



Korean Ladder Study Note

ㄱ / ㄴ / ㅇ

The Soft Korean Consonants Beginners Overlook

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Pronunciation Consonants	ㄱ / ㄴ / ㅇ The Soft Korean Consonants Beginners Overlook

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-CNS-008>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vIRqoP3dQU>

Visit koreanladder.com for all free lessons

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Okay, real talk. When I try 미음, 니은, and 히읇, they all feel quiet to me. Are they really that different?

That's a great honest question. These three are the softest doors into Korean sound, and English speakers often push too hard on them.

Here's the frame for today. 미음 and 니은 are nasals, so the air goes through your nose. 히읇 is just a light breath, like a quiet sigh.

미음은 콧소리예요. In English, 미음 is a nasal. Lips together, hum out through the nose.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	하나 씨, 이거는 뭐예요? —	Hana, what is this?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	그건 물이에요. —	That's water.
Junho	아, 물. 맛있어요? —	Ah, water. Is it good?
Hana	네, 맛있어요. —	Yes, it's good.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
ㅁ · ㄴ · ㅎ m · n · h	two nasals and one soft breath	Here's the frame for today. 미음 and 니은 are nasals, so the air goes through your nose. 히읇 is just a light breath, like a quiet sigh.
ㅁ mieum (m)	lips together, hum through the nose	미음은 콧소리예요. In English, 미음 is a nasal. Lips together, hum out through the nose.
ㄴ nieun (n)	tongue behind top teeth, sound through the nose	니은도 콧소리예요. 니은 is also a nasal. The tongue touches just behind your top teeth, and the sound goes up your nose.
ㅎ hieut (h)	a soft, warm breath — no blocking	그리고 히읇은 숨소리예요. And 히읇 is a breath sound. No lips, no tongue block, just a soft warm sound.
엄마 eomma	mother	Let me show you 미음 in a real word. 엄마. Mother. Feel your lips meet twice, softly.
나 na	I / me	이제 니은이에요. Now 니은. Listen to 나. It means I or me. Tongue taps up, gentle nasal.
하나 hana	one	And 히읇. 하나. It means one, and it's also Hana's name. Notice the soft breath at the very start.
하나 = ㅎ + ㄴ —	one soft breath, one soft nasal	완벽해요. You just heard the whole lesson inside one word.



Grammar / Structure Notes

□ · ㄴ · ㅎ

□ · ㄴ · ㅎ — two nasals and one soft breath

Nose sound, nose sound, breath

□

□ — lips together, hum through the nose

미음

ㄴ

ㄴ — tongue behind top teeth, sound through the nose

니은

ㅎ

ㅎ — a soft, warm breath — no blocking

히읇

엄마

엄 + 마 — mother

Let me show you 미음 in a real word. 엄마. Mother. Feel your lips meet twice, softly.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
하	ha
엄마	eomma
누나	nuna
하늘	haneul

Self-Check

- 1 Say □ / ㄴ / ㅎ 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
ㄷ / ㅌ / ㅌ The Three Korean D/T Sounds	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㄷ / ㅌ / ㅌ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-CNS-006
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
ㅇ의 두 얼굴 첫소리 묵음과 받침 받침 'ㅇ'	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅇ의 두 얼굴 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-CNS-004
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

My Notes

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