



Korean Ladder Study Note

말 놓을까요

Switching to Casual Banmal with Friends

Level	Topic	Focus
A2 · Elementary TOPIK 2	Colloquial Banmal (Casual)	말 놓을까요 Switching to Casual Banmal with Friends

Study Links

[Open this lesson on Korean Ladder](https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-COLLOQ-BAN-001)

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-COLLOQ-BAN-001>

[Watch the full video on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5CNxdI1PI0)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5CNxdI1PI0>

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Okay, real question. My Korean friend keeps saying 말 놓자, and I just smile and panic. What am I supposed to do?

Right? I learned everything in 존댓말, the polite style. Nobody told me when it's okay to switch.

좋은 질문이에요. Korean has two gears. 존댓말 is polite, 반말 is casual. In English, 반말 means the way you talk with close friends.

기본은 존댓말이에요. With strangers, elders, or at work, you stay polite. 반말 is something you earn or agree on together.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	우리 말 놓을까? —	Shall we drop the formality?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	그래, 좋아. 말 놓자. —	Sure, sounds good. Let's go casual.
Hana	너 지금 뭐 해? —	What are you doing right now?
Junho	나 밥 먹어. —	I'm eating.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
반말 banmal	casual speech (with close friends)	좋은 질문이에요. Korean has two gears. 존댓말 is polite, 반말 is casual. In English, 반말 means the way you talk with close friends.
기본은 존댓말 gi-bon-eun jon-daet-mal	Polite speech is the default.	기본은 존댓말이에요. With strangers, elders, or at work, you stay polite. 반말 is something you earn or agree on together.
반말은 친한 사이에서만 banmal-eun chin-han sa-i-e-seo-man	Casual speech only with close relationships.	반말은 친한 친구하고 써요. In English, you use 반말 with close friends, younger people, or family. Never with someone older you just met.
학생이에요 hak-saeng-i-e-yo	is a student (polite)	Let's break the polite ending. 학생이에요 is 학생, 'student,' plus 이예요, the polite 'to be.' In 반말, that 이예요 just becomes 이야.
놓다 no-ta	Switching to Casual Banmal with Friends	들어 보세요. 놓다. The ㅎ and ㄷ blend, so it sounds like 노타.
말 놓자 mal no-cha	Switching to Casual Banmal with Friends	그리고 반말로는 말 놓자. Here ㅎ meets ㅈ, so 놓자 sounds like 노차.
놓다 / 놓자 no-ta / no-cha	Switching to Casual Banmal with Friends	Wait — so 'no-ta' for 놓다 but 'no-cha' for 놓자? The h changes the next sound.
ㅎ + ㄷ → ㅌ / ㅎ + ㅈ → ㅊ —	Switching to Casual Banmal with Friends	정확해요. The hidden ㅎ pushes air into the next consonant. ㄷ becomes ㅌ, and ㅈ becomes ㅊ.



Grammar / Structure Notes

반말

반말 — casual speech (with close friends)

존댓말 = polite speech (the default)

기본은 존댓말

기본은 존댓말 — Polite speech is the default.

반말 is earned or agreed on

반말은 친한 사이에서만

반말은 친한 사이에서만 — Casual speech only with close relationships.

친구, 가족, or younger people

저는 학생이에요.

저는 학생이에요. — I am a student. (polite)

Here is 존댓말 first. 저는 학생이에요. It means 'I am a student,' the polite way.

나는 학생이야.

나는 학생이야. — I'm a student. (casual)

저 → 나, 이에요 → 이야

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
노타	no-ta
말 노차	mal no-cha
노타 / 노차	no-ta / no-cha
너 지금 뭐 해?	neo ji-geum mwo hae?
나 밥 먹어	na bap meo-geo.

Self-Check

- 1 Say 말 놓을까요 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
글썩요 / 그러게요 / 아무튼 Hedging and Agreeing Naturally	A2 Colloquial: compare 글썩요 / 그러게요 / 아무튼 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-COLLOQ-FIL-001
뭐예요 / 거예요 Everyday Korean Contractions	A2 Colloquial: compare 뭐예요 / 거예요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-COLLOQ-CTR-001
-르 거야 / -는 거지 / -ㄴ 걸 Spoken Contractions of 것	B2 Colloquial: compare -르 거야 / -는 거지 / -ㄴ 걸 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-COLLOQ-CTR-001
ㅇㅋ / ㄱㄱ / ㅋㅋ Reading Korean Text and Chat Abbreviations	B1 Colloquial: compare ㅇㅋ / ㄱㄱ / ㅋㅋ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-COLLOQ-TXT-001

My Notes

Free Korean lessons, one rung at a time. This PDF, the website, and the video lessons are free for personal study.