

Perception of native Korean Speakers on English and German

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Abstract

In this paper, we discuss why two different surface forms appear in loanwords for English and German /ʃ/. In Korean, a vowel is inserted into loanwords if a consonant cannot be properly syllabified. Therefore, /ʃ/ in some positions of loanwords trigger vowel insertion. Interestingly, /ʃ/s in the onset cluster of English and German words were borrowed in Korean as /ʃu/ with the inserted vowel [u] whereas /ʃ/s in the coda position of English and German words were borrowed as /ʃi/ with the inserted vowel [i]. For example, 'shrimp' is adopted as [ʃurimphi] whereas 'rush' is adopted as [rəʃi].

In this paper, we attempt to find out the phonetic reason for the distribution of the surface forms of /ʃ/. We assume that since the formant frequency of [i] is higher than that of [u], the peak frequency of /ʃ/ with the surface form of [ʃi] in loanwords may be higher than that of /ʃ/ with the surface form of [ʃu]. We also assume that duration may be another factor for the distribution of [ʃi] and [ʃu]. Since /ʃ/ and /u/ use lip rounding whereas /i/ doesn't, the duration for [ʃi] might be longer than that of [ʃu].

German supports our assumption. /ʃ/ in the onset cluster is longer than /ʃ/ in the coda position. It also has higher peak frequency than that of /ʃ/ in the coda position. In loanwords, /ʃ/ in the onset cluster is borrowed as [ʃu] as in *Spiegel* whereas /ʃ/ in the coda position is borrowed as [ʃi] as in *Bosch*. English, however, does not support our assumption. Peak frequency of [ʃ] depends on the preceding vowel, not on its position in the syllable structure. If the preceding vowel is front, then the peak

frequency of the following /ʃ/ is high but if the preceding vowel is back, then the peak frequency of the following /ʃ/ is low. The peak frequency of /ʃ/ in the onset cluster seems to be in between. As we assumed, however, the duration of /ʃ/ in the coda position is longer than that of /ʃ/ in the onset cluster. With the mixed results, we question whether Koreans really hear two different sounds for /ʃ/ in English words. For the future experiment, we would like to perform the perception test for /ʃ/ in English words.