



Korean Ladder Study Note

아버님 / 어머니 / 부모님

Respectfully Referring to Someone Else's Parents

Level	Topic	Focus
B1 · Intermediate TOPIK 3	Honorifics Subject Honorifics	아버님 / 어머니 / 부모님 Respectfully Referring to Someone Else's Parents

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-HON-SUB-005>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pkCDm1XzGsk>

Visit koreanladder.com for all free lessons

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Here is my real-life panic question: if I'm talking about my coworker's dad, can I say 민수 씨 아빠? Or does that sound too casual?

좋은 질문이에요. In adult Korean, 민수 씨 아빠 can sound like you are talking in a childlike or very casual way.

A safer respectful phrase is 민수 씨 아버님. If it is his mother, 민수 씨 어머니.

오늘의 핵심은 님이에요. 아버지 becomes 아버님, and 어머니 becomes 어머니, when you elevate someone else's parent.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	준호 씨, 부모님께서서는 잘 지내세요? —	Junho, are your parents doing well?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	네, 잘 지내세요. 하나 씨 부모님께서도 건강하시죠? —	Yes, they're doing well. Hana, your parents are healthy too, right?
Hana	네, 감사해요. 어머님께서 요즘 운동을 자주 하세요. —	Yes, thank you. My mother has been exercising often these days.
Junho	좋네요. 아버님께서도 같이 하세요? —	That's nice. Does your father do it with her too?

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
민수 씨 아버님 / 민수 씨 어머님 Minsu ssi abeonim / Minsu ssi eomeonim	Minsu's father / Minsu's mother, respectfully	A safer respectful phrase is 민수 씨 아버님. If it is his mother, 민수 씨 어머님.
아버지 → 아버님 어머니 → 어머님 abeoji → abeonim / eomeoni → eomeonim	father → respected father / mother → respected mother	오늘의 핵심은 님이에요. 아버지 becomes 아버님, and 어머니 becomes 어머님, when you elevate someone else's parent.
님 = 높임 nim = nopim	님 marks respect or elevation	So it is not just fancy vocabulary. It changes the social distance and respect level.
부모님 bumonim	parents, respectfully	맞아요. And for both parents together, Korean usually says 부모님.
민수 씨 아버님께서 오셨어요 Minsu ssi abeonimkkeseo osyeosseoyo	Minsu's father came.	Listen first. 민수 씨 아버님께서 오셨어요. This means, Minsu's father came, respectfully.
아버님께서 오셨어요 abeonimkkeseo osyeosseoyo	Father came, respectfully.	Here, 아버님 is the respectful noun, and 께서 is the honorific subject particle. 오셨어요 is the honorific verb form of 오다.
지영 씨 어머님께서 전화하셨어요 Jiyeong ssi eomeonimkkeseo je onhwahasyeosseoyo	Jiyeong's mother called.	Now the mother. 지영 씨 어머님께서 전화하셨어요. Jiyeong's mother called, respectfully.
수진 씨 부모님께서 한국에 계세요 Sujin ssi bumonimkkeseo Hanguge gyeseyo	Sujin's parents are in Korea.	And both parents. 수진 씨 부모님께서 한국에 계세요. Sujin's parents are in Korea, respectfully.



Grammar / Structure Notes

민수 씨 아버님 / 민수 씨 어머님

민수 씨 아버님 / 민수 씨 어머님 — Minsu's father / Minsu's mother, respectfully

Use 님 on kinship words when referring to someone else's parent respectfully.

아버지 → 아버님 어머니 → 어머님

아버지 → 아버님

어머니 → 어머님 — father → respected father / mother → respected mother

님 adds respect to the person you are referring to.

님 = 높임

님 = 높임 — 님 marks respect or elevation

Especially important with someone else's family.

부모님

부모님 — parents, respectfully

부모 means parents. 님 makes it respectful.

민수 씨 아버님께서 오셨어요

민수 씨 + 아버님 + 께서 + 오셨어요 — Minsu's father came.

Listen first. 민수 씨 아버님께서 오셨어요. This means, Minsu's father came, respectfully.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
민수 씨 아버님께서 오셨어요	Minsu ssi abeonimkkeseo osyeosseoyo
아버님께서	abeonimkkeseo
아버님께서 오셨어요	abeonimkkeseo osyeosseoyo
지영 씨 어머님께서 전화하셨어요	Jiyeong ssi eomeonimkkeseo jeonhwahasyeosseoyo

Self-Check

- 1 Say 아버님 / 어머님 / 부모님 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
-(으)시- Adding the Honorific Infix to Any Verb	B1 Honorifics: compare -(으)시- with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-HON-SUB-002
계시다 / 드시다 / 주무시다 / 연세 / 진지 Special Honorific Words	B1 Honorifics: compare 계시다 / 드시다 / 주무시다 / 연세 / 진지 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-HON-SUB-001
우리 부모님께서 Speaking About Your Own Family with Honorifics	B1 Honorifics: compare 우리 부모님께서 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-HON-SUB-004
편찮으시다 / 돌아가시다 Honorific Verbs for Illness and Passing	B1 Honorifics: compare 편찮으시다 / 돌아가시다 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-HON-SUB-003

My Notes

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