



## Korean Ladder Study Note

# 꼰대 / 라떼는 말이야 / 갑질

## Slang About Generations and Power

Level	Topic	Focus
C1 · Advanced TOPIK 5	Colloquial Slang	꼰대 / 라떼는 말이야 / 갑질 Slang About Generations and Power

## Study Links

Open this lesson on Korean Ladder

<https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-COLLOQ-SLG-003>

Watch the full video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXPE2dVMS28>

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

<https://www.koreanladder.com>

## Core Idea

Okay, real question. My Korean friend called her boss a 꼰대 and then whispered, 'don't say that out loud.' Why?

Right, and I keep seeing 라떼는 말이야 in memes. Is it really about coffee?

좋은 질문이에요. These are charged words. Today we learn what they mean AND when you can safely say them.

First word. 꼰대 means a condescending older person who lectures you and won't listen. In English, think 'an out-of-touch boomer who knows best.'

## Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Junho	부장님 또 '나 때는 말이야' 시작하셨어요. —	The manager started his 'back in my day' again.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	완전 꼰대 모드네요. —	Total kkondae mode.
Junho	근데 어제는 갑질까지 하셨어요. 너무하셨어요. —	But yesterday he even abused his power. He went too far.
Hana	그건 좀 심했네요. —	That was a bit much.

## Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
꼰대 kkon-dae	a patronizing, lecturing elder	First word. 꼰대 means a condescending older person who lectures you and won't listen. In English, think 'an out-of-touch boomer who knows best.'
라떼는 말이야 ra-tte-neun ma-ri-ya	'Back in my day...' — pun on 나 때 / latte	Next. 라떼는 말이야. It sounds like '나 때는 말이야' — 'back in my day...' 나 때 means 'my time,' and people joke it sounds like 라떼, a latte.
갑질 gap-jil	abuse of power / authority	Exactly. Third word, the heaviest. 갑질 — abuse of power by someone in the stronger position toward someone weaker.
말이야 → 마리아 ma-ri-ya	Slang About Generations and Power	좋아요. Hear how 말이야 became 마리아? That liaison makes you sound natural.
뒤에서 / 친구끼리만 dwie-seo / chin-gu-kki-ri-man	behind their back / only among friends	Because they judge a person's character. 꼰대 and 갑질 accuse someone of being closed-minded or abusive. You'd never say them to that person's face.
농담 ↔ 진지함 nong-dam ↔ jin-ji-ham	joke ↔ seriousness	라떼는 말이야 is lighter — it's a meme, often playful. But 갑질 is serious; it shows up in real news about workplace abuse.
갑질까지 하셨어요 gap-jil-kka-ji ha-syeo-sseo-yo	he even did gapjil (honorific)	좋은 포인트예요. The subject is a superior, so we add the honorific 시 — 하셨어요, 시작하셨어요. The grammar stays respectful even when the content is critical.
농담 vs 비난 nong-dam vs bi-nan	joke vs serious criticism/accusation	Now the key boundary. Don't mix up a light joke with a serious charge. 농담 and 비난 are very different weights.



## Grammar / Structure Notes

### 꼰대

꼰대 — a patronizing, lecturing elder

Originally school slang for a strict teacher/father.

### 라떼는 말이야

라떼는 말이야 — 'Back in my day...' — pun on 나 때 / latte

Mocks 꼰대 who keep saying 나 때는...

### 갑질

갑질 — abuse of power / authority

갑 = the dominant party in a contract; -질 = a nasty repeated act.

### 갑질

갑 + 질 — power-abuse by the dominant side

갑 is the 'A side' in a contract — the boss, the client. -질 is a suffix for a bad, repeated behavior. Together: bullying from above.

### 뒤에서 / 친구끼리만

뒤에서 / 친구끼리만 — behind their back / only among friends

These are gossip-register, not address-register.

## Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
라떼는 마리아	ra-tte-neun ma-ri-ya
라떼는 말이야	ra-tte-neun ma-ri-ya
말이야 → 마리아	ma-ri-ya
부장님 또 '나 때는 말이야' 시작하셨어요.	bu-jang-nim tto 'na ttae-neun ma-ri-ya' si-ja-ka-syeo-sseo-yo
시작하셨어요	si-ja-ka-syeo-sseo-yo

## Self-Check

- 1 Say 꼰대 / 라떼는 말이야 / 갑질 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
위라벨 / 금수저 / 갓생 Slang About Life and Society	C1 Colloquial: compare 위라벨 / 금수저 / 갓생 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson <a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-COLLOQ-SLG-001">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-COLLOQ-SLG-001</a>
점메추 / 별다줄 / 알잘딱 Korean Abbreviation Slang	C1 Colloquial: compare 점메추 / 별다줄 / 알잘딱 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson <a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-COLLOQ-SLG-002">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-COLLOQ-SLG-002</a>
멘붕 / 핵 / 짱 / 꿀팁 Everyday Casual Slang	B1 Colloquial: compare 멘붕 / 핵 / 짱 / 꿀팁 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson <a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-COLLOQ-SLG-001">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B1-COLLOQ-SLG-001</a>
인싸 / 아싸 / 갑분싸 / 꿀잼 Trendy Korean Internet Slang	B2 Colloquial: compare 인싸 / 아싸 / 갑분싸 / 꿀잼 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson <a href="https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-COLLOQ-SLG-002">https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-B2-COLLOQ-SLG-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.