



*My First Book of Korean Words: An ABC Rhyming Book*

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Many languages share and borrow words. Korean borrows “roket” from the English word “rocket.” (p. 18)

How many languages are there in the world? Can you guess? It is not a simple question. Stephen R. Anderson (2005) noted that as of “2009, at least a portion of the Bible had been translated into 2,508 different languages, still a long way short of full coverage” (p. 1). Across the world, people use many different languages. *My First Book of Korean Words: An ABC Rhyming Book* is filled with information about Korean words and culture. This book introduces the Korean language to readers, showing Korean words in alphabetical order from A to Z. Each letter is accompanied by an English sentence with the same meaning. Even though there are differences between Korean and English, readers will easily understand Korean words with the English explanations. In the preface, the authors introduce six basic Korean vowels and three consonants, explaining how they are pronounced.

*My First Book of Korean Words: An ABC Rhyming Book* is filled with colorful pictures illustrating Korean culture, linking the language with its society. Each page gives cultural information along with the symbols for words such as soccer, moon, and flying—words that young readers would be familiar with in either Korean- or English-speaking cultures. Thus, it seems to be a good book for young children to learn basic Korean words. This book is available in hard copy and e-book versions, to which people can have easy access. It can be used to learn about the Korean language or as an entrée into Korean culture.

However, this book has several problems, including that it does not show the correct syllable structure of Korean words or how the Korean writing system represents sounds. *Hangul* is a writing system unique to Korean. Each letter is designed to represent a consonant or vowel sound. Korean letters for consonants and vowels are grouped together to form a sort of ‘block’ corresponding to each syllable. What is important for the introduction of the Korean language is the authenticity and accuracy of the information of the language and culture of Korea, which are closely correlated.

While the book has some problems, it is still an interesting way to compare English with Korean, and could be used with books about Korea as well as novels that highlight Korean characters. The Worlds of Words Korean Kit Bibliography would be especially helpful for finding additional resources to use with this book:

<http://wowlit.org/links/booklists/korea/>.

The authors, Kyubyong Park and Henry J. Amen, IV, work for a Korean publishing

company. They are the authors of *Korean for Beginners*. Henry J. Amen, IV, is a freelance writer, who studied Korean while living in Seoul for two years working for a publishing company. Aya Padrón, who also lived in Korea, is a free-lance artist with experience in East Asian languages, cultures and arts. She is also an illustrator of such books as *My First Book of Japanese Words: An ABC Rhyming Book* and *My First Book of Chinese Words: An ABC Rhyming Book*.

Meet Aya Padrón on-line: <http://www.goodreads.com/author/>.

Anderson, S. R. (2005). How many languages are there in the world? Linguistic Society of America. Retrieved from on-line journal: <http://www.linguisticsociety.org/>.

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