

Practical Korean Grammar Course (beginners) – proposals

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In this paper I would like to analyze the factors that should be considered before starting teaching Korean grammar (part I). Also, I would like to present the table of contents for the beginners course of Practical Korean Grammar 1st semester (15 classes) (part II).

I. Before starting Practical Grammar Course the following factors should be considered:

1. The addressee (mother tongue, age, purpose of learning Korean, the degree of knowledge of grammar and linguistic theories)

- mother tongue

In case of Korean Section of Warsaw University almost all the students are Polish and their mother tongue is Polish. Some foreign students who undertook the Korean Language classes speak and write Polish fluently therefore there is no need to pay them any special attention. Since all the students speak Polish, all the exercises can be focused on grammatical differences between Polish and Korean, so that the most difficult grammatical differences will be practiced more.

- age

The course (textbook) is aimed at the students of Korean Section of Warsaw University so it means that the learners are adults and have a good

command of at least two foreign languages¹. It means that there is no need for „children exercises” and pictures. Moreover, the students have probably possessed a good command of learning foreign languages.

- the purpose of studying Korean

The purpose of studying the language in question is underappreciated but, nevertheless, very important factor. Namely, the businessmen who want to be able to call the taxi or house wives who want to be able to buy some groceries at the market will not need much grammar for their language practice. The students who are the addressee of this course (textbook) want to learn Korean language in speaking, reading and writing. They should possess a good command of Korean so they can read specialized materials that will help them to prepare their B.A. and M.A. thesis. In case of Warsaw University the students of Korean Section attend courses of Korean Grammar and Practical Korean Grammar . The course of Korean Language (that can be attended by any students of Warsaw University) involves less grammatical material but, nevertheless, some of the exercises presented here are practiced by the students of Korean Language as well.

- theoretical knowledge of Korean Grammar

The students of Korean Section all know at least two foreign languages very well so they are acquainted with methodology of learning foreign languages and the difficulties that learning a foreign language may pose. Moreover, at Korean Section all the students attend course of „Korean grammar” by professor R. Huszcza. During the class the students are acquainted with the theoretical issues of Korean grammar, the comparison

1 To enter Faculty of Oriental Studies one must take English and another foreign language as a main subject.

of Polish and Korean grammar and the matters that need special attention of students whose mother tongue is Polish. Many examples are also cited. During the class of Practical Korean Grammar the students learn how the issues discussed by Professor Huszcza are used in everyday language, try to apply the rules in conversation, exercises etc.

2. vocabulary

Very important issue is vocabulary. The students who start to learn Korean should be able to practice certain grammatical expressions using the familiar vocabulary acquired during the Korean Conversation class (taught by the native Korean speaker).

The matters concerned with vocabulary are addressed and discussed by Baek Bongja, Mun Geumhyun and others in various publications and the National Institute of Korean Language has composed a set of most common Korean vocabulary that can be of a great help to Korean language teachers.

3. the type of exercises

The exercises used for grammar practice should be various and interesting. Drills are very effective but, unfortunately, the students get bored very quickly. In the Practical Grammar Course (Ist semester) the following exercises are used: „fill in the blanks”, „multiple choice”, „answer the questions”, „change the underlined... into...” and „translate into Korean”. The students are always asked to translate the sentence in question into Polish, thus it is possible to check whether the student understands the sentence and the grammar correctly. The importance is put on the understanding of the grammar used.

While constructing the exercises it is important to take into consideration the level of general knowledge of Korean. The beginners do

not know many Korean words and structures thus it is the best to use easy and familiar vocabulary. The students should concentrate their efforts on understanding the grammar, not the situation or words.

II. The proposal for the table of contents for the course of Practical Korean grammar (practice book for Korean Grammar - beginners).

The students who enter Korean Section (or those who enroll in Korean Language Class) start learning Korean from the very beginning, i.e. they start from learning Korean alphabet. Therefore one (or two) of the 15 classes in a semester (1 class per week) is not a class of grammar but of reading and writing Hangeul. Only after the students get familiar with Korean alphabet they can start practising grammar.

In Korean Grammar class by professor Huszcza theoretical issues of Korean Grammar are discussed so the students already know the basics of the word order, sentence structure, syntax etc. During Practical Grammar Course there is no need for theoretical explanations, the focus is on understanding and practice.

Also common mistakes and breaking/ommiting the grammatical rules by native Koreans are discussed and analysed (“나르는 새”, ect). The knowledge of the mistakes is helpful because it will help the students understand Korean better.

1. N 입니다 vs. N 이/가 있습니다 (N 에 있습니다)

For Polish speakers the difference of meaning between Korean 이다 and 있다 is easy to understand but hard to practice because both of them can be translated into Polish as „być”. Therefore the students confuse 이다 and 있다. The other confusing factor is phonetical resemblance and

presence (absence) of nominative particle 이/가. The practice of 이다 and 있다 is very important and it seems worth to practice them from time to time – even more advanced learners will benefit from such exercises.

During the Korean Conversation the students have already studied „expressing a location” so it is a good opportunity to practice “-안에, -위에, -앞에, -뒤에 etc” with 있다. Especially that aforementioned “-안에, -위에, -앞에, -뒤에 etc” are often omitted which can be a problem for the students.

2. N 입니다 vs. N 이/가 있습니다 (N 에 있습니다) + 아닙니다, 없습니다

Introducing negative 없다 and 아니다 is a little confusing factor for the students. There is no nominative particle 이/가 before 이다 but there is one before 아니다. This is a reason of confusion.

3. Nouns (case particles: N 이/가, N 에서, N 에, N 을/를, N 의, N 에게, N 한테, N 에게서, N 한테서, N 로/으로, N 와/과)

The concept of cases is familiar to Poles so it is possible to practice most of case particles together. After introducing nominative particle -이/가 the students already know the consonant/vowel rule of the following ending. The particles that need more practice are -에 and -에서 because they are easy to confuse and both translate into Polish as „w”. Also, it is important to emphasize that -로/으로 is not used with 되다 (to become). In Korean it is -이/가 되다.

이/가 좋다 and 을/를 좋아하다 (and other pairs of this type) need more practice because they are very confusing for Polish students. Both Korean expressions are translated into Polish as „to like” (lubić) while one of them requires a nominative particle and the other one – objective

particle. It is important to introduce these expressions and practice them at the early stage of learning Korean.

4. Noun particles - practice

5. Verbs (-ㅂ니다/-습니다, -어요/-아요/-여요)

The students know the rule behind forming the -ㅂ니다/-습니다 forms and the usage of these forms. Introduction of „요” forms is very important and it is easier than expected. The rules of forming the regular „요 forms” are very clear and it is important to mention the rule of dark/light vowels from 훈민정음.

6. Case particles and verb forms (-요)

It is important to review the material and practice all the structures and particles together. The exercises used here are mostly of the „fill out the blanks” type and translation exercises (Polish to Korean).

7. Negation (-지 않습니다/-지 않아요, -지 못합니다/-지 못해요, 안-, 못-)

The rule of negation is very clear and there are no exceptions so the students grasp it very quickly.

8. Irregular verb forms (-요, -ㅂ니다/-습니다)

Korean irregular verbs are very difficult and it is impossible to learn them all at the beginner level but, since certain verbs that appear early in the learning process are irregular, there is a need of introducing certain rules for irregular verbs. (답다 - 더워요 - 답습니다, 춥다-추워요-춥습니다, 모르다 - 몰라요 - 모릅니다, 알다 - 알아요-압니다). ㅎ irregular verbs and other irregular forms (-면, -시-, (으)십시오, etc) are introduced later. All the irregular verb forms are practiced at the beginning of the 3rd semester, after the students know all the endings that involve irregularities.

9. Present tense (-고 있다, -는 중이다, -고 있는 동안에)

The forms of present tense and time expressions are practiced.

10. Past tense (-왔-/왔-/왔-) and time expressions

Since the rule behind forming the past tense forms is that of „요” forms, the forms of the past tense are not difficult to learn. Introducing the past forms is a good opportunity to practice „요” forms as well as past-time expressions („yesterday, an hour ago etc).

11. Future tense (-겠-) and time expressions

12. Verb forms – practice

All verb forms, time expressions and case particles are practiced. The following type of exercises is used: „fill out the blanks”, „multiple choice”, „translate into Korean”.

13. Review and practice