



Korean Ladder Study Note



The Two Vowels Modern Seoul Speakers Now Say the Same

Level	Topic	Focus
A1 · Beginner TOPIK 1	Pronunciation Vowels	ㅚ The Two Vowels Modern Seoul Speakers Now Say the Same

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-009>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzTQB5ZfW3U>

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Here's my learner panic question: if 게 and 괴 look different, why do they sound almost the same when Seoul speakers say them fast?

좋은 질문이에요. The short answer is: the old sound of ㅚ has changed for many modern Seoul speakers.

Careful point: ㅚ is not always exactly the same as ㅘ. In many words, it is often like a quick 우 plus 에, close to 웨.

So 괴 can sound like a tiny 우 before 에, not a totally new mystery vowel.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	오늘 회의 있어요? —	Is there a meeting today?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	네, 외국 손님이 와요. —	Yes, a guest from abroad is coming.
Hana	회의실은 어디예요? —	Where is the meeting room?
Junho	왼쪽에 있어요. —	It is on the left.
Hana	오늘 회의 있어요? —	Is there a meeting today?
Junho	네, 외국 손님이 와요. —	Yes, a guest from abroad is coming.
Hana	회의실은 어디예요? —	Where is the meeting room?
Junho	왼쪽에 있어요. —	It is on the left.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
ㅈ ≈ 웨 oe ≈ we	ㅈ is often pronounced like a quick 'we' sound	Careful point: ㅈ is not always exactly the same as ㅈ. In many words, it is often like a quick 우 plus 에, close to 웨.
괴 ≈ 궤 goe ≈ gwe	괴 often sounds close to 궤	So 괴 can sound like a tiny 우 before 에, not a totally new mystery vowel.
ㅈ vs ㅈ e vs oe	flat 'e' vs modern 'oe/we'	맞아요. Today's frame is: 모음 에 and 모음 외. The card shows ㅈ and ㅈ, and we compare the flat 에 sound with the modern 외 sound.
게 · 괴 ge · goe	The Two Vowels Modern Seoul Speakers Now Say the Same	First, listen only. 게. 괴. 게. 괴.
게 ge	The Two Vowels Modern Seoul Speakers Now Say the Same	게는 입을 편하게 펴요. In English, 게 is a flat 에 sound. No lip rounding.
괴 goe	The Two Vowels Modern Seoul Speakers Now Say the Same	괴는 예전에는 입술을 둥글게 해서 더 rounded 하게 말했어요. Older ㅈ was rounded, like a single rounded vowel.
ㅈ → 궤처럼 oe → like we	ㅈ often sounds like 궤	하지만 요즘 서울말에서는 괴가 궤처럼 들리는 경우가 많아요. In daily speech, it often has a quick w-like start.
외국 oeguk	The Two Vowels Modern Seoul Speakers Now Say the Same	Now real words. 외국. Many Seoul speakers say this very close to 웨국.



Grammar / Structure Notes

ㅜ ≈ 웨

ㅜ ≈ 웨 — ㅜ is often pronounced like a quick 'we' sound

Modern Seoul speech often uses a small w-glide.

괴 ≈ 궈

괴 ≈ 궈 — 괴 often sounds close to 궈

Keep it light, not exaggerated.

ㅐ vs ㅜ

ㅐ vs ㅜ — flat 'e' vs modern 'oe/we'

The vowel ㅜ is historically rounded, but modern Seoul often makes it close to 웨.

ㅜ → 궈처럼

ㅜ → 궈처럼 — ㅜ often sounds like 궈

This is why 괴 can sound very close to 궈, but not always identical.

외국

외국 — foreign country

외국. 외국. The first syllable is not a big 오 sound. It is quick and light.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
게, 괴	ge · goe
게	ge
괴	goe
외국	oeguk
회의	hoe-ui
왼쪽	oenjjok
에	e
외	oe

Self-Check

1 Say ㅐ 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
ㅏ The Two Open Vowels Beginners Blur	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅏ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-006
ㅗ The Vowels That Now Sound the Same	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅗ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-002
ㅑ / ㅓ / ㅕ / ㅗ The 'Y' Glide Vowels	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅑ / ㅓ / ㅕ / ㅗ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-004
ㅛ The 'Yae' and 'Ye' Glide Vowels	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅛ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-VOW-010

My Notes

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