



## Korean Ladder Study Note

# ㅎ 약화·탈락

좋아요 → 조아요

Level	Topic	Focus
B1 · Intermediate TOPIK 3	Pronunciation Linking Sounds	ㅎ 약화·탈락 좋아요 → 조아요

## Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-PRON-LNK-001>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGY6idc0hHE>

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

## Core Idea

Okay, real question. I learned to write 좋아요, but every Korean I hear says something like 조아요. Where did the ㅎ go?

Same with 많이. The book says 많이, but it comes out like 마니. It's like the ㅎ just... evaporates.

좋은 질문이에요. This is one of the most useful pronunciation rules in Korean. It's called ㅎ 약화 and ㅎ 탈락 — ㅎ weakening and ㅎ dropping.

The letter ㅎ, we call it 히읗. It's a soft, breathy sound. And when it sits between two voiced sounds, it becomes too weak to survive.

## Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	커피 좋아해요? —	Do you like coffee?



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	네, 많이 좋아해요. —	Yes, I like it a lot.
Hana	설탕은요? —	How about sugar?
Junho	설탕은 싫어요. —	I don't like sugar.

## Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
ㅎ 약화 · ㅎ 탈락 hieut yakhwa · hieut talrak	ㅎ weakening · ㅎ dropping	좋은 질문이에요. This is one of the most useful pronunciation rules in Korean. It's called ㅎ 약화 and ㅎ 탈락 — ㅎ weakening and ㅎ dropping.
ㅎ hieut	the letter named 히읗 — a soft 'h'	The letter ㅎ, we call it 히읗. It's a soft, breathy sound. And when it sits between two voiced sounds, it becomes too weak to survive.
모음/ㄴ ㄹ ㅁ ㅇ + ㅎ voiced sound + hieut	ㅎ weakens between voiced sounds	Here is the core idea. Between vowels, or after ㄴ, ㄹ, ㅁ, ㅇ, the ㅎ almost disappears. In English, it marks the spot where sound flows straight through.
좋아요 jo-a-yo	I like it / it's good	Let's hear it in real words. 좋아요. Listen — 조아요. The ㅎ from 좋 is gone, and the sounds link together.
많이 ma-ni	a lot / much	Now 많이. There's a ㅎ hidden in 많, right after ㄴ. But after that ㄴ, the ㅎ drops completely. It becomes 마니.
좋다 → 좋아요 → [조아요] jota → joayo → [joayo]	spelling keeps meaning; speech drops ㅎ	정확해요. The ㅎ keeps the meaning clear on paper — 좋다 is 'good' — but in fast, voiced speech, the sound just glides past it.
싫어요 si-reo-yo	좋아요 → 조아요	맞아요. 싫어요 becomes 시러요. The ㄹ links to 어, and the ㅎ drops. You just found the pattern yourself.
전화 jeon-hwa	좋아요 → 조아요	One more type. Sometimes ㅎ doesn't fully drop — it just weakens. In 전화, the ㅎ softens and it sounds like 저놔. Listen for that gentle glide.



## Grammar / Structure Notes

### ㅎ 약화 · ㅎ 탈락

ㅎ 약화 · ㅎ 탈락 — ㅎ weakening · ㅎ dropping

the ㅎ softens or disappears between voiced sounds

### ㅎ

ㅎ — the letter named 히읗 — a soft 'h'

weakest Korean consonant

### 모음/ㄴ ㄹ ㅁ ㅇ + ㅎ

모음/ㄴ ㄹ ㅁ ㅇ + ㅎ — ㅎ weakens between voiced sounds

vowels and ㄴ ㄹ ㅁ ㅇ are all 'voiced'

### 좋아요

좋 + 아 + 요 — I like it / it's good

Let's hear it in real words. 좋아요. Listen — 조아요. The ㅎ from 좋 is gone, and the sounds link together.

### 많이

많 + 이 — a lot / much

Now 많이. There's a ㅎ hidden in 많, right after ㄴ. But after that ㄴ, the ㅎ drops completely. It becomes 마니.

## Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
조아요	jo-a-yo
마니	ma-ni
시러요	si-reo-yo
저놔	jeon-hwa

## Self-Check

- 1 Say ㅎ 약화·탈락 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
ㄴ 첨가 Why 한여름 Sounds Like 한너름	B2 Pronunciation: compare ㄴ 첨가 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson <a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-PRON-LNK-002">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-PRON-LNK-002</a>
격음화 When ㅎ Turns ㄱ/ㄷ/ㅂ into ㅋ/ㅌ/ㅍ	B2 Pronunciation: compare 격음화 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson <a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-PRON-LNK-001">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-PRON-LNK-001</a>
받침이 넘어가요 음악이 → 으마기, Basic Linking for Beginners	A2 Pronunciation: compare 받침이 넘어가요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson <a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-PRON-LNK-001">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-PRON-LNK-001</a>
연음 법칙 How Korean Words Blur Together	C1 Pronunciation: compare 연음 법칙 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson <a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-PRON-LNK-001">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-PRON-LNK-001</a>

## My Notes

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