



Korean Ladder Study Note

이모 / 사장님 / 기사님

Kinship & Job Titles for Strangers

Level	Topic	Focus
C1 · Advanced TOPIK 5	Honorifics Titles & Address	이모 / 사장님 / 기사님 Kinship & Job Titles for Strangers

Study Links

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

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

[Watch the full video on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYhw95MeZv4)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYhw95MeZv4>

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

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Core Idea

Okay, real question. In a Korean restaurant, how do I get the server's attention? Do I just say 'excuse me'?

Right — back home I'd just say 'hey' or wave. That can't be the Korean move.

좋은 질문이에요. In Korean, we often borrow a family word or a job word to call someone we don't know. It feels close, not cold.

We call this 호칭. In English, a term of address — the word you use to flag someone and show respect at the same time.

Conversation Snapshot

Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	사장님, 이 사과 얼마예요? —	Boss, how much are these apples?
Junho	세 개에 오천 원이에요. —	Three for five thousand won.



Speaker	Korean	Meaning
Hana	그럼 여섯 개 주세요. —	Then I'll take six, please.
Junho	네, 감사합니다. —	Sure, thank you.
Hana	기사님, 서울역까지 가 주세요. —	Driver, to Seoul Station, please.
Junho	네, 알겠습니다. —	Yes, got it.
Hana	기사님, 좀 천천히 가 주세요. —	Driver, please go a bit slower.
Junho	그렇게요. —	I'll do that.

Vocabulary & Useful Expressions

Word	Meaning	Example
이모 imo	auntie (mom's sister) — used warmly for an older woman	좋은 질문이에요. In Korean, we often borrow a family word or a job word to call someone we don't know. It feels close, not cold.
호칭 hoching	term of address — what you call someone	We call this 호칭. In English, a term of address — the word you use to flag someone and show respect at the same time.
사장님 sajangnim	(respected) boss/owner	님 is the magic piece. 님은 존경을 더해요. In English, 님 adds respect — it turns a plain job word into a polite title.
이모 = 따뜻함 / 사장님 = 예의 imo = ttatteutham / sajangnim = ye-ui	이모 = warmth · 사장님 = politeness	맞아요. The family words feel warm and close. The job-plus-님 words feel respectful and a little more neutral.
저기요 jeogiyo	Excuse me — the neutral, always-safe attention-getter	Good instinct. At a tiny noodle place, 이모 is perfect. At a fancy restaurant or any business, stay safe with 사장님 or 저기요.
잘 모르겠으면 → 저기요 jal moreugesseumyeon → jeogiyo	If you're not sure → 저기요	저기요 is your safety net. 저기요는 안전해요. In English, 저기요 is the polite, neutral way when you're unsure which title fits.



Word	Meaning	Example
사장님 = 가게 주인 sajangnim = gage juin	사장님 = the shop's owner	들으셨죠? I opened with 사장님, not '저기요', because I could see she owns the stall. The title flatters and respects at once.
세워 주세요 sewo juseyo	Kinship & Job Titles for Strangers	좋아요. 기사 was clear. One tweak — 세워 is se-wo, two beats, so the driver hears it cleanly. Try once more.

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Grammar / Structure Notes

이모

이모 — auntie (mom's sister) — used warmly for an older woman

fictive kinship: a family word for a stranger

호칭

호칭 — term of address — what you call someone

Choosing it well signals social distance.

이모, 여기 김치 좀 더 주세요.

이모, 여기 김치 좀 더 주세요. — Auntie, some more kimchi here, please.

warm, casual, common in mom-and-pop diners

사장님, 이거 얼마예요?

사장 + 님 + , + 이거 + 얼마 + 예요 + ? — Boss, how much is this?

Next, the job one: 사장님. 사장 means boss or owner, and 님 is the honorific tag. You use it for whoever runs the shop.

사장님

사장 + 님 — (respected) boss/owner

님 is the magic piece. 님은 존경을 더해요. In English, 님 adds respect — it turns a plain job word into a polite title.

Pronunciation Loop

Phrase	How to practice
기사님, 여기서 세워 주세요.	gisanim, yeogiseo sewo juseyo.
세워 주세요	sewo juseyo
이모, 물 좀 주세요.	imo, mul jom juseyo.
이모 = 친근함	imo = chingeunham

Self-Check

- 1 Say 이모 / 사장님 / 기사님 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
님 / 씨 Korean Titles and Address	A2 Honorifics: compare 님 / 씨 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-A2-HON-ADR-001
모시다 / 올리다 / 말씀 올리다 Elevated Humble Vocabulary	C1 Honorifics: compare 모시다 / 올리다 / 말씀 올리다 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-HON-HUM-001
압존법 When to Lower Honorifics in Front of a Higher Superior	C1 Honorifics: compare 압존법 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-HON-SUB-001
하계체 The Familiar Speech Level Elders Use	C1 Honorifics: compare 하계체 with this lesson so the boundary becomes clearer.	Open lesson https://www.koreanladder.com/lesson.html?id=KOR-C1-HON-LVL-001

My Notes

Free Korean lessons, one rung at a time. This PDF, the website, and the video lessons are free for personal study.