주자에게 제공하는 프로그램을 도입하고 있다
program

“뉴욕의 고급 주택의 경우 호텔식 청소, 퍼스널한 해외 여행 제공, 자가용
New York hotel personal

제트기 등의 최고급 서비스를 제공 받는다. 우리나라도 그러한 서비스가
jet service service

실현될 것입니다.”