



Korean Ladder Study Note

막 / 약간 / 아니 그게

Intensifiers and Hedges in Fast Speech

Level	Topic	Focus
C1 · Advanced TOPIK 5	Colloquial Fillers & Reactions	막 / 약간 / 아니 그게 Intensifiers and Hedges in Fast Speech

Study Links

[Open this lesson on Korean Ladder](https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-COLLOQ-FIL-001)

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-COLLOQ-FIL-001>

[Watch the full video on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6suwKuKQRjw)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6suwKuKQRjw>

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Core Idea

드라마를 보다 보면 누가 이렇게 말해요. 나 막 울었어. 단어는 다 아는데... 막? 이게 뭐 하는 거죠?

Right! I always thought 막 just meant 'just,' like 'just now.' But here it doesn't feel like time at all.

And then there's 약간. My textbook says 'a little,' but my Korean friend drops 약간 into every other sentence.

이건 다 디스코스 마커예요. 막이랑 약간은 말의 색을 입히고, 아니 그게랑 뭐는 생각할 시간을 벌어요. 원어민은 이 말 없이는 대화를 못 해요.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	그 영화 어땠어? —	How was that movie?
Junho	음... 약간 슬펐어. 근데 막 웃기도 했어. —	Hmm... kinda sad. But I also just laughed a lot.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	아 맞아, 나도 막 울다가 약간 민망했어. —	Oh yeah, I just bawled and got a little embarrassed.
Hana	주말에 뭐 했어? —	What did you do this weekend?
Junho	아니 그게... 뭐, 그냥 집에서 막 잤어. —	No wait... well, I just crashed and slept at home.
Hana	약간 부럽다. —	Kinda jealous.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
막 · 약간 · 아니 그게 · 뭐 —	intensify, soften, and stall — the glue of fast speech	이건 다 디스크스 마커예요. 막이랑 약간은 말의 색을 입히고, 아니 그게랑 뭐는 생각할 시간을 벌어요. 원어민은 이 말 없이는 대화를 못 해요.
막 mak	just / like crazy — does the action wildly or recklessly	먼저 막. 막은 '그냥' 또는 '마구'예요. 동작을 마구, 세계, 한꺼번에 하는 느낌이에요. 막 먹었어 — I ate like crazy. 막 울었어 — I just bawled.
막 뛰어갔어 mak ttwioe-gasseo	(I) just ran off — wildly, all at once	들어보세요. 막 뛰어갔어 — I just ran off, full speed, no plan. 막은 그 정신없고 거침없는 에너지를 실어요.
막 = 방식 (manner) —	HOW you do it — wildly, not HOW MUCH	So 막 isn't about the action being BIG — it's about it being WILD? Done recklessly or all at once?
막 먹었어 mak meogeosseo	ate fast and messily — not 'ate a lot'	맞아요. 막 먹었어는 빨리, 정신없이 먹은 거예요. 많이 먹었다는 뜻이 아니에요. 양이 아니라 방식이에요.
완전 ≠ 막 —	완전 = totally (degree) · 막 = recklessly (manner)	완전이랑 비교해 보세요. 완전은 '완전히, 정말'이에요 — 정도예요. 완전 맛있어 — totally delicious. 막 맛있어는 어색해요. 막은 정도를 나타내는 말이 아니거든요.
막 웃다가 막 울었어 mak utdaga mak ureosseo	(I) just laughed and then just bawled	예문 들어볼게요. 어제 막 웃다가 막 울었어 — I just kept laughing, then suddenly bawled. 둘 다 동작이죠.
애들이 막 뛰어다녀요 aedeuri mak ttwioe-danyeoyo	The kids are running around like crazy	또 하나. 애들이 막 뛰어다녀요 — The kids are running around like crazy. 거침없는 움직임이에요.



Grammar / Structure Notes

막 · 약간 · 아니 그게 · 뭐

막 · 약간 · 아니 그게 · 뭐 — intensify, soften, and stall — the glue of fast speech
the meaning lives in the rhythm, not the dictionary

막

막 — just / like crazy — does the action wildly or recklessly
adds unrestrained energy to a verb; it is NOT a degree word like 완전

막 뛰어갔어

막 + 뛰어갔 + 어 — (I) just ran off — wildly, all at once

들어보세요. 막 뛰어갔어 — I just ran off, full speed, no plan. 막은 그 정신없고 거침없는 에너지를 실어요.

막 = 방식 (manner)

막 = 방식 (manner) — HOW you do it — wildly, not HOW MUCH

So 막 isn't about the action being BIG — it's about it being WILD? Done recklessly or all at once?

막 먹었어

막 먹었어 — ate fast and messily — not 'ate a lot'

manner, not amount

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
완전 웃겼는데 약간 슬프기도 했어	wanjeon utgyeonneunde yakgan seulpeugido haesseo

Self-Check

- 1 Say 막 / 약간 / 아니 그게 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
글썩요 / 그러게요 / 아무튼 Hedging and Agreeing Naturally	A2 Colloquial: compare 글썩요 / 그러게요 / 아무튼 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-COLLOQ-FIL-001
네 / 아니요 / 맞아요 Natural Korean Reactions	A1 Colloquial: compare 네 / 아니요 / 맞아요 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A1-COLLOQ-FIL-001
음 / 그러니까 / 뭐랄까 Sounding Natural with Korean Fillers	B1 Colloquial: compare 음 / 그러니까 / 뭐랄까 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-COLLOQ-FIL-001
워라밸 / 금수저 / 갓생 Slang About Life and Society	C1 Colloquial: compare 워라밸 / 금수저 / 갓생 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-COLLOQ-SLG-001

My Notes

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