Learn Korean Ep. 91: Changing Action Verbs to Adjectives (Part 1 of 2)

We've already covered in previous lessons how to conjugate adjectives and action verbs. For example, we can say "That person is good" by conjugating the verb 좋다 ("to be good") into 그 사람이 좋아요. We can also conjugate it before a noun as 좋은 and get 좋은 사람이에요 ("He is a good person.").

We've also covered how to conjugate action verbs. For example, we can conjugate the action verb 먹다 ("to eat") and get 저는 피자를 먹어요 ("I eat pizza.").

But these forms alone don't allow us to create more complicated sentences, and we'll need to learn a new form in order to say things like "I made a food *that* he likes," or "I want to meet someone *who* speaks Korean." To make these types of sentences, we'll need to know how to change an action verb into an adjective, so we can use it before a noun.

First, here's an example of what we'll be making, using the action verb 좋아하다 ("to like"):

철수는 제가 좋아하는 피자를 만들었어요.
"Chul-soo made a pizza that I like."

Let's learn how to change action verbs into adjectives. Each tense works a bit differently.

Present Tense: Action Verb Stem + 는

For the present tense, take an action verb stem and attach 는. Here are a few examples.

하다 → 하는
먹다 → 먹는
가다 → 가는
놀다 → 노는*

* In present, past, and future tenses, verb stems ending in ㄹ will drop the ㄹ when conjugating this form. This is common with grammar forms that use ㄴ or ㄹ.

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피자를 먹는 고양이를 봤어요.

"I saw a cat that eats pizza."

한국어를 잘하는 사람을 만나 보고 싶어요.

"I want to meet someone who speaks Korean well."

여기서 제가 아는 사람이 없어요.

"There is nobody who I know here."

Although the word "nobody" doesn't appear in the Korean sentence, a more literal translation would be "There is no *person* who I know."

그 사람이 좋아하는 음식을 만들었어요.

"I made food that he likes."

Past Tense: Action Verb Stem + 은/ㄴ

For the past tense, take an action verb stem and attach 은 if it ends in a *consonant*, or ㄴ if it ends in a *vowel*. Here are a few examples:

먹다 → 먹은
하다 → 한
쓰다 → 쓴

제가 쓴 책이 아주 좋아요.

"The book that I wrote is very good."

집에 일찍 간 사람이 없었어요.

"There was nobody who went home early."

제 친구가 준 과자가 맛있었어요.

"The snacks my friend gave me were delicious."

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2 시간 동안 공부한 학생이 누구였어요?

"Who was the student who studied for 2 hours?"

Future Tense: Action Verb Stem + 을/ㄹ

For the future tense, take an action verb stem and attach 을 if it ends in a *consonant*, or ㄹ if it ends in a *vowel*. Here are a few examples:

먹다 → 먹을
하다 → 할
믿다 → 믿을

오늘 공부할 사람이 없어요.

"There is nobody who will study today."

같이 갈 사람을 찾고 있어요.

"I'm looking for someone who will go together (with me)."

이건 제가 살 컴퓨터예요.

"This is the computer that I will buy."

부모님에게 받을 선물이 있어요.

"There is a present that I will get from my parents."

Advanced Notes

When making sentences that use this grammar ("that" or "who" in English), you'll most commonly find the *Subject Marker* (이/가) used to mark the person who is doing the action verb – *not* the Topic Marker (은/는).

In our first example, we had 철수는 제가 좋아하는 피자를 만들었어요. ("Chul-soo made a pizza that I like."). It would be awkward to use 저는 in the sentence instead of 제가. Using the Subject Marker shows that here, "I" (제가) am the person who likes the pizza.

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Conclusion

If you have any questions, feel free to send me a message through my web site or on YouTube. Good luck in your studies!