

Preface

All languages have verbs, and almost all languages have irregular verbs. Students and even native speakers have to deal with both. Most English dictionaries feature a complete list of 300 or so irregular verbs; and for French there is a little book, 'Bescherelle – 1. La conjugaison pour tous' ('Conjugation for Everybody'), which covers the French verb completely. This book endeavours to do the same for the Korean verb: full coverage, including archaic forms that are still used in modern renderings of ancient Korean literature and plays, which are part of the Korean culture.

This makes this book of prime interest to anybody who is involved in studying or teaching the Korean language, and more in particular to the intermediate and advanced student of Korean who likes to have a work of reference at hand or occasionally feels the need for more detailed information.

Coverage

The purpose of this book is to explain all Korean verb forms, where a 'verb form' is defined as a stem connected to an ending, without intervening space. This means that the verb form 보내겠어요 is explained, but the verb expression 보낼 거예요 is not (although the verb forms 보낼 and 거예요 are explained).

Verbs, suffixes, and endings are introduced without regard to frequency of use. Most items presented in this book are in more or less everyday use, but for completeness' sake the lists of verbs, suffixes, and endings in this book contain many items which are sometimes considered 'rare'. Experience has shown, however, that 'rare' endings occur surprisingly often; we quote from a children's comic book on Korean history:¹ ... 고조선을 세웠느니라 – ... *and it is a fact that I founded the Ancient Korean Nation*; within a few pages we find 세우겠노라, 하옵니다, and 없소이다; and the blunt speech style ending -소, of which Ho-Min Sohn writes '[M]any contemporary Koreans, including the author of this book, have not used this level at all in their lives' (Sohn Ho-Min, *Korean*, Routledge, 1994, page 9) was found as a publicity gimmick on a shop receipt in 2017: 필요한 건 다 있소 – *You need it - we've got it*. Almost all of Korean grammar is very much alive.

¹ 사회, 6학년, 삼성출판사, page 8

All verbs listed in this book can be found in the larger dictionaries. With very few exceptions, we have avoided dialect forms and words.

How to use this book

This book has three main features: the three-stem method; the complete treatment of irregular and similar regular verbs; and the complete annotated list of verb suffixes and endings. Each is useful in its own right; together they embody a complete understanding of the Korean verb form.

The three-stem method splits the verb form in a stem part and an ending part, in such a way that the two parts are independent entities, which can freely be combined with other stems and endings. Traditionally a form like 먹어요 is divided 먹-어요, but in this book it is divided 먹어-요; likewise 먹으면 is divided 먹으-면 rather than traditionally 먹-으면. Together 먹-, 먹어-, and 먹으- represent the plain, extended, and padded stems of the verb 먹다. Each of the more than 200 endings in Chapter 7 combines with one of these three stems, supplying the reader with 200+ verb forms for the price of three stem forms. The three-stem method is explained in detail in Chapters 1 and 2. Since the consistent application of this method is new, care has been taken to introduce it in a reasoned and substantiated way.

Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 use the three-stem method to simplify the treatment of the irregular consonant stems, vowel stems, ㄹ-stems, and generated verbs respectively. To provide familiarity with the resulting verb forms, full-page paradigms containing up to 26 verb forms are given for more than 30 representative verbs; more than 60 verbs are shown in shorter eight-form paradigms; and all irregular verbs are shown with four representative forms. It will be useful to go through the full-page paradigms and see how each form is built; the eight-form paradigms provide interesting detail; and the full lists of irregular verbs can be consulted as needed using the verb form index, or they can just be perused. The same applies to the entries for endings and suffixes in Chapter 7, which starts on page 133.

The verb form index, starting from page 203, contains all verb forms in the full-page paradigms and the short paradigms, and the basic ones from the one-line listings.

Acknowledgements

This book and its authors owe a major debt to S.E. Martin's *A Reference Grammar of Korean*. Prof. Martin's book is unsurpassed in scope, depth, and completeness, and is indispensable to the professional linguist specializing in the Korean language. But its terseness, absence of Hangeul, and non-standard romanization present a very high threshold to a more general public. We have drawn deeply from Prof. Martin's book; we have kept the completeness but hope to have reduced the threshold considerably.

Furthermore the authors of the book want to express their thanks to Arwen Grune, for advice on the format of the tables in this book and other typographical suggestions; to Bruce McDonough for the idea to include a Glossary and for

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And last but not least, our thanks go to Samantha Vale Noya and Rosie McEwan of Taylor & Francis (Routledge) for their much appreciated help in getting this book to the finish line.

The reference works and other books listed in Appendix B have been indispensable. Literature references are identified in the text by author name and book title where applicable.

Disclaimers

Even completeness has its limits, and the limits on the completeness of the material in this book have been stated in a few short disclaimers, inserted at their pertinent points. They can be found through the entry 'disclaimer' in the Subject Index.

Finally

The best text book or lecture for a student is the one of which he or she finds one third easy, one third informative, and one third difficult. We hope that our readers will still find something worth learning in the easy part, profit from the middle part, and occasionally delve into the difficult part.

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