



Korean Ladder Study Note

-(으)ㄹ 리가 없다 / -(으)ㄹ 수밖에 없다

Emphatic Negation and Inevitability

Level	Topic	Focus
B2 · Upper-Intermediate TOPIK 4	Grammar Negation	-(으)ㄹ 리가 없다 / -(으)ㄹ 수밖에 없다 Emphatic Negation and Inevitability

Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

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

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bViJYxssqs>

Visit koreanladder.com for all free lessons

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

Core Idea

Okay, real problem. My friend is never late, and someone says he skipped class. I want 'there's no way,' but I keep saying 갈 수밖에 없어요 — and that sounds like I have no choice but to go.

좋은 혼란이에요. 영어의 no way랑 no choice는 느낌이 다른데, 한국어는 패턴도 완전히 달라요. In English, one rejects a claim, and the other accepts a forced action.

오늘의 핵심은 두 패턴이에요. 을 리가 없다, and 을 수밖에 없다. One says impossible. One says inevitable.

먼저 을 리가 없어요. In English, this means there's no way that blank happens. You push back hard on an idea.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	우산이 없네요. —	There's no umbrella.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	비가 이렇게 오면 택시를 탈 수밖에 없어요. —	When it rains like this, we have no choice but to take a taxi.
Hana	그런데 준호 씨가 우산을 안 챙겼을 리가 없어요. —	But there's no way you didn't pack an umbrella.
Junho	맞아요. 집에 두고 온 게 분명해요. 그래서 지금 살 수밖에 없네요. —	Right. I clearly left it at home. So I have no choice but to buy one now.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
-(으)ㄹ 리가 없다 / -(으)ㄹ 수밖에 없다 -(eu)l ri-ga eop-da / -(eu)l su-bak-ke eop-da	there's no way that... / have no choice but to...	오늘의 핵심은 두 패턴이에요. 을 리가 없다, and 을 수밖에 없다. One says impossible. One says inevitable.
-(으)ㄹ 리가 없다 -(eu)l ri-ga eop-da	there's no way that... / it can't be that...	먼저 을 리가 없어요. In English, this means there's no way that blank happens. You push back hard on an idea.
그럴 리가 없어요 geu-reol ri-ga eop-seo-yo	There's no way.	So 그럴 리가 없어요 is like, that story has zero chance. I'm not guessing — I'm rejecting it.
어간 + -(으)ㄹ 리가 없다 eogan + -(eu)l ri-ga eop-da	stem + prospective ending + 'there's no reason/way'	형태는 간단해요. 동사나 형용사 어간에 으 ㄹ을 붙이고, 리가 없다로 끝나요. If the stem ends in a consonant, use 을. If it ends in a vowel, or in 리을, use ㄹ.
먹을 리가 없어요 / 갈 리가 없어요 meog-eul ri-ga eop-seo-yo / gal ri-ga eop-seo-yo	There's no way someone eats / goes	Got it. 먹다 becomes 먹을 리가 없어요. 가다 becomes 갈 리가 없어요. Same blank-looking slot, but the job is disbelief.
-(으)ㄹ 수밖에 없다 -(eu)l su-bak-ke eop-da	have no choice but to... / can't help but...	이제 반대쪽이에요. 을 수밖에 없어요. In English, this means have no choice but to blank, or can't help but blank.
탈 수밖에 없어요 tal su-bak-ke eop-seo-yo	have no choice but to take (it)	Ah — 탈 수밖에 없어요 isn't 'there's no way I take a taxi.' It's the opposite energy. The situation corners me into the taxi.
어간 + -(으)ㄹ 수밖에 없다 eogan + -(eu)l su-bak-ke eop-da	stem + prospective ending + 'no choice but'	형태는 리가 없다와 같아요. 어간 뒤에 으 ㄹ, then 수밖에 없다. Same attachment, different meaning.



Grammar / Structure Notes

-(으)ㄹ 리가 없다 / -(으)ㄹ 수밖에 없다

-(으)ㄹ 리가 없다 / -(으)ㄹ 수밖에 없다 — there's no way that... / have no choice but to...

Same looking blank slot — opposite jobs.

-(으)ㄹ 리가 없다

-(으)ㄹ 리가 없다 — there's no way that... / it can't be that...

Strong disbelief. You reject the claim.

그럴 리가 없어요.

그럴 + 리 + 가 + 없어요. — There's no way that's true.

기본 문장이에요. 그럴 리가 없어요. That means there's no way that's true.

그럴 리가 없어요

그럴 리가 없어요 — There's no way.

Classic pushback line.

준호 씨가 거짓말할 리가 없어요.

준호 씨 + 가 + 거짓말할 + 리 + 가 + 없어요. — There's no way Junho would lie.

사람에도 붙어요. 준호 씨가 거짓말할 리가 없어요. In English, there's no way Junho would lie.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
그럴 리가 없어요	geu-reol ri-ga eop-seo-yo
갈 수밖에 없어요	gal su-bak-ke eop-seo-yo
그럴 리가 없어요. 갈 수밖에 없어요.	geu-reol ri-ga eop-seo-yo / gal su-bak-ke eop-seo-yo

Self-Check

- 1 Say -(으)ㄹ 리가 없다 / -(으)ㄹ 수밖에 없다 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
-지 않아요 / -지 못해요 The Long Negative Forms	A2 Grammar: compare -지 않아요 / -지 못해요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-GRAM-NEG-001
안 Two Ways to Say 'No/Can't'	A1 Grammar: compare 안 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-GRAM-NEG-001
-(으)ㄴ / 는 / (으)ㄹ 것 같다 Expressing Guesses and Impressions	B2 Grammar: compare -(으)ㄴ / 는 / (으)ㄹ 것 같다 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-GRAM-MOD-001
-(으)ㄹ수록 The More X, the More Y	B2 Grammar: compare -(으)ㄹ수록 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-GRAM-CON-001

My Notes

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