



# Common English mistakes that Koreans make

This column will look at some of the pitfalls that Koreans tend to fall into when speaking English at the workplace. Let's speak English the right way!



These are expressions we use at the airport that can sound very awkward to an English speaker.



## 1) baggage ticket (X) → baggage claim check (O)

Since the receipt issued by a carrier to a passenger for checked-in baggage is called “짐표” in Korean, it is easy to translate it as a “baggage ticket”. But the commonly used term for it in English is a “baggage claim check”, or simply “claim check”.

» Where's your baggage claim check?

## 2) conveyor (X) → baggage claim, baggage claim area (O)

A conveyor belt is part of a baggage carousel, which is a device that delivers checked items to passengers at the baggage claim area. Since a conveyor belt only refers to part of a device, the correct way to call the device itself is a “baggage carousel”. However, it is much more common to say that you picked up your baggage at the baggage claim area (or simply at baggage claim).

» Could you tell me where the baggage claim area is?

## 3) label (라벨) (X) → baggage tag, luggage tag (O)

The tag you put on your bag with your name and contact information is often called a “label” in Korea. It is important to note that “label” is a very commonly mispronounced word among Koreans. If you say “라벨”, an English speaker probably won't understand what you're referring to. You have to say “레이블”. Pronunciation issues aside, this identification/contact information that you attach to your bag is commonly called a baggage tag or a luggage tag.

» Did you put your phone number on the baggage tag?

## 4) hand carry (X) → carry-on baggage, carry-on bag, carry-on (O)

Many Koreans call the baggage you take with you on your flight “hand carry” because you use your hands to carry the baggage, but you should refer to them as “carry-on baggage”. The word “carry-on baggage” is used to collectively refer to everything, and each individual bag you're carrying is called a “carry-on bag”. You can shorten both terms as “carry-on”.

» Am I allowed to bring nuts to eat on the plane in my carry-on baggage?



These are some expressions that we use day-to-day while shopping that are not used by native speakers of English.



## 1) eye shopping (X) → window shopping (O)

When we just browse without buying anything, we call it “eye shopping”. However, the correct expression is “window shopping”.

» Let's go window shopping.

## 2) A/S (after service) (X) → warranty (O)

When you buy a product and the manufacturer promises to repair or replace it if necessary within a specified period of time, it is called a warranty.

» This came with a two-year warranty.



These are some expressions that we use related to work that will confuse native speakers of English.



## 1) arbeit (X) → part-time job (O)

Arbeit is a part of everyday vocabulary for Koreans, but it is a word of German origins, meaning “work” or “labor”. As such, an English speaker will not understand what you mean if you say you have “arbeit”. A proper English word for it is a “part-time job”.

» Do you have a part-time job?

## 2) salaryman (X) → white-collar worker, office worker (O)

The term “salaryman” is grammatically and colloquially incorrect. “Salaried man” is the grammatically correct way of saying it, but even this isn't used in everyday English. “White-

collar worker”, “businessperson” and “office worker” are the terms of choice for the native English speaker.

» I don't want to be a white-collar worker like everyone else. I want to be my own boss.

## 3) meeting (X) → date (O)

The word “meeting” is used much more broadly by Koreans than it is by the English-speaking population. In English, a meeting refers to a gathering of people to discuss something, often to talk about business. If the gathering is of romantic nature, it is called a “date”.

» Have you ever tried group dating?