



Korean Ladder Study Note

ㅇ의 두 얼굴

첫소리 묵음과 받침 받침 'ㅇ'

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Pronunciation Consonants	ㅇ의 두 얼굴 첫소리 묵음과 받침 받침 'ㅇ'

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-CNS-004>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tHgTyayAzkg>

Visit [koreanladder.com](https://www.koreanladder.com) for all free lessons

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Okay, real question. When I see 아이, part of me wants to say 'ngai'. Why does my mouth do that?

Same. In English 'ng' feels like a real sound, so I sneak it onto the front of Korean words.

That's the trap. The letter ㅇ has two completely different jobs, and beginners mix them up.

여기 핵심이에요. Here is the core idea. Say it with me: ㅇ at the front is silent.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	아이가 강에 가요. —	The child goes to the river.
Junho	네, 방에서 공을 가져와요. —	Yes, bring the ball from the room.
Hana	오이도 있어요? —	Is there cucumber too?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	네, 여기 있어요. —	Yes, here it is.
Hana	아이가 강에 가요. —	The child goes to the river.
Junho	방에서 공을 가져와요. —	Bring the ball from the room.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
ㅇ ieung	The circle consonant	여기 핵심이에요. Here is the core idea. Say it with me: ㅇ at the front is silent.
아이 오 a · i · o	Front ㅇ = silent, only the vowel is heard	When ㅇ is the first sound of a syllable, it makes no sound at all. It just holds the vowel.
아 = ah, 이 = ee, 오 = oh a, i, o	Initial ㅇ is a silent placeholder	그래서 아 is just 'ah'. 이 is just 'ee'. 오 is just 'oh'. No 'ng' anywhere.
이 = ㅇ + i	Silent ㅇ holds the seat so the vowel can appear	왜 silent placeholder 일까요? In Korean, every syllable must start with a consonant slot. When there's no real consonant, ㅇ fills the seat so the vowel can sit.
아이 a-i	child / kid	이제 네이티브 예문. Now some native examples. Listen to the clean vowel starts.
오이 o-i	cucumber	그리고 오이. Cucumber. Again, 'oh-ee'. Open and clean.
받침 ㅇ batchim ieung	Final ㅇ = the 'ng' sound	이제 두 번째 얼굴. Now the second face. When ㅇ sits at the BOTTOM of a syllable, as the 받침, the final piece, it becomes 'ng'.
강 gang	river	강. River. The ㅇ is under 가, so it closes the syllable with 'ng' — 'gang'.



Grammar / Structure Notes

○

○ — The circle consonant

Front = silent · Back = 'ng'

아 이 오

아 이 오 — Front ○ = silent, only the vowel is heard

아 = 'ah', not 'ngah'

아 = ah, 이 = ee, 오 = oh

아 = ah, 이 = ee, 오 = oh — Initial ○ is a silent placeholder

그래서 아 is just 'ah'. 이 is just 'ee'. 오 is just 'oh'. No 'ng' anywhere.

이 = ○ + ㅣ

이 = ○ + ㅣ — Silent ○ holds the seat so the vowel ㅣ can appear

No consonant sound, just structure

아이

아 + 이 — child / kid

이제 네이티브 예문. Now some native examples. Listen to the clean vowel starts.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
아이 / 양	a-i · ang
이 / 잉	i vs ing
아이	a-i

Self-Check

- 1 Say ○의 두 얼굴 three times: slow, natural, then inside a short sentence.
- 2 Write one original sentence that was not in the video.
- 3 Rewatch the YouTube lesson and pause when the same pattern appears.

Related / Subsequent Studies



Lesson	Why study it next	Link
ㄹ 발음 The Korean R/L Sound at the Start and Middle of Words	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㄹ 발음 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-CNS-002
ㅈ / ㅊ / ㅉ The Three Korean 'J/Ch' Sounds	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅈ / ㅊ / ㅉ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-CNS-003
ㅋ ㅌ ㅍ Aspirated and Tense Consonants	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅋ ㅌ ㅍ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-CNS-001
ㅅ Plain and Tense Sibilants	A2 Pronunciation: compare ㅅ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-PRON-CNS-001

My Notes

Your ladder to fluent Korean. This PDF, the website, and the video lessons are free for personal study.