

**Strategies
for
Communicating
in
Korean**

In Jung Cho & Danbee Kim

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for
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in
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To our parents

Audio files for this book are available at <http://talking2koreans.com>

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INTRODUCTION

Developing Communication Strategies

When it comes to language learning, people often think about the study of language systems, such as memorising new words, learning grammar rules and new writing systems. However, language learning involves much more than just studying vocabulary and grammar rules. Language and culture are deeply connected with each other and are inseparable. For example, Koreans use different levels of speech (e.g. honorific/polite/casual styles of speech), depending on the relationship between the speaker and the listener.

In addition to the study of the language systems and understanding of culture, it is important for you to also develop communication strategies. These strategies will help you enhance the effectiveness of your communication by bridging the gap in your linguistic and cultural knowledge. These strategies include the ability to:

- say things in different ways;
- guess which words to use;
- utilise contextual cues;
- interpret and produce non-verbal expressions, and so on

Many of you probably feel quite challenged in expressing your thoughts in Korean due to your limited knowledge of the Korean language. However, you may be pleasantly surprised at how much you are capable of communicating in Korean with your current knowledge of Korean, only if you would just give it a good try. Moreover, by employing these strategies appropriately you will be able to further increase your communication ability.

Most of you are already using some of these communication strategies (mostly unconsciously) when communicating in your first language. However, with learning a foreign language, it becomes important that you are consciously aware of these strategies and make a deliberate effort to interpret meaning and to deliver messages.

To the Student

The more you use Korean in meaningful situations, the more quickly you will improve your Korean. Using language 'actively' is essential to your learning process. That is, you learn by doing and by trying out language, through trial and error. Regardless of your Korean level, you need strategies that will help you to compensate for language which you have not yet fully grasped.

The communication strategies presented in this book may be used for self-study purposes, by any student whose Korean proficiency is at or higher than a level which is achieved with 100 contact hours of language learning in formal learning situations.

The exercises in this book are also good for learning vocabulary and improving listening skills. You will be able to infer and guess the meaning of unknown words from context or the given information.

To the Teacher

Research shows that many Korean language teachers feel the need to teach communication strategies to their students but find it to be challenging due to the dearth of teaching or learning resources in Korean communication strategies. Also, there are very few Korean textbooks that explicitly teach communication strategies. This book aims to bridge this gap between the teachers' needs and the reality.

Furthermore, teachers may find it helpful to adopt the communication strategies discussed in this book in their classroom, when explaining new vocabulary or expressions to their students. This can be a particularly effective way of teaching communication strategies, considering that many students learn by observing and imitating the ways in which their teachers communicate.

Most expressions in this book are based on authentic expressions used by native Korean speakers for communication strategies. Naturally they are of spoken style, not of written style.

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About Symbols Used in this Book

These symbols are designed to help you learn Korean grammatical items more effectively. At the beginning, you may need some time to familiarise yourself with these symbols.

Symbol	Meaning	Example
+(a/b)	This symbol is used for the adjective and verb endings which follow the 'last vowel' rule. When the last vowel in a preceding stem/word is 'ㅏ' or 'ㅑ', the element 'a' should be used. Otherwise, the element 'b' should be used.	+(아/어)요 +(아/어)서
()	Parentheses without a slash inside means the part inside them can be omitted without causing any significant change in its overall meaning.	어디(에)서
+{a/b}	This symbol is used for the grammatical items which follow the 'consonant or vowel' rule. That is, when a preceding word ends in a consonant, the first element 'a' is used, and when it ends in a vowel, the second element 'b' is used.	+{이/가} +{을/를} +{을/르} 때
+{a}	This symbol is also used for the grammatical items which follow the 'consonant or vowel' rule. That is, the first element 'a' is used only when a preceding word ends in a consonant.	+{이}랑 +{으}세요
a/b	The backward slash used without parentheses or braces means that 'a' and 'b' are interchangeable.	+말(이)야/뜻(이)야
a(⇒b)	This symbol is used for contractions. That is, 'a' is the contracted form of 'b'.	근데(⇒그런데)
a(≒b)	This symbol is used to show standard spellings. That is, 'a' is a spoken variation of 'b'.	니(≒네) 여자친구

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

SECTION ONE

When You Do Not Know the Word or Expression

1. When you do not know the word or expression

One of the most effective strategies for getting your message across when you do not know a certain word is to use a general category word ('superordinate'), followed by additional information that describe the specific attributes about the object that you are explaining. Superordinate is a term that is used to describe a word or category with a more general or broader meaning than something else.

For instance, '과일 (fruit)' is a superordinate of '사과 (apples)', '포도 (grapes)', '딸기 (strawberries)' and '오렌지 (oranges)'. The four specific names of fruit here are 'subordinate' terms.

The most common sentence pattern for this strategy is as follows:

'category' word +인데 'specific' attributes/information about object (<i>superordinate</i>)
--

One example would be saying "돈인데 동그랗게 생겼어/생긴 거야. (It's money, and is round-shaped)" when you do not know the exact word for '동전 (coins)'. You can make your message even clearer by also using body language, e.g., making a circle with your fingers.

Here, '돈' is a superordinate of '동전 (coins)'. Other subordinates include '지폐 (paper money)', '현금 (cash)' and so on.

Consider the example below: How would you get your message across if you did not know the Korean word for 'strawberries'?

Before you read the explanations, it is important that you try and say the following on your own first, without referring to the dictionary or other learning materials. This will help to identify the gaps in your communication strategies, which will lead to finding more effective learning strategies for you.

It is strongly recommended that you do this every time you come across the practice example dialogues in this document.

[Example]

A: What's your favourite fruit?

B: I love **strawberries**.

If you do not know the word '딸기(strawberries)', but you know some other words, such as '과일(fruit)', '작아 (small)' and '빨간색 (red)', you can get your message across by saying "과일인데 작고 빨간색이야 (It's a fruit, and it's small and red)". Here, the general category word '과일 (fruit)' would be the superordinate, with '작고 빨간색 (small and red)' being the words that describe the specific attributes about '딸기 (strawberries)'.

Let's examine further in the next section how we can use superordinates and subordinates to explain the words you do not know.

1.1 Use Superordinates and Subordinates

If you do not know how to say a specific word, but you know a word that is a superordinate of that word, you may still be able to get your message across quite effectively.

Consider the example below: What superordinate could you use if you did not know the words for ‘a pair of trousers and a sweater’?

[Example 1]

A: What did you do on the weekend?

B: I did some shopping.

A: Cool. Did you buy anything?

B: Yeah, I bought a **pair of trousers and a sweater**.

If you do not know the words for specific clothing items, such as ‘a pair of trousers and a sweater (바지하고 스웨터)’, but you know the superordinate term ‘옷 (clothes)’, you can get your overall message across by saying “옷 좀 샀어 (I bought some clothes).” instead of saying “바지하고 스웨터 샀어”.

Conversely, if you do not know the word 옷 (clothes) but know some specific words, such as 바지 (a pair of trousers), 스웨터 (a sweater) or 치마 (a skirt), you can say “바지하고 스웨터하고 치마 **이런 거** 샀어 (I bought some **stuff like** a pair of trousers, a sweater and a skirt)”. You can replace ‘이런 거’ with ‘같은 거’ with very little difference in meaning.

Consider Example 2 below: What subordinates could you use to get your meaning across if you did not know the word for ‘vegetables’?

[Example 2]

A: What did you get from the grocery store?

B: I got some **vegetables**.

If you do not know how to say ‘채소 (vegetables)’ but you know some other specific words such as ‘양파 (onions)’ and ‘당근 (carrots)’, you can say “양파하고 당근 같은 거 샀어 (I bought some **stuff like** onions and carrots)”.

In addition, if you know some subordinates, but not sure about the corresponding superordinate, you can use the following question pattern to ask the other person:

‘하위어 1’+하고, ‘하위어 2’+하고, 이런 거를 (통틀어서) 뭐라고 그러지?
‘Subordinate 1’ and ‘Subordinate 2’, what do you call things like this (as a whole)?

Some examples of superordinates are words such as, 음식 (food), 과일 (fruit), 채소 (vegetable), 음료수 (drinks/beverage), 동물 (animal), 곤충 (insects), etc. However, if you do not know these ‘specific’ superordinates, you could use ‘general’ superordinates, which are broader, all-purpose words, such as ‘먹는 거 (something you eat)’, ‘마시는 거 (something you drink)’, ‘타는 거 (something you get on/ride/take)’ and so on. For example, when explaining ‘팝콘 (popcorn)’, you can say “**먹는 건데** 영화 볼 때 많이 먹어 (**It’s something you eat**, and you eat this often when watching a movie)”, and say “**타는 건데** 아파트하고 큰 빌딩에 많은 거야 (**It’s something you get on**, and you see this a lot in apartments and big buildings)” when explaining ‘엘리베이터 (elevator)’.

Exercise 1: Match the Superordinates and Subordinates

You will see in the dialogues below that two friends are playing a word-guessing game. Friend 'A' is providing a list of subordinates and friend 'B' is guessing the appropriate superordinates.

You should first try and guess the superordinates by yourself, without referring to the list of words given at the end of this exercise. (You can also act out this dialogue in pairs as a speaking exercise, to help improve your communication skills.)

(1) A: 물, 주스, 커피, 홍차 이런 거를 통틀어서 뭐라고 그러지?

B: 음료수 or 마시는 거.

(2) A: 아버지, 어머니, 형, 누나, 오빠, 언니, 동생 이런 거를 통틀어서 뭐라 그러지?

B: _____.

(3) A: 사과, 배, 포도, 복숭아, 수박 같은 거를 통틀어서 뭐라고 하지?

B: _____.

(4) A: 침대, 소파, 의자, 테이블, 책장 같은 거를 통틀어서 뭐라 하지?

B: _____.

(5) A: 연예인, 요리사, 의사, 교수, 디자이너, 엔지니어 이런 거를 통틀어서 뭐라 그래?

B: _____.

(6) A: 호주, 말레이시아, 프랑스, 미국, 중국 같은 거를 통틀어서
뭐라고 해?

B: _____.

(7) A: 하양다, 까망다, 노랑다, 빨강다, 파랑다 이런 거를 뭐라 그러지?

B: _____.

(8) A: 구두, 운동화, 샌들, 부츠 이런 거를 뭐라고 하지?

B: _____.

a.	색(깔)	b.	음료수/마시는 거	c.	직업	d.	나라
e.	과일	f.	신발/신는 거	g.	가구	h.	가족

Exercise 2: Match the Superordinates and Subordinates

You will see below a list of subordinates. For each set of subordinates, write down the most appropriate superordinate. You should first try and write down the superordinates by yourself, without referring to the list of words given at the end of this exercise. (You can also make this exercise into dialogues, similar to those in Exercise 1.)

	Subordinates	Superordinates
(1)	블라우스, 바지, 치마, 티셔츠	옷 or 입는 거
(2)	개, 고양이, 소, 돼지, 캥거루, 침팬지, 고릴라, 오랑우탄	
(3)	배추, 고추, 당근, 감자, 상추, 호박, 파, 마늘, 가지, 버섯	
(4)	노래, 가수, 작곡가, 피아노, 오페라, K-pop	
(5)	야구, 축구, 테니스, 골프, 배구, 농구	
(6)	비, 눈, 바람, 하늘, 우산, 태풍, 일기예보	
(7)	모기, 파리, 나비, 개미, 벌	
(8)	게, 생선, 새우, 굴, 조개, 김	

a.	옷/입는 거	b.	음악	c.	스포츠	d.	날씨
e.	동물	f.	곤충	g.	야채/채소	h.	해산물

Exercise 3: Match the Superordinates and Subordinates

You will see below a list of subordinates. For each set of subordinates, write down the most appropriate superordinate. You should first try and write down the superordinates by yourself, without referring to the list of words given at the end of this exercise. (You can also make this exercise into dialogues, similar to those in Exercise 1.)

	Subordinates	Superordinates
(1)	닭, 오리, 펭귄, 제비, 타조	
(2)	수업, 숙제, 학생, 선생님, 방학	
(3)	피아노, 바이올린, 첼로, 기타	
(4)	의사, 환자, 암, 스트레스, 약	
(5)	나무, 꽃, 풀, 버섯	
(6)	스모그, 기후변화, 재활용, 쓰레기	
(7)	세모, 네모, 동그라미, 길쭉하다	
(8)	재미있다, 슬프다, 기쁘다, 행복하다	

a.	학교	b.	건강	c.	모양	d.	감정
e.	식물	f.	환경	g.	악기	h.	새

1.2 Use Comparison/Analogy

When you do not know a certain word, you can get your message across by making a comparison or analogy to something else that is similar. One of the most commonly used sentence pattern is '**Noun 비슷한 거** (*something similar to Noun*)'.

Consider the example below: How would you explain the word 'sunflower' by comparing it to something that is similar to it?

[Example]

A: What did you get from the market?

B: I got some **sunflowers**.

Even if you do not know the word for 'sunflower (**해바라기**)', you can try and get your message across by comparing it to the 'sun (**태양**)' and say "**꽃인데 태양 비슷한 거** (It's a flower, and **similar to the sun**)". Also, note that the superordinate '**꽃** (flower)' greatly increases the effectiveness of making your message clearer.

Conventional or literal analogical comparison is more effective than novel analogical comparisons. Furthermore, although there are analogical comparisons that are universal across cultures (e.g. cherry lips **앵두 같은 입술**), there are also culture-specific comparisons, which you will need to learn separately. For example, if you say **죽은 물고기 같은 악수** (dead fish handshake), most Koreans will not be able to understand its meaning right away. In Korean, they just say **힘없는 악수** (weak and limp handshake).

The sentence patterns (and their examples) that are frequently used for comparison and analogy are provided in the following page.

Sentence Patterns for Comparison and Analogy

	Sentence Patterns	Examples
(1)	N+하고 비슷해 N+{이}랑 비슷해	- 염소: 음메 음메 하는데 양 이랑 비슷해 . (Goat: It goes, “bleat, bleat”, and similar to a sheep.)
	N+하고 비슷한 거 N+{이}랑 비슷한 거	- 뿔: 사슴 머리에 있는데 나뭇가지 하고 비슷한 거야 . (Horn: It’s on a deer’s head, and similar to a branch.)
(2)	N+처럼 생겼어	- 풍차: 선풍기 처럼 생겼는데 네덜란드에 많아. (Windmill: It looks like a fan, and you see these a lot in the Netherlands.)
	N+처럼 생긴 거	- 불가사리: 바다에 있는 건데 별 같이 생긴 거야. (Starfish: It’s in the sea and looks like a star.)
(3)	N 같아	- 고구마: 감자 같애 (≠ 같아). (Sweet potato: It’s like a potato.)
	N 같은 거	- 블루베리: 포도 같은 거 . 보라색이야. (Blueberries: It’s something like grapes. It’s purple.)
	N 같은 데	- 정글: 더운 데야. 숲속 같은 데 를 뭐라 그래? (Jungle: It’s a hot place. What do you call somewhere like a forest?)

Exercise 4: Fill in the Blanks with Appropriate Words

You will see in the dialogues below that two friends are playing a word-guessing game. You should first try and guess the words appropriate for the blanks by yourself, without referring to the list of words given at the end of this exercise. (You can also act out this dialogue in pairs as a speaking exercise, to help improve your communication skills.)

(1) A: 꽃인데 노란색이야.

B: 노란색 꽃?

A: 어, 태양처럼 생겼어.

B: 해바라기.

(2) A: 편지 같은 건데 컴퓨터로 보내.

B: _____.

(3) A: 동물인데 길어.

B: 긴 동물?

A: 어, 길고 지렁이 같아.

B: _____.

(4) A: “음메 음메” 하는데 염소가 아니야. 비슷해.

B: _____.

(5) A: 스테이크 먹을 때 이걸로 찍어 먹어. 창 같이 생긴 거.

B: _____.

(6) A: 이건 스포츠인데(→스포츠인데) 배드민턴이랑 비슷한 거야.

B: _____.

(7) A: 고릴라하고 비슷한 거.

B: 침팬지?

A: 아니, 그거 말고.

B: _____.

(8) A: 굴 비슷한데 더 커.

B: _____.

a.	뱀	b.	양	c.	해바라기	d.	테니스
e.	포크	f.	이메일	g.	오랑우탄	h.	오렌지

1.3 Use Opposite Words/Negative Comparison

The particle +**말고** can be used with a noun to describe an opposite word or the concept of exclusion. If you say, ‘N+**말고**’, it literally translates as ‘not N but (something else)’. Firstly, you can use N+**말고** when you do not know how to say the opposite word of something, for instance, if you know the word for ‘grandfather (할아버지)’ but cannot remember how to say ‘grandmother (할머니)’, you can ask your friend, “**할아버지** 말고...? (not grandfather, but...?)”, to which your friend will probably answer you with, “**할머니**? (grandmother?)”. You will also find N+**말고** helpful when you do not know how to say a particular word, but you know some other words that are related to that word. For instance, if you do not know the word for ‘nurse (간호사)’ but know the word for ‘doctor (의사)’, you might try and describe 간호사 by saying, “**의사** **말고** 옆에서 도와 주는 사람 (not doctor but someone who is helping at the side)”.

Consider the example below: If you did not know the word ‘coin’ in Korean, how would you use +**말고** to get your message across?

[Example 1]

A: Do you have any **coins**?

B: Umm... No, I don't.

Even if you do not know how to say ‘**동전** (coins)’ in Korean, you can still get your message across as long as you know a few other simple words like ‘**돈** (money)’ and ‘**종이** (paper)’. For instance, you can say “**돈** 좀 있어? **종이돈** **말고** (Do you have some money, **but not** paper money)”. In addition, you can also use body language, by making a circle with your fingers to show that you are talking about ‘coins’.

Consider another example: How would you say someone is ugly, when you do not know the actual word for ‘ugly’?

[Example 2]

A: Jihun's girlfriend is **so ugly**.

B: I know!

If you do not know how to say 'so ugly (진짜/정말/너무 못생겼다)' in Korean, but you know the word 'pretty (예쁘다)', you can say "지훈이 여자 친구 **진짜 안 예쁘다** (Jihun's girlfriend is really not pretty)" instead of "지훈이 여자 친구 **진짜 못생겼다** (Jihun's girlfriend is really ugly)". Note that the adjective '예쁘다' is mainly used to describe females, and '잘생겼다 (handsome)' to describe males.

Exercise 5: Fill in the Blanks with Appropriate Words

You will see in the dialogues below that two friends are playing a word-guessing game. You should first try and guess the words appropriate for the blanks by yourself, without referring to the list of words given at the end of this exercise. (You can also act out this dialogue in pairs as a speaking exercise, to help improve your communication skills.)

(1) A: 결혼하고 나이 들면...

B: 아저씨?

A: 아저씨말고.

B: _____.

(2) A: 시원한 바람이 나와.

B: 선풍기?

A: 선풍기말고.

B: _____.

(3) A: 꽃에 날아다니는 벌레.

B: 벌?

A: 그거말고 하나 더 있잖아.

B: _____.

(4) A: 남자말고? 남자 반대말?

B: _____.

(5) A: 어른말고?

B: 뭐? 어른말고?

A: 어른 반대말.

B: _____.

(6) A: 태권도말고.

B: 합기도.

A: 아니, 합기도말고. 일본 거.

B: _____.

(7) A: 밥 먹을 때 사용하는 거.

B: 숟가락.

A: 숟가락말고.

B: _____.

(8) A: 이거는 핀말고 (pointing at her head) 여기에 하는 거.

B: 머리핀?

A: 머리핀말고.

B: _____.

a.	에어컨	b.	나비	c.	여자	d.	아이
e.	아줌마	f.	젓가락	g.	머리띠	h.	유도

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Strategies for Communicating in Korean is a first of its kind guide to the communication strategies in Korean which will help mid-beginner and intermediate learners overcome communication breakdowns that may occur due to their limited knowledge of the Korean language.

Key features include:

- Explanations in plain English
- Authentic spoken Korean language examples based on discourse analysis
- Many types of exercises
- Audio files for this book available online (<http://talking2koreans.com>).

Strategies for Communicating in Korean is an essential reference and practice book for learners of Korean, and also a good source book for teachers.

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