



Korean Ladder Study Note

엄마

The Rising Pitch of Calling Out to Someone

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Pronunciation Intonation	엄마 The Rising Pitch of Calling Out to Someone

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-INT-002>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zHr8c3FNbQ4>

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Here's my problem. I say 엄마, or 저기요, but it sounds like I'm just reading a vocabulary word, not calling someone.

맞아요. In Korean, when you call out, the pitch often rises sharply and then holds a little.

If the pitch is flat, 엄마 can sound like you are just saying the word mom. With the calling pitch, 엄마↗— sounds like you are calling her.

So the difference is not a new word. It is the melody.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	저기요↗— —	Excuse me.
Junho	네, 잠시만요. —	Yes, one moment, please.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	저기요 ㄱ— —	Excuse me.
Junho	네, 잠시만요. —	Yes, one moment, please.
Junho	여기요 ㄱ— —	Over here, please.
Hana	네, 도와드릴게요. —	Yes, I'll help you.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
부를 때 쓰는 억양 bureul ttae sseuneun eogyang	calling intonation	오늘의 핵심은 부를 때 쓰는 억양이에요. In English, that means calling intonation — the sound you use to get someone's attention.
엄마 ㄱ— eomma	The Rising Pitch of Calling Out to Someone	The shape is simple: start normally, jump up near the end, and hold the final sound just a little.
저기요 jeoggiyo	Excuse me.	First example: 저기요. 저기요 is a polite way to get attention, like excuse me.
여기요 yeoggiyo	Over here, please. / Excuse me.	Second example: 여기요. It can mean over here, please, or excuse me, often when calling attention in a restaurant or shop.
엄마 eomma	The Rising Pitch of Calling Out to Someone	Let me try the flat one first: 엄마.
엄마 → 엄마 ㄱ— eomma → eomma	The Rising Pitch of Calling Out to Someone	Good for the noun. But for calling, lift it: 엄마 ㄱ—.
소리가 높게 올라가요 soriga nopge ollagayo	The pitch goes up.	Listen to the pitch. 소리가 높게 올라가요. In English, the pitch goes up.
저기요 ㄱ— jeoggiyo	The Rising Pitch of Calling Out to Someone	Exactly. Korean calling intonation is not only volume. It is a clear rise, with a small hold at the end.



Grammar / Structure Notes

부를 때 쓰는 억양

부를 때 쓰는 억양 — calling intonation

Used when calling someone or politely getting attention.

저기요

저기 + 요 — Excuse me.

First example: 저기요. 저기요 is a polite way to get attention, like excuse me.

여기요

여기 + 요 — Over here, please. / Excuse me.

Second example: 여기요. It can mean over here, please, or excuse me, often when calling attention in a restaurant or shop.

소리가 높게 올라가요

소리가 높게 올라가요 — The pitch goes up.

The important part is pitch, not volume.

저기요

저기 + 요 — Excuse me.

Let's unpack 저기요. 저기 can mean "over there," but in 저기요 it works like a polite attention-getter. 요 adds politeness, and the calling sound makes it function like "excuse me."

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
엄마 ㄱ—	eomma
엄마	eomma
저기요 ㄱ—	jeogiyo
민수 → 민수 ㄱ— / 민수야	Minsu → Minsu / Minsuya
엄마아	eomma
저기요 → 저기요 ㄱ—	jeogiyo → jeogiyo

Self-Check

- 1 Say 엄마 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
가요 끝을 올리면 질문이 돼요	A1 Pronunciation: compare 가요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-INT-001
끊어 읽기 Where to Pause So a Long Sentence Stays Clear	C1 Pronunciation: compare 끊어 읽기 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-PRON-INT-002
나열의 억양 Rising Pitch When You List Things	A2 Pronunciation: compare 나열의 억양 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-PRON-INT-002
뭐 먹어 Wh-Question Intonation Without a Rising End	B1 Pronunciation: compare 뭐 먹어 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-PRON-INT-001

My Notes

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