



## Korean Ladder Study Note

# 반말 의문·명령

-냐? / -어라 / -지 마

| Level                                 | Topic                         | Focus                        |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| B2 ·<br>Upper-Intermediate<br>TOPIK 4 | Colloquial<br>Banmal (Casual) | 반말 의문·명령<br>-냐? / -어라 / -지 마 |

## Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-COLLOQ-BAN-001>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJv0FDIPXQE>

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

## Core Idea

Okay, real question. My Korean friend texts me 밥 먹었냐? and I panicked — is he mad at me?

Not angry at all. That 냐 is just very casual. Between close friends, 밥 먹었냐? simply means 'Did you eat?'

The harshness English speakers hear is not in the grammar. It's in the tone. Today we fix the tone.

Here's our frame. 반말 has its own question and command endings. Three today: -냐 for questions, -어라 for commands, -지 마 for 'don't.'

## Conversation Snapshot

| Speaker | Korean          | Meaning           |
|---------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Hana    | 야, 밥 먹었냐?<br>—  | Hey, did you eat? |
| Junho   | 아니, 아직. 왜?<br>— | No, not yet. Why? |



| Speaker | Korean                      | Meaning                                         |
|---------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Hana    | 그럼 빨리 나와라. 같이 먹자.<br>—      | Then come out quick. Let's eat together.        |
| Junho   | 알았어. 근데 나 기다리지 마, 곧 가.<br>— | Got it. But don't wait for me, I'm coming soon. |
| Hana    | 야, 밥 먹었냐?<br>—              | Hey, did you eat?                               |
| Junho   | 그럼 빨리 나와라.<br>—             | Then come out quick.                            |
| Junho   | 기다리지 마, 곧 가.<br>—           | Don't wait, I'm coming.                         |

## Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

| Word                               | Meaning                       | Example                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 친한 사이에서만<br>chinhan<br>sai-eseoman | only with close relationships | 이건 친한 사이에서만 써요. In English — only with people you're truly close to. Same age, close friends, or someone younger. |
| 빨리 와라<br>ppalli wara               | Come quickly.                 | 정확해요. Now the command. The casual command ending is 어라 or 아라. 빨리 와라 — 'Come quickly.'                             |
| 먹어라 / 앉아라<br>meogeora / anjara     | eat! / sit down!              | 어라/아라 follows the same vowel rule as 어요/아요. 먹다 becomes 먹어라 — 'eat.' 앉다 becomes 앉아라 — 'sit down.'                  |
| 오 + 아라 → 와라<br>o + ara → wara      | the same contraction as 와요    | 맞아요. 오 plus 아라 becomes 와라. Just like 오아요 becomes 와요. Same contraction you already know.                           |
| 하지 마<br>haji ma                    | Don't do it.                  | Now the third one — 'don't.' The casual prohibition is 지 마. 하지 마 — 'don't do it.' 가지 마 — 'don't go.'              |
| 걱정하지 마<br>geokjeonghaji ma         | Don't worry.                  | 지 마 attaches to any verb stem. 걱정하지 마 — 'don't worry.' It's the casual form of 하지 마세요.                            |
| 하다 → 해라<br>hada → haera            | do it! (irregular)            | 네, 완벽해요. 하다 is irregular in the command — it becomes 해라, not 하아라. Memorize that one.                              |
| 야 + 웃는 톤<br>ya + unneun ton        | 'hey' + a smiling tone        | 정확해요. 야 and a smile turn a command into an invitation. Same words, completely different feeling.                  |



## Grammar / Structure Notes

### -냐? / -어라 / -지 마

-냐? / -어라 / -지 마 — ask / command / forbid — casual

Banmal endings, used with close friends and juniors

### 친한 사이에서만

친한 사이에서만 — only with close relationships

Never to elders, bosses, or strangers

### 밥 먹었냐?

밥 + 먹었 + 냐? — Did you eat (a meal)?

Let's show it. The casual question ending is 냐. 밥 먹었냐? — 'Did you eat?' The polite version would be 밥 먹었어요?

### 어디 가냐?

어디 + 가 + 냐? — Where are you going?

One more. 어디 가냐? — 'Where are you going?' You take the verb 가다 and add 냐.

### 빨리 와라

빨리 + 와 + 라 — Come quickly.

정확해요. Now the command. The casual command ending is 어라 or 아라. 빨리 와라 — 'Come quickly.'

## Pronunciation Loop

| Phrase | How to practice |
|--------|-----------------|
| 밥 먹었냐? | bap meogeonnya? |
| 빨리 와라  | ppalli wara     |

## Self-Check

- 1 Say 반말 의문·명령 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                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| -어 / -지 / -자 / -래?<br>Casual Sentence Endings<br>Among Friends | B1 Colloquial: compare -어 / -지 / -자 / -래?<br>with this lesson so the boundary becomes<br>clearer. | Open lesson<br><a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-COLLOQ-BAN-001">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-COLLOQ-BAN-001</a> |
| 말 놓을까요<br>Switching to Casual<br>Banmal with Friends           | A2 Colloquial: compare 말 놓을까요 with this<br>lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.                | Open lesson<br><a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-COLLOQ-BAN-001">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-COLLOQ-BAN-001</a> |
| 야<br>친구를 부르고 가리키는 반말                                           | A2 Colloquial: compare 야 with this lesson so<br>the boundary becomes clearer.                     | Open lesson<br><a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-COLLOQ-BAN-003">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-COLLOQ-BAN-003</a> |
| 응 / 어 / 아니 / 몰라<br>Casual Yes, No, and 'I<br>Dunno'            | A2 Colloquial: compare 응 / 어 / 아니 / 몰라<br>with this lesson so the boundary becomes<br>clearer.    | Open lesson<br><a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-COLLOQ-BAN-002">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-COLLOQ-BAN-002</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.