

In the car 

“Let’s Learn Local English!”

Cars are an essential part of modern life. This column will look at some of the pitfalls that Koreans can fall into when talking about cars in English.

WHILE DRIVING

The following Konglish expressions are commonly used by Koreans when driving, but a native speaker of English will have a tough time trying to understand what you mean.

1) side brake (X) → emergency brake/ parking brake (O)

Because this brake is on the side, they are commonly referred to in Konglish as a side brake. In the English-speaking world, however, it is more commonly called a “handbrake”, an “emergency brake” or a “parking brake”.

» You must use the emergency brake in that case.

2) Accel (X) → gas pedal / accelerator (O)

“Accel” is short for “accelerator”, but native speakers of English prefer to call it the “gas pedal”. Stepping on the accelerator is colloquially expressed as “hitting the gas”.

» My car makes a weird sound when I step on the gas pedal.
 » Hit the gas, will you? We’re late.



3) back mirror (X) → rear-view mirror (O)

It is easy to understand why this term is used. It’s a mirror that drivers use to look at what’s behind them. However, the proper term for it is a “rear-view mirror”.

» Who adjusted the rear-view mirror? I can’t see properly.

CAR PARTS

These are several Konglish expressions that refer to car parts which are not used by native speakers of English.

1) window brush (X) → windshield wiper (O)

The front window of a car is called a “windshield” or “windscreen”, not a window. Because this part wipes the windshield clean, it is called a “windshield wiper” or “windscreen wiper”.

» Turn on the windshield wipers.

2) bonnet (O) / hood (O)

While British English refers to the hinged cover over the engine of an automobile as a “bonnet”, “hood” is the word that’s used in American English.

» Pop the hood open. I need to check the engine.



3) open car (X) → convertible (O)

A convertible is a type of car whose roof can be opened, which explains why many Koreans call it an open car. But, the proper terminology is a “convertible”.

» I want to buy a convertible.

AUTO REPAIR

These are some expressions that we use related to auto repair and maintenance that will confuse native speakers of English.

1) car center (X) → auto body shop / auto repair shop (O)

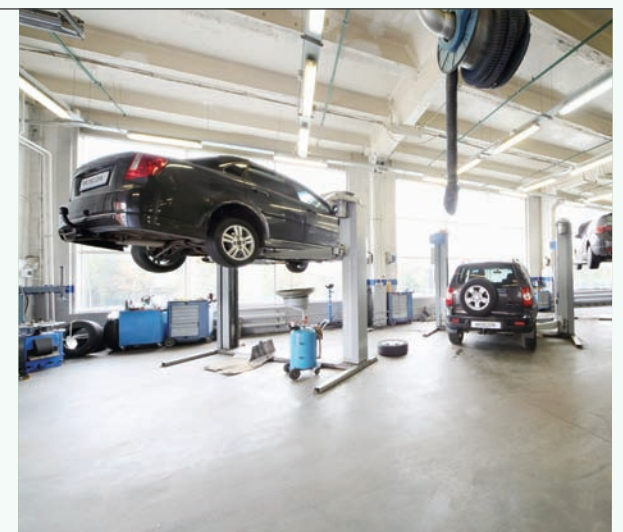
The place you go to have your car fixed is called an auto body shop or an auto repair shop in proper English. On a related note, a person who fixes cars is called an “auto mechanic”.

» I need to take my car to an auto body shop.

2) sunting (X) → tinting (O)

When you add shading to your car windows for protection from the sun’s rays, it is not called “sunting”. It’s referred to as “tinting”. When you get tinting done on your windows, you say that your windows are “tinted”.

» Where can I get my car window tinted?



3) punc (X) → flat tire (O)

Koreans like to use the word “punc” to refer to a flat tire. Puncture refers to a hole, so that’s where the word “punc” originated. However, a tire that has a hole becomes flat, so English speakers call it a flat tire.

» I’ve got a flat tire, and I don’t have a spare in my trunk! What do I do?