

CONVENIENCES FOR UZBEKS IN LEARNING THE KOREAN LANGUAGE

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This article explores the main conveniences that make the Korean language relatively accessible for Uzbek learners. It discusses the linguistic, cultural, educational, and motivational factors that facilitate the process of learning Korean among Uzbeks. Special attention is given to the structural similarities between Uzbek and Korean, such as sentence order and agglutinative grammar, as well as the learner-friendly nature of the Korean writing system, Hangul. The article also highlights the role of cultural closeness, the influence of Korean popular culture, and the expanding educational and professional opportunities connected with Korean language proficiency in Uzbekistan. The study concludes that despite certain challenges, Korean offers a number of practical advantages for Uzbek learners and has become one of the most attractive foreign languages in the contemporary Uzbek educational context.

The process of learning a foreign language is often influenced by the learner's native language, cultural background, educational experience, and motivation. For Uzbek learners, the Korean language has become one of the most attractive and practical foreign languages to study in recent years. This growing interest is connected not only with the popularity of Korean culture, technology, and education, but also with the increasing academic, economic, and labor relations between Uzbekistan and the Republic of Korea. Although Korean is structurally and linguistically different from Uzbek in many respects, there are also a number

of important conveniences that make the learning process relatively accessible and effective for Uzbek learners. These conveniences can be observed in the fields of grammar, pronunciation, sentence structure, cultural mentality, motivation, and educational opportunities.

One of the main conveniences for Uzbeks in learning Korean lies in the structural similarities between the two languages. Uzbek belongs to the Turkic language family, while Korean is generally considered a language isolate, though some scholars have discussed typological similarities between Korean and Altaic languages.⁴ Despite their different origins, Uzbek and Korean share several grammatical features that make Korean more understandable for Uzbek learners compared to many Indo-European languages such as English, Russian, or German. One of the clearest examples is sentence structure. Both Uzbek and Korean usually follow the Subject–Object–Verb (SOV) order. For example, in Uzbek, one says “Men kitob o‘qiyman” (I read book), and in Korean, “나는 책을 읽어요” (I read book). This familiar sentence order reduces confusion for Uzbek students and helps them form basic sentences more naturally.

Another significant convenience is the agglutinative nature of both languages. In both Uzbek and Korean, grammatical meanings are often expressed by adding suffixes or endings to the root word. This means that Uzbek learners are already familiar with the concept of modifying words through systematic additions. In Uzbek, suffixes indicate tense, possession, plurality, and case, while in Korean, particles and verb endings play a similar role. For example, just as Uzbek learners understand the importance of suffixes such as “-lar,” “-ni,” or “-da,” they can more easily grasp Korean markers such as “-들,” “-을/를,” and “-에.” This morphological similarity helps learners recognize patterns and reduces the burden of memorizing isolated grammatical rules.

Pronunciation is another area where Uzbek learners often find certain advantages in learning Korean. Compared to languages with highly irregular pronunciation systems, Korean pronunciation is relatively systematic. Once learners become familiar with Hangeul, the Korean alphabet, they can pronounce many words correctly with a high degree of accuracy. For Uzbek students, this is especially convenient because Uzbek orthography is also largely phonetic, meaning that words are generally pronounced the way they are written. This phonetic transparency creates a strong foundation for reading and speaking. Although Korean

⁴ Cho, S., & Whitman, J. (2019). Korean. Cambridge University Press, p. 45.

contains some sounds that may initially seem unfamiliar, such as tense consonants or subtle vowel distinctions, Uzbek learners usually adapt to them more easily than to the unpredictable pronunciation patterns found in some Western languages.

The Korean writing system, Hangul, is also considered one of the most learner-friendly alphabets in the world, and this presents another major convenience for Uzbek learners. Unlike Chinese characters or Japanese kanji, Hangul is logical, scientific, and relatively easy to master.⁵ Most learners can begin reading basic Korean words within a short period of time. For Uzbeks, who are already used to alphabetic writing systems such as Latin and Cyrillic, adapting to Hangul is much easier than learning a complex ideographic script. The visual organization of Korean syllable blocks may seem unusual at first, but once learners understand the combination of consonants and vowels, the system becomes highly practical. This ease of literacy often increases learners' confidence in the early stages of study and motivates them to continue.

Another convenience is the increasing availability of Korean language education in Uzbekistan. In recent years, Korean language courses, educational centers, university departments, online classes, and exchange programs have expanded significantly. Many Uzbek students now have access to qualified teachers, textbooks, Korean language institutes, and digital resources specifically designed for beginners. In some schools and universities, Korean is taught as a second or third foreign language, which makes the learning process more institutionalized and systematic. The presence of Korean educational and cultural centers in Uzbekistan has also contributed to the popularity of the language and has made learning opportunities more accessible for young people across the country.

Cultural familiarity and social mentality also play an important role in making Korean more approachable for Uzbek learners. Although Uzbekistan and Korea are distinct in terms of history and language, they share certain cultural values that create a sense of familiarity. Respect for elders, strong family ties, social politeness, modesty, and collectivist traditions are highly valued in both societies. This cultural closeness helps Uzbek learners better understand the pragmatic and social dimensions of Korean communication. For example, the Korean language contains honorific forms and polite speech levels that reflect social relationships and age hierarchy. Uzbek learners may find these concepts easier to understand because Uzbek culture also emphasizes respectful speech and proper forms of address in

⁵ Pae, H. K. (2024). *Analyzing the Korean Alphabet: The Science of Hangul*. Springer, p. 86.

communication. Therefore, Korean is not only learned as a linguistic system but also as a culturally meaningful form of interaction that resonates with Uzbek social norms.

Motivation is another key factor that makes Korean easier and more convenient for Uzbek learners. Language acquisition is strongly affected by the learner's emotional engagement and practical goals. In Uzbekistan, many young people are highly motivated to study Korean because of the global influence of Korean popular culture, including K-pop, K-dramas, Korean cinema, fashion, and social media content.⁶ Exposure to authentic language materials through music, television, YouTube, and online communities creates a natural learning environment and supports vocabulary acquisition, listening comprehension, and pronunciation practice. When learners are emotionally interested in the language and culture, they tend to study more consistently and enthusiastically. This kind of intrinsic motivation is one of the strongest facilitators of successful language learning.

In addition to cultural interest, Korean offers practical advantages in terms of education and employment, which further encourages Uzbek learners. South Korea is one of the leading countries in science, technology, engineering, medicine, and higher education. Many Uzbek students are interested in studying at Korean universities through scholarship programs, international exchange opportunities, and government-funded educational initiatives. At the same time, Korean language proficiency can open doors to jobs in translation, tourism, business, international cooperation, and labor migration. Since South Korea has become an important partner for Uzbekistan in various sectors, knowledge of Korean is increasingly seen as a valuable skill. This real-life usefulness makes the language more meaningful for learners and increases their commitment to mastering it.

The digital age has also created significant conveniences for Uzbeks learning Korean. Today, learners can access mobile applications, video lessons, online dictionaries, language exchange platforms, grammar websites, and Korean learning channels on social media. Applications such as language-learning apps, pronunciation tools, and online flashcards make independent learning easier and more flexible. Uzbek learners can study Korean at their own pace, repeat difficult material, and engage with native or advanced speakers online. In addition, subtitles, bilingual resources, and Korean content translated into Uzbek, Russian, or English provide useful bridges for comprehension. These technological tools help overcome

⁶ Lee, J. (2018). Effects of contact with Korean popular culture on KFL learners' motivation. *The Korean Language in America*, 22(1), p. 25.

traditional barriers in language learning and allow students from different regions to access quality educational materials.

It is also important to note that Uzbek learners often develop strong memorization and adaptation skills due to their multilingual educational environment. Many students in Uzbekistan grow up with exposure to Uzbek, Russian, and often English or other languages. This multilingual background can positively influence the learning of Korean, because learners are already familiar with the process of switching between languages and adapting to different grammatical systems. Such linguistic flexibility often makes it easier to absorb new vocabulary, recognize patterns, and tolerate ambiguity during the learning process. In this sense, Uzbek learners are not starting from zero; they often bring valuable cognitive and linguistic experience into the Korean classroom.

At the same time, it should be acknowledged that learning Korean is not entirely easy, and Uzbek learners may still face certain challenges, such as honorific usage, verb endings, listening speed, and vocabulary of Sino-Korean origin. However, the existence of challenges does not cancel out the many conveniences that support the learning process. In fact, when learners have structural familiarity, cultural interest, practical motivation, and access to educational resources, even difficult aspects of a language become more manageable. The key is to approach Korean not as an impossible foreign system, but as a language that contains many learner-friendly features, especially for Uzbek students.

In conclusion, the Korean language offers numerous conveniences for Uzbek learners, making it one of the more accessible and rewarding foreign languages to study in the modern educational context. The similarities in sentence structure and agglutinative grammar, the logical writing system, the relatively regular pronunciation, the cultural closeness in social values, the strong motivation created by media and career opportunities, and the growing number of educational resources all contribute to a favorable learning environment. For Uzbeks, learning Korean is not only a linguistic activity but also a bridge to academic advancement, intercultural communication, and professional development. As relations between Uzbekistan and South Korea continue to strengthen, the importance of Korean language learning is likely to grow even further, and Uzbek learners will continue to benefit from the unique conveniences that support their success in this field.

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