



Korean Ladder Study Note

구개음화

When 같이 Becomes 가치

Level	Topic	Focus
B2 · Upper-Intermediate TOPIK 4	Pronunciation Consonants	구개음화 When 같이 Becomes 가치

Study Links

[Open this lesson on Korean Ladder](https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-PRON-CNS-001)

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

[Watch the full video on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2KS3CTHCCM)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2KS3CTHCCM>

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Core Idea

Okay, real talk. I spelled it 같이 — g, a, t, i — but every Korean person I hear says 가치. Did I learn it wrong?

Same. And 굳이 — I expect 구디, but it comes out 구지. It feels like the spelling is lying to me.

You learned it right. The spelling keeps the original letter on purpose. What changes is only the sound. 이 규칙의 이름은 구개음화예요. In English, it's called palatalization.

Here is the core. When a word ends in ㅏ or ㅓ, and the next part starts with 이 or 히, the sound slides forward in the mouth. ㅏ becomes ㅓ, and ㅓ becomes ㅕ.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	준호 씨, 내일 해돋이 같이 봐요. —	Junho, let's watch the sunrise together tomorrow.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	좋아요. 굳이 일찍 안 가도 돼요? —	Sounds good. Do we even need to go that early?
Hana	네, 문이 일찍 닫히니까 서둘러요. —	Yes, the gate closes early, so let's hurry.
Junho	알겠어요. 같이 가요. —	Got it. Let's go together.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
구개음화 gugaeumhwa	palatalization — a sound change, not a spelling change	You learned it right. The spelling keeps the original letter on purpose. What changes is only the sound. 이 규칙의 이름은 구개음화예요. In English, it's called palatalization.
ㄷ, ㅌ + 이/히 → ㅈ, ㅊ d, t + i/hi → j, ch	Final ㄷ/ㅌ before 이 or 히 turn into ㅈ/ㅊ	Here is the core. When a word ends in ㄷ or ㅌ, and the next part starts with 이 or 히, the sound slides forward in the mouth. ㄷ becomes ㅈ, and ㅌ becomes ㅊ.
입천장 (palate) ipcheonjang	The sound moves toward the palate to match 이/히	Why does this happen? 이 소리는 입천장에서 나요. The vowel 이 is made high near the roof of your mouth — the palate. So ㄷ and ㅌ get pulled up to meet it, and become ㅈ and ㅊ.
같이 gat-i → ga-chi	together (sound: 가치)	Let's hear real examples. 같이 — written with 디귤... 아니요, 티을. The ㅌ meets 이, so we say 가치. 같이 가요 — let's go together.
굳이 gud-i → gu-ji	needlessly, going out of one's way (sound: 구지)	다음은 굳이. The ㄷ meets 이, so it becomes 구지. 굳이 안 해도 돼요 — you don't have to go out of your way.
해돋이 haedod-i → haedo-ji	sunrise (sound: 해도지)	Now a trickier one — 해돋이, the sunrise. Again ㄷ plus 이 gives 지. We say 해도지. 새해 해돋이 — the New Year's sunrise.
이/히가 무엇이든 규칙은 같아요 i/hi-ga mueosideun gyuchigeun gateoyo	Whatever the 이/히 is, the rule is the same	맞아요. 이/히 가 무엇이든 규칙은 똑같아요. Whether the 이 is a particle, an ending, or built into the word — if ㄷ or ㅌ sits right before it, the change still happens.
ㅌ → ㅊ, ㄷ → ㅈ t → ch, d → j	Aspirated stays aspirated (ㅌ → ㅊ); plain stays plain (ㄷ → ㅈ)	Okay let me reason it out. ㅌ plus 이 climbs up to ㅊ. ㄷ plus 이 climbs up to ㅈ. So the t-family goes to ch, the d-family goes to j. Same height, two doors.



Grammar / Structure Notes

구개음화

구개음화 — palatalization — a sound change, not a spelling change

The letters stay; only the pronunciation shifts.

ㄷ, ㅌ + 이/히 → ㅈ, ㅊ

ㄷ, ㅌ + 이/히 → ㅈ, ㅊ — Final ㄷ/ㅌ before 이 or 히 turn into ㅈ/ㅊ

Only before 이 or 히 — not before other vowels.

입천장 (palate)

입천장 (palate) — The sound moves toward the palate to match 이/히

기역·디귤 stay low; 지읒·치읓 sit higher — closer to 이.

같이

갈 + 이 — together (sound: 가치)

Let's hear real examples. 같이 — written with 디귤... 아니요, 티을. The ㅌ meets 이, so we say 가치. 같이 가요 — let's go together.

굳이

굳 + 이 — needlessly, going out of one's way (sound: 구지)

다음은 굳이. The ㄷ meets 이, so it becomes 구지. 굳이 안 해도 돼요 — you don't have to go out of your way.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
가치	gat-i
해도지	haedod-i
다치다	dat-hi-da

Self-Check

- 1 Say 구개음화 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
ㄹ 발음 The Korean R/L Sound at the Start and Middle of Words	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㄹ 발음 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-CNS-002
ㅅ Plain and Tense Sibilants	A2 Pronunciation: compare ㅅ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-PRON-CNS-001
ㅋ ㅌ ㅍ Aspirated and Tense Consonants	A1 Pronunciation: compare ㅋ ㅌ ㅍ with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-PRON-CNS-001
비음화 When ㄱ/ㄷ/ㅂ Become ㄴ/ㄹ/ㅁ	B1 Pronunciation: compare 비음화 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-PRON-CNS-001

My Notes

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