

Korean FOR DUMMIES®

by Jungwook Hong and Wang Lee



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About the Author

Wang Lee was born in Seoul, Korea, and he moved at an early age to the Middle East. He spent two years in Kuwait and another six and a half in Saudi Arabia. At the age of 13, he moved with his family to the United States and has been there ever since. He graduated from Shimer College in 2000, with a B.A. in Humanities. Since then, he's been working as an interpreter and a translator. He has worked for various school districts helping children with disabilities and has worked as a translator in many different fields ranging from the medical profession to the auto industry. He tutors Korean children in English and writes in his spare time.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my parents, Sang Gil and Tae Kyun Lee, and my sister, Eun Jung. I am forever in their debt for all the love and support they were kind enough to show. None of this would have been possible without their help and guidance.

Author's Acknowledgments

When I was a little kid, I was fortunate enough to travel the world and live in many different places. It had a large part in shaping the person that I became. I was only three or four when my family moved to Kuwait. My sister, being a couple years older than myself, attended school while we were there. She went to a British school and I first learned English looking over her shoulders. I didn't learn to read then; I just memorized what she was reading and correlated that with the pictures that were on the pages. Later, when my family moved to Saudi Arabia, I continued to learn English from a British lady named Mrs. Brodure. For the first few years of my English-speaking career, I said things like "parcels" instead of "packages," "bonnet" instead of "hood," "lift" instead of "elevator," and the like.

When I moved to the States, I quickly learned that my bilingual skills were a valuable asset. It was a very marketable skill, in fact. I quickly realized that something that came quite naturally to me was something that many people struggled with. I knew that I was fortunate to learn English at an early age, which enabled me to communicate with perfect pronunciation and pass myself off as a native speaker. Then, I would raise a few eyebrows by turning around and speaking perfect Korean as well. My parents at home made sure I spoke Korean very well.

So my first set of thanks goes out to my parents, who taught me Korean and made sure I read and spoke it well. To my father, who always brought home a Korean newspaper for me to read, and for my mother, who was always there for me and pushed me to test my limits.

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Introduction

You probably know more about Korean than you think you do. Maybe you own a Korean-made cellphone or car. You may have had some Korean food or watched a Korean film, and maybe you've even heard something interesting about Korea in the news. But if you want to learn how to speak Korean, you're probably interested in speaking and interacting with Korean people. Perhaps you're doing business with a company in Korea, or perhaps you're planning to travel to Korea. Whatever the case, *Korean For Dummies* will go a long way toward helping you get a handle on the Korean language.

Some people say that speakers of different languages perceive things differently. If that's truly the case, perhaps learning a bit of Korean will help you see things the way a Korean does. Regardless of whether the language changes your perception, however, Koreans will perceive *you* differently when you try speaking some Korean. Speaking their language will certainly give them a good first impression! If you want to befriend people at school, on the job, or while traveling, show them that you're not only interested in them, but also that you're trying to understand and live by their culture.

Korean For Dummies helps you take those first steps toward understanding some Korean and tells you about some Korean mannerisms. As with anything, the first few steps can be the hardest to take, but they're worthwhile. After you make some friends using the Korean that you pick up from this book, you'll know that learning Korean is rewarding and fun!

About This Book

If you don't like memorizing tables upon tables of grammatical rules and declensions, or if you love it but don't have much time, this book is for you. Each chapter is organized so that you can look up and say a little something in the many situations that you may encounter while shopping, traveling, eating, and so on.

Learn a few words and sentences as you go along through this book, and surprise Koreans with a few well-placed phrases. Pick up this book when you need it, and flip through the sections that you find useful. Each section has a few phrases and cultural pointers that are meant to give Koreans a “Where did you learn that from?” sort of reaction. And if you’re interested, you can learn a few sentence structures that you can add to as you become more comfortable with the language. The chapters are structured so that you can take away the bits that you need when you need them, so get ready to learn by speaking a little bit at a time as opposed to memorizing a whole lot at once.

Conventions Used in This Book

I use a few conventions in this book to help your reading go smoothly:

- ✓ Web addresses appear in `monofont`.
- ✓ Korean terms are in **boldface** to make them stand out.
- ✓ Korean words are spelled out phonetically, so that you see how to pronounce them.
- ✓ Definitions, which are shown in parentheses, follow the phonetically spelled Korean words the first time they appear in a section.
- ✓ Throughout the book, I give a nonliteral translation of the dialogues and phrases and, when necessary, I add a literal translation to help you better understand not only the phrase that you’re saying, but also how and when to use it.
- ✓ Degrees of politeness are very important in Korean phrases. For important sentences, the formal polite, informal polite, intimate, and plain degrees of politeness are pointed out as necessary.
- ✓ Verb and adjective conjugations are given in the following order: dictionary stem and informal polite stem.

Anytime you’re learning a language, you want to reinforce the material that you’re learning by putting your lessons in the correct context. I use the following elements to help you do just that:

- ✓ **Talkin’ the Talk:** These dialogues include bits and pieces of material from each lesson. They put the material in a daily context and show you the situations in which they may happen. Each dialogue has a brief introduction to the scenario in which the conversation takes place and often

includes cultural tidbits. Each dialogue has the Korean words spelled out phonetically so that you can see their English pronunciations, so reading through them should be a breeze. If they're not so easy to read at first, look for dialogues that have a CD icon next to them — you can listen to those dialogues on the CD that comes with the book. In no time, you'll get the hang of speaking Korean!

- ✔ **Words to Know:** On the blackboards in this section, important words are highlighted for you to have at your disposal. I include the informal polite form of the verbs. (Chapter 2 has more information on verb forms and their various endings.)
- ✔ **Fun & Games:** These sections include a few exercises to help jog your memory and reinforce what you learn in the chapter. The exercises help you gauge your performance, so make sure you give them a try.

Foolish Assumptions

Here are a few foolish assumptions that I made about you while writing this book:

- ✔ You don't know much Korean aside from a phrase or two that you picked up from films or from your friends.
- ✔ You're not planning to take a proficiency test any time soon, nor are you trying to start translating literature or begin interpreting. All you want to do is learn a few bits of Korean here and there in order to communicate with some Koreans around you.
- ✔ You don't want to wake up in a cold sweat after memorizing tables upon tables of grammatical rules and conjugations.
- ✔ You want to have fun while learning Korean.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is organized thematically into four parts and a set of appendixes. Each part focuses on a particular theme, such as shopping, introductions, or eating out at a restaurant.

Part I: Getting Started

This portion of the book introduces you to Korean pronunciation and gives you an overview of basic Korean grammar. If you can, make sure that you go through Part I carefully, because it will significantly help your understanding of what's happening throughout the rest of the book.

Part II: Korean in Action

Here, you begin learning Korean — and Korean culture — for everyday life. Meeting someone? Eating? Shopping? Look through this section if you want to look for information and expressions that you can use with your friends.

Part III: Korean on the Go

This part of the book gives you more task-specific expressions to use when you want to travel. If you need to exchange currency, book a hotel room, or ask for directions, go through this chapter.

Part IV: The Part of Tens

Even if you're really strapped for time, you should go through Part IV. Here I include ten ways to learn Korean quickly, ten phrases to make you sound more Korean, ten expressions that Koreans like to use, and ten things you shouldn't do in front of Koreans. These sections are short and easy to remember, so go through them when you can.

Part V: Appendixes

This part contains various references that you may want to turn to while flipping through the rest of the chapters. You can find verb tables that show the conjugations of regular and irregular verbs, and a mini-dictionary for Korean-to-English and English-to-Korean words. In addition, check the answers to the Fun & Games sections at the end of each chapter, and look for the list of tracks that appear on the audio CD.

Icons Used in This Book



Throughout the book, I use icons in the margins and sidebars to help you find information quickly. Here are the icons to look for:

This icon highlights tips that make learning Korean easier.



This icon is used to point out information that bears repeating and remembering.



Avoid saying or doing things that have this warning sign icon. It marks the faux pas that you may make while speaking or interacting with Koreans.



Throughout the text, these icons mark bits about Korean culture and travel.



The audio CD that accompanies this book gives you a chance to listen to native speakers of Korean. You may have a few Korean friends at your disposal to pronounce various phrases, but when they're not there, use the CD to learn Korean faster. This icon lets you know what's on the CD.

Where to Go from Here

To get a sense of what's going on behind the scenes in terms of grammar, read Chapter 2. Korean grammar is very different from English grammar. I don't present all there is to know about Korean grammar, because that's beyond the scope of this book. You can, however, find enough grammar info to figure out what's going on and possibly figure out which words are playing what role when you listen to your Korean friends.

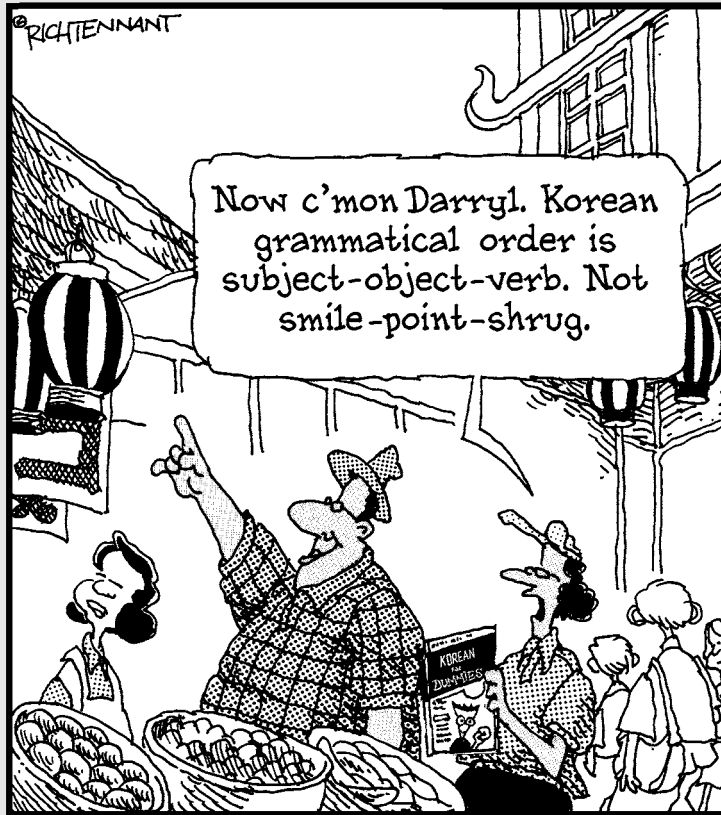
Chapter 2 aside, listening and speaking are the focus of this book. And although I try to provide you with as much information on specific topics as I can, the best way to learn is by trial and error. Learning a language involves learning how to interact with people, and no book or language course — however well designed — can trump actual conversation with someone. Go on and read a topic that strikes your fancy, listen to the audio CD, try using a Korean phrase here and there, but most importantly try speaking with a Korean speaker whenever you can. You'll undoubtedly form friendships and fond memories along the way.

Part I

Getting Started

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



In this part . . .

If you've never been introduced to the Korean language before now, this part is for you. You can become familiar with Korean pronunciation and get an overview of basic Korean grammar. Try to go through Part I carefully because it lays the foundation for understanding the rest of the book.

Chapter 1

Getting Down the Basics

In This Chapter

- ▶ Sounding off with Korean phonetics
- ▶ Pronouncing the basic vowels and consonants
- ▶ Working on sounding fluent
- ▶ Practicing some Korean phrases
- ▶ Using Korean gestures

Surprising a **woneomin** (*won-uh-min*; native speaker) of Korea by perfectly pronouncing a **mungu** (*moon-goo*; phrase) or a **munjang** (*moon-jang*; sentence) of their language can be **jaemi** (*jae-mee*; fun). And the purpose of this chapter is to help you do exactly that. Here you will learn how to pronounce Korean and get a hang of a few common **haengdong** (*hang-dong*; gestures). It shouldn't take long for you to begin fooling your Korean **chingudeul** (*chin-goo-deul*; friends) into thinking that you've secretly been spending time mastering the language.

Like **unjeon** (*oon-jun*; driving), riding a **jajeongeo** (*ja-juhn-guh*; bike) or tightrope **geotgi** (*gut-gee*; walking), the only way to get better at pronouncing Korean is by practicing. And the only way to fix your mistakes is by making them. So in this chapter, I introduce words like **chimdae** (*chim-dae*; bed), **angyeoung** (*an-gyoung*; eye glasses), **chitsol** (*chi-sol*; toothbrush), and **keopi** (*kuh-pee*; coffee) so you can practice saying words throughout your daily routine, and also teach you some basic sentences and phrases so you can start communicating in Korean. The more Korean you incorporate into your daily routine and **daehwa** (*dae-hwa*; conversations) you have, the better your understanding of Korean will become. Try to get a Korean friend to work with you. Practicing accurate pronunciation will not only help you **deutgi** (*deut-gee*; listen) and **malhagi** (*mal-ha-gee*; speak), but it will also win you brownie points, as Koreans will think highly of you for taking the time to master the finer points of their native language.

In the following sections, I present the sounds in their Romanized alphabetical order. Although it might take a while to get used to Korean sounds, there are no new concepts to learn such as tone or pitch.

Getting the Basic Sounds

Korean, like English, is a phonetic **eoneo** (*un-uh*; language). Each character of the Korean **sseugi** (*sseu-gee*; writing) system represents a sound, be it a vowel or a consonant. Although Korean has its own writing system, Hangeul, learning Korean using Korean script will require that you learn various sound change rules. So instead throughout this book, I will Romanize (write the sounds of Korean out in English) Korean phonetics, or sounds, using the English alphabet.

The Romanization method that I have chosen is the revised Romanization of Korean approved by the Korean government in year 2000. Using Romanization, I will write out how the characters sound so you can jump into conversation immediately without learning these rules. In addition, I have also included the pronunciation of the Korean words in brackets with English translation.

If you have the time, I highly recommend that you learn the Korean script, Hangeul. Hangeul was developed in the mid 1400s by the King Sejong's mandate to create a writing system that could easily be learned by commoners. Today, almost all of Korea relies on Hangeul for written communication, and Romanization is used exclusively for foreigners. Learning Hangeul will give you access to a wealth of online resources, so if you want to learn Korean more effectively, make sure you eventually take the time to learn Korean script.



Pronounce Korean words as though you are British, Scottish, or Australian rather than an American. For example, pronounce *an-gyeong* as *ahn-gyoung* not *an-gyoung*. Pronounce the *an* as *ahn* rather than *an*.

The Basic Vowel Sounds

Every Korean consonant must be accompanied by a vowel. Sometimes a group of vowels can form a word, as in the case of **uyu** (*oo-yoo*) which means *milk*, and **yeoyu** (*yuh-yoo*) which means *leisure/ease*. You should have little difficulty pronouncing most of the vowels, but some will sound almost indistinguishable from one another, and some will simply be tricky to pronounce.

First, try going over the sounds listed in Table 1-1. Don't worry if you have trouble figuring out how to pronounce some of the sounds. I go over how to distinguish and pronounce some of the trickier ones later in this chapter.



Phonetically, *ae* and *e* are two different sounds. Hence, they should be distinguished as such, although their difference may be blurred by most native speakers in casual speech.



Table 1-1		Vowel Sounds
Vowel	English Word with the Sound	Korean Word with the Sound
a	ah-ha	jadongcha (<i>ja-dong-cha</i> ; car)
ae	hand	chaek (<i>chaek</i> ; book)
e	get	gagye (<i>ga-ge</i> ; store)
eo	uh	geoul (<i>guh-ool</i> ; mirror)
eu	gull	oneul (<i>o-neul</i> ; today)
i	eat	i (<i>ee</i> ; teeth)
o	so	chitsol (<i>chi-ssol</i> ; toothbrush)
oe	wet	hoesa (<i>hwae-sa</i> ; company, corporation)
u	boo	mul (<i>mool</i> ; water)
ui	boy	uija (<i>ui-ja</i> ; chair)
wa	water	hwajangsil (<i>hwa-jang-shil</i> ; bathroom)
wae	wet	wae (<i>whae</i> ; why)
we	wet	wigyeyang (<i>we-gae-yang</i> ; stomach ulcer)
wi	we	wiheom (<i>wee-hum</i> ; danger)
wo	won	mwo (<i>mwo</i> ; what)
ya	yam	chiyak (<i>chi-yak</i> ; toothpaste)
yae	yesterday	yae (<i>yae</i> ; that person; informal)
ye	yeti	jipye (<i>jee-pae</i> ; dollar bills)
yeo	yuck	angyeong (<i>an-gyoung</i> ; eye glasses)
yo	yo	yokjo (<i>yog-jo</i> ; bathtub)
yu	you	hyusik (<i>hyoo-sheeg</i> ; rest)



In Korean, pronounce *a* as *ah* (like *spa*) as in British English instead of *ae* (like *day*) in U.S. English.

Distinguishing among vowel sounds

Can Koreans tell the difference among the following three groups of sounds?

ae (sounds like the *a* in hand), *e* (sounds like the *e* in get), and
oe (sounds like the *o* in hope)

The answer is **ye** (*yae*; yes) and **aniyo** (*a-ni-yo*; no). If native Korean speakers were to **anjas** (*an-ja*; sit down) and split hairs over the **bareum** (*ba-reum*; pronunciation) of the three groups of sounds, they most likely could. But for the most part, especially in **maeil** (*mae-ill*; daily) conversation, they don't. So do not worry if you cannot distinguish between the sounds *ae*, *e*, and *oe*, because most Koreans do not worry either. The only way to distinguish between them is when you see them written down. Therefore, just by hearing them, most Koreans cannot tell the difference between above sounds.

Try these examples:

wae (sound like the *we* in wet) **waegeurae** (*wae-geu-rae*; what is it)

oe (also sound like *we* in wet) **oetori** (*wae-to-ree*; alone)

yae (sound like *ye* in yeah) **yaeya** (*yae-ya*; hey, kid)

ye (sound like the *ye* in yesterday) **ye** (*yae*; yes)

As you can see with the pronunciations written in brackets, above words are very difficult to distinguish just by hearing the words itself. It is more important to listen to the words used in sentences.

Pronouncing eu and ui

The *eu* sound does not exist in English. Fortunately, it isn't that **eoryoepda** (*uh-ryup-da*; hard) to **baeuda** (*bae-oo-da*; learn). Imagine that a friend or a sibling has hit you hard in the **bae** (*bae*; stomach) and you've just had the wind knocked out of you. Most likely you'll be clenching your **i** (*ee*; teeth) and groaning. Keep imagining the pain that you are in, but now focus on your groaning. Your teeth should be clenched tightly and your **mom** (*mohm*; body) should be tense. Now, try groaning a few times, and focus on the sound that you make. Keep your **ip** (*eeep*; mouth) in the same position. Now try making a clear sound while keeping your mouth in that same shape.

The *ui* sound is a combination of the *eu* sound and the *i* sound. You start off with an *eu* sound, then quickly shift into an *i* sound. It might have been easier to remember if *ui* were written as *eui*, but I'd like you to learn standard Romanization so just keep this in mind.

By this point, you should have the *eu* and *ui* sounds down. I hope that wasn't too painful.

The Basic Consonant Sounds

Try saying the words *ski*, *gas*, and *kid*. You should notice that you let more air out when you pronounce *gas* than when you do *ski*, and again that you let even more air out when you say *kid* than you do when you say *gas*. Korean pronunciation relies heavily on how much air you let out when you pronounce consonants.



As you listen to the CD, try to focus on how much air is being let out for each letter.



Table 1-2 lists some basic consonant sounds. Please note that when a same consonant has two different sounds, I have **bolded** the consonant in question to differentiate between examples being used. *Note:* The revised form of Romanization no longer uses apostrophes.



Table 1-2		Consonant Sounds
Consonant	English Word with the Sound	Korean Word with the Sound
ch	chat	chimdae (<i>chim-dae</i> ; bed)
h	hat	haneul (<i>ha-neul</i> ; sky)
j	chose	jigeum (<i>jee-geum</i> ; now)
jj	match	jeo jjok (<i>juh-jjok</i> ; that way)
k	cap	kal (<i>kal</i> ; knife)
k,g	kooky	gukgi (<i>gook-gee</i> ; national flag)
k,g	good	gilga (<i>geel-ga</i> ; roadside)
kk	ski	kkeut (<i>kkeut</i> ; end)
m	mom	meori (<i>muh-ree</i> ; head)
n	no	namu (<i>na-moo</i> ; tree)
ng	sung	sang (<i>sang</i> ; table)
p	pass	pal (<i>pal</i> ; arm)
b, p	paper	japida (<i>ja-pee-da</i> ; get caught)
b, p	baby	babo (<i>ba-bo</i> ; dummy)
pp	happy	ppang (<i>ppang</i> ; bread)
r, l	roll	ramyum (<i>ra-myun</i> ; instant noodle)

(continued)

Table 1-2 (continued)

Consonant	English Word with the Sound	Korean Word with the Sound
s	so	sul (<i>sool</i> ; alcohol)
ss	boss	ssal (<i>ssal</i> ; rice)
t	tada	tada (<i>ta-da</i> ; to burn or to ride [depends on the context])
t, d	tone	datda (<i>dat-da</i> ; to close)
t, d	ed	badak (<i>ba-dag</i> ; floor)
tt	star	ttokttok (<i>ttog-ttog</i> ; knock knock)

k, *g* and *d*, *t* are read as *g* and *d* before a vowel, as in **gilga** (*geel-ga*; street), **gagu** (*ga-goo*; furniture), **doldam** (*dol-dam*; stone wall) and **don** (*don*; money), and as *k* and *t* when followed by another consonant or form the final sound of a word, as in **dokdo** (*dok-do*; dokdo island), **yokjo** (*yog-jo*; bathtub), **chaek** (*chaeg*; books), **geotda** (*guht-da*; to walk) and **datda** (*dat-da*; to close).

The *r*, *l* sound differs in that it is pronounced as *r* before a vowel, as in **baram** (*ba-ram*; wind), **ramyun** (*ra-myun*; instant noodles) and as *l* everywhere else as in **balral** (*bal-ral*; energetic).

Pronouncing *jj*, *kk*, *pp*, and *tt*

Most people have little trouble pronouncing *j* and *ch*, but the *jj* sound is often a source of frustration. To understand first how the *jj* sound is pronounced (and later, the *kk*, *pp*, and *tt* sounds), try saying *jazz*, *match*, and *champ*. You should notice that the *ch* sound has the most air coming out of your mouth and *j* the next. It should seem as though you are trying to prevent any air from coming out. For this reason, the *j*, *ch*, and also *jj* sounds are called *affricates*. They are phonetically a combination of a stop and a fricative, hence the term *affricate*, which involves a friction of airflow as well as the obstruction of airflow at different stages of its production.

In fact, the *jj*, *kk*, *pp*, and *tt* sounds are actually stops of the *ch*, *k*, *p*, and *t* sounds. So when you pronounce *jj*, *kk*, *pp*, and *tt*, try letting less air rush out of your mouth than you would when you are saying *ch*, *k*, *p*, and *t*. Try these examples:

chong (*chong*; gun)
jeojjok (*juh-jjok*; over there)
jjok-jii (*jjok-jee*; memo)
kkeut (*kkeud*; end)
kkot (*kkot*; flower)
kong (*kong*; bean)
pal (*pal*; arm)
ppalli (*ppal-li*; fast)
ppang (*ppang*; bread)
tang (*tang*; bang)
ttang (*ttang*; ground)
tteok (*tteog*; rice cake)

Telling the difference between s and ss

Again, the name of the game in pronouncing the *s* and *ss* sounds is airflow. However, the defining characteristic of these two sounds is that they involve hissing sounds when they are produced, hence their name ‘sibilant.’ The *ss* sound involves more friction of airflow compared to the *s* sound. The *s* sound in the words *sound* and *cinema* is like the Korean *ss* sound. Try saying the words **ssal** (*ssal*; rice) and **ssada** (*ssa-da*; cheap).

On the other hand, the Korean *s* sound is closer to an English *z* sound compared to the *ss* sound. But, *s* is quite different from *z* in English in that the former is voiceless and the latter voiced. Try saying *zada* first, but then say the *z* sound imagining that you’ve lost your voice. You should have an *s* sound that is significantly softer, and also longer, than what you are used to. If you have trouble differentiating the two, try pronouncing the *s* sound twice as long as you would the *ss* sound. Try these examples:

ssal (*ss-al*; rice), **sal** (*sal*; skin)
ssada (*ssa-da*; cheap), **sada** (*sa-da*; buy)

One more thing to know about the *s* and the *ss* sound is that when they are combined with an *i* sound, as *si* and *ssi*, they are read *shi* and *sshi*, as in these examples:

ssi (*sshi*; Mr., Mrs., Miss), **si** (*shi*; poem)

Pronouncing the Korean *r, l* sound

If you **gullida** (*gool-lee-da*; roll) your **hyeo** (*hyuh*; tongue) across the **cheon-jang** (*chun-jang*; roof) of your mouth, you should notice a flat hard part near the teeth and a ridge where you should notice an incline. When you say *d* as in *day* and *dog*, or *l* as in *lamb* and *log*, your tongue stays on the hard part near your **i** (*ee*; teeth). In the case of *l* in English, the tip of your tongue touches the alveolar ridge, but when you pronounce an *r* sound as in *run* and *rock*, the tip of your tongue stays behind the ridge on the roof of your mouth, somewhere on the incline.



The key to pronouncing the Korean *r, l* sound is to keep only the tip of your tongue on the ridge between the *r* and *l* sounds. If you have trouble pronouncing the *r, l* sound, just think of it as the *l* sound pronounced by putting the tip of your tongue on the ridge that I was talking about earlier. Try these examples.

chitsol (*chi-ssol*; toothbrush)

hangari (*hang-a-ree*; jar, pot)

nara (*na-ra*; country)

pal (*pal*; arm)

ramyun (*ra-myun*; instant noodles)

uri (*oo-ree*; us, we)

Muting consonants at the end of a syllable

When Korean syllables or **daneo** (*da-nuh*; words) end in a *g* or a *d* sound, Koreans will mute the *g* or *d* sound. More specifically speaking, syllable-final *g* and *d* are unreleased sounds. When pronouncing these sounds, the airflow is closed very rapidly. Koreans do this by not letting as much air rush out of their mouths as they would when they would pronounce a *g* or a *d* sound at the beginning of a syllable. As **isanghan** (*ee-sang-han*; strange) as this may sound, even English speakers do this when they say the *d* in *good morning*.

For practice, try these examples (*kkeut* should sound a lot like *good*):

kkeut (*kkeud*; end)

chitsol (*chi-ssol*; toothbrush)

chaek (*chaeg*; book)

yok-jo (*yog-jo*; bathtub)

hyu-sik (*hyu-sheeg*; rest)

jeojjok (*juh-jjog*; over there)

ttok-ttok (*ttog-ttog*; knock knock)

badak (*ba-dag*; floor)

Sounding Fluent

Once you have a grasp of the basic Korean **sori** (*so-ree*; sounds), mimicking the intonation, and cadence of a Korean speaker should take just a **jogeum** (*jo-geum*; little) more work. But this does not mean that path to excellent Korean pronunciation is one without **yuhok** (*yoo-hok*; temptations). In this section, I provide three tips for mastering Korean pronunciation and making your Korean sound even more natural.



Koreans use many English words on a daily basis. A few of them sound similar to the original English words but for others you might have to use your imagination. Most of these words should be easy to memorize and help you better understand Korean pronunciation.

Don't stress

English words and sentences are full of stressed and unstressed syllables. For example, the sentence “Ko-*rean* pro-nun-ci-a-tion is *sim-ple*” is stressed at three points. The same sentence in Korean, “**Hangugeo bareumeun swiwoyo** (*han-goo-guh ba-reum-eun shee-wo-yo*; Korean pronunciation is easy),” is said with no stress at all. It is possible to emphasize a particular word in a sentence by saying each syllable in that word **cheoncheonhi** (*chun-chun-hee*; slowly) and **keuge** (*keu-gae*; loudly), but if you ever feel tempted to put stress on a syllable within a word in Korean, resist.

Pronounce each syllable

In this book, I provide the Romanization for the Korean word and sentences, then I write out how each word is pronounced breaking words up into syllables. Although it may be tempting read each syllable quickly, if you enunciate each syllable clearly it will be easier for you to pronounce words accurately, and easier for Koreans to understand you. Remember to speak like an Australian or British person, such as pronouncing *a* as *ah*.



Puzzling English words in Korean

Some English words have had their meanings changed over the course of their assimilation into the Korean language. Don't be surprised when you hear familiar English words used with different meanings.

- ✓ **Panties:** **Paen-tee** does not only refer to women's underwear; it also refers to men's underwear. Do not get the wrong idea if

your male co-worker says he prefers boxer-style **sa-gag-paen-tee** to briefs.

- ✓ **Training:** **Choo-ree-ning** does not mean *training*. Instead, it refers to the gym pants that you wear when you train.
- ✓ **Villa:** **Beel-la** is not a house in the countryside, but a condominium or apartment complex.

Speak in a steady rhythm

At times, English sentences can sound like a waltz, a minuet, a serenade or sometimes even like a jazz piece. This is all because speakers of English can vary the rhythm of the words within a sentence. Although Koreans may raise or lower the tone of their **moksori** (*mok-so-ree*; voices), the best rhythm of Korean speech is a steady one, almost like a march. It might even help if you clap your hands at a steady beat and pronounce each syllable as you clap. Remember, if you feel the **piryo** (*pee-ryo*; need) to vary the rhythm of a Korean sentence, resist.

Basic phrases

Table 1-3 provides some basic phrases that you can begin practicing now so that even if you don't sound fluent, you can show that you're trying.

Table 1-3 Basic Korean Phrases		
<i>Korean</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>	<i>Translation</i>
cheoncheonhi malhaejusaeyo	<i>chun-chun-hee mal-hae-joo-sae-yo</i>	Speak slowly please.
[some word] eui tteutsi hangugeoro/yeongeoro mwoyaeyo?	<i>[some word] eui tteut- shée han-goo-guh-ro/ young-uh-ro mwo-yae-yo?</i>	What does [some word] mean in Korean/English?
[some word] eul bareumhae jusaeyo	<i>[some word] rul ba-reum-hae-joo-sae-yo</i>	Please pronounce [some word].