



Korean Ladder Study Note

나

Hearing Initial ㄴ and ㄷ Clearly

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Pronunciation Consonants	나 Hearing Initial ㄴ and ㄷ Clearly

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-CNS-027>

Watch the full video on YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2TQPPnzV_A

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Okay, confession. When Korean friends say yes, sometimes I hear an N sound, and sometimes I swear I hear a D. Am I imagining it?

좋은 질문이에요. 네와 데는 다른 단어예요. 네 means 'yes', and 데 means 'place'.

나와 다도 그래요. 나 means 'I' or 'me', and 다 means 'all'. Two different words.

So if I mix them up, I might say 'all' when I mean 'me'. Good to know before I embarrass myself.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	준호 씨, 빵 다 먹었어요? —	Junho, did you eat all the bread?
Junho	네, 다 먹었어요. 미안해요. —	Yes, I ate it all. Sorry.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	괜찮아요. 빵 파는 데 알아요? —	It's okay. Do you know a place that sells bread?
Junho	네, 알아요. 나중에 같이 가요. —	Yes, I do. Let's go together later.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
ㄴ vs ㄷ n vs d	nasal (nose sound) vs stop (light pop)	오늘의 핵심은 니온과 디글이에요. Today's key is two consonants: 니온, the N sound, and 디글, the D sound.
ㄴ · ㄷ n · d	Tongue tip: just behind the upper teeth	혀 위치는 거의 같아요. Your tongue tip touches the same spot, just behind your top teeth.
나 na	I, me (casual)	먼저 나. 나. It means 'I' or 'me'. Listen for the soft hum at the start.
다 da	all, everything	이번엔 다. 다. It means 'all'. Short and clean, no hum.
네 ne	yes (polite)	네. 네. That's 'yes', the polite yes you hear all day in Korea.
데 de	place (used after a describing word)	그리고 데. 데. It means 'place', like in 빵 파는 데, a place that sells bread.
나 · 다 · 네 · 데 na · da · ne · de	I · all · yes · place	이제 짝으로 들어 보세요. 나, 다. 네, 데. Listen to them in pairs.
나 vs 다 na vs da	Hearing Initial ㄴ and ㄷ Clearly	Oh, so the N one can last as long as I want, like humming. But the D one is just a tiny pop?



Grammar / Structure Notes

ㄴ vs ㄷ

ㄴ vs ㄷ — nasal (nose sound) vs stop (light pop)

Same tongue spot · different airflow

ㄴ · ㄷ

ㄴ · ㄷ — Tongue tip: just behind the upper teeth

Both letters start from the same spot

ㄴ vs ㄷ

ㄴ vs ㄷ — The difference is the air

ㄴ: air through the nose · ㄷ: air blocked, then released

ㄴ vs ㄷ

ㄴ vs ㄷ — The difference is the air

ㄴ: air through the nose · ㄷ: air blocked, then released

나

나 — I, me (casual)

Starts with a hum

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
나	na
다	da
나 vs 다	na vs da
다 vs 타	da vs ta
네 · 데	ne · de

Self-Check

- 1 Say 나 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
ㄴ / ㄷ / ㅎ The Soft Korean Consonants Beginners Overlook	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㄴ / ㄷ / ㅎ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-CNS-008
ㅁ · ㄴ · ㅇ 콧소리 자리 Feeling Where Korean Nasals Are Made	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅁ · ㄴ · ㅇ 콧소리 자리 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-CNS-019

My Notes

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