



Korean Ladder Study Note

그쪽 / 본인 / 당신

The 'You' Words That Can Backfire

Level	Topic	Focus
B1 · Intermediate TOPIK 3	Honorifics Titles & Address	그쪽 / 본인 / 당신 The 'You' Words That Can Backfire

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-HON-ADR-002>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wPlGf4FB48c>

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Okay, I have to confess something. In English I say 'you' about a hundred times a day. So in Korean I just kept saying 당신. Was that... bad?

It's the most natural question, Alice. And the honest answer is — Korean usually avoids a direct 'you' entirely.

Think of it this way. In Korean, pointing at someone with a bare 'you' can feel like poking them. We prefer their name or their title.

Today's rung is address — how we point at the listener. We'll meet three 'you' words: 그쪽, 본인, and 당신. Each one carries its own distance.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	선생님, 이거 선생님 우산이에요? —	Teacher/sir, is this your umbrella?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	아, 네. 제 거예요. 감사합니다. —	Oh, yes. It's mine. Thank you.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
그쪽 · 본인 · 당신 geu-jjok · bon-in · dang-sin	three ways to say 'you' — each with a different feel	Today's rung is address — how we point at the listener. We'll meet three 'you' words: 그쪽, 본인, and 당신. Each one carries its own distance.
그쪽 geu-jjok	'that side' → a polite, neutral 'you'	First, the safest of the three. 그쪽. Literally it means 'that side' or 'that direction.'
그쪽 + 은 geu-jjok + eun	'that side' + topic marker = 'as for you'	So... 그쪽은? The 'that side' plus the topic particle 은. It's like saying 'as for that side.'
본인 bon-in	'oneself / the person themselves'	Now the second word. 본인. This one means 'oneself' — the person in question.
당신 dang-sin	the 'you' that can backfire	정확해요. And now, the dangerous one. 당신.
이름 + 직함 ireum + jikham	use their name + title instead of 'you'	So here's the golden rule. When you don't know someone, don't hunt for a 'you' word at all. Use their name or title.
선생님 우산 seonsaengnim usan	'teacher's umbrella' = 'your umbrella'	Did you hear it? Junho said 선생님 우산이에요? — 'Is this teacher's umbrella?' — instead of 'your umbrella.' No 당신 anywhere.
저기요 jeo-gi-yo	The 'You' Words That Can Backfire	Okay, let me try one. If I want to catch a stranger's attention — I shouldn't say 당신, right? What do I say?



Grammar / Structure Notes

그쪽 · 본인 · 당신

그쪽 · 본인 · 당신 — three ways to say 'you' — each with a different feel

Distance · Formality · Danger

그쪽

그쪽 — 'that side' → a polite, neutral 'you'

used with people you don't know well

그쪽

그쪽 — point at the space, not the person

keeps a polite distance

그쪽은 어떻게 생각하세요?

그쪽 + 은 + 어떻게 + 생각하세요 + ? — What do you think? (polite, to someone you don't know)

So a shopkeeper or a stranger might say 그쪽은 어떻게 생각하세요? — 'What do you think?'

그쪽 + 은

그쪽 + 은 — 'that side' + topic marker = 'as for you'

So... 그쪽은? The 'that side' plus the topic particle 은. It's like saying 'as for that side.'

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
저기요	jeo-gi-yo
저기요?	jeo-gi-yo?

Self-Check

- 1 Say 그쪽 / 본인 / 당신 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
저기요 / 여기요 / 여보세요 Getting Someone's Attention Politely	B1 Honorifics: compare 저기요 / 여기요 / 여보세요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-HON-ADR-001
님 / 씨 Korean Titles and Address	A2 Honorifics: compare 님 / 씨 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-HON-ADR-001
부장님 / 과장님 / 대리님 Addressing Coworkers by Rank	B2 Honorifics: compare 부장님 / 과장님 / 대리님 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-HON-ADR-001
선배님 / 후배 Addressing Seniors and Juniors	B2 Honorifics: compare 선배님 / 후배 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-HON-ADR-002

My Notes

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