

## TRADEMARKS IN KOREAN

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Korean (Hangeul) is a phonemic alphabet organized into syllabic blocks. Each block consists of at least two of the 24 Hangeul letters, at least one each of 14 consonants and 10 vowels. Hangeul - with only 14 consonants and 10 vowels - is capable of expressing virtually any sound.

This phonemic alphabet means that Korean (Hangeul) can be transcribed into almost every foreign language. In general, Koreans tend to transcribe all languages (apart from Chinese) into Korean but with a very close approximation to the original English sound - rather than translating the meaning of the words into Korean.

For examples:

- **Coca-Cola** is one of famous trademarks known in Korea. Its Korean transcript sounds as same as the original, 'Coca-Cola' (코카콜라).
- **Burberry** still sounds almost same 'berbery (버버리)'.  
• **Burger King** sounds the same as 'burger king (버거킹)' rather than translated word 'burger wang'
- **Lion King** still as 'lion king' (라이온 킹) and not the translated version 'Saja Wang' which means 'Lion King' in Korean.

There are a few points of note when transcribing/ translating a foreign word into Korean.

As Korean consonants do not include the sounds of 'F', 'R', 'Z', 'V', 'P', 'L', 'J', they use the 'B' consonants instead. However, should the word begin with one of these missing consonants, then it needs special consideration to ensure that it can be interpreted correctly; for example, 'Racing' and 'Lacing' sound same. 'Base' and 'Vase' are same. 'Zest' and 'Jest' are same in Korean.

In order to make sure these words are transcribed correctly there are alternative ways of presenting this sound. A good example of this in practice is with regard to the 'F' sound. The most current and popular way of presenting an 'F' for example is to use a 'P' sound instead. This presents its own complications - 'Forty' and 'Potty' 'Photee' are both the same in Korean '포티'. An alternative option is to use the 'H' sound - so the well-known trademark 'Fanta' is written as 'Hwanta (환타)' in Korean.

Other complex phonetic complexities can be found with the 'Th-' sound and the vowel sounds 'E' and 'æ'. Korean does not have 'Th' sound, instead they use 'ss' - 'Think' is written as 'Ssink (씽크) in Korean. However there is a big difference between the 'e' sound and 'æ' when written in Korean - a bit like English letters 'e' and 'a'. 'Marry (매리)' and 'Merry (메리)' are distinguished when they are written in Korean but the pronunciation is the same.

Lastly do note that American English is more common than British English in Korea.