Only approximately 1% of Jeju citizens now speak Jeju language fluently.

Jeju is a critically endangered language spoken on the islands of Jeju Province, South Korea, and in a diasporic enclave in Osaka, Japan.

Language or dialect?

Jeju and Korean are mutually unintelligible, meaning speakers of Korean cannot understand the Jeju language and monolingual speakers of Jeju cannot understand Korean. Recent research shows comprehension of Jeju by Korean speakers at 5-12%, and only 20-25% of the vocabulary of Korean and Jeju overlaps.

How is Jeju different from Korean?

Jeju’s vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation are distinct from Korean, and Jeju retains an older vowel, the arae ‘·’, now lost in Korean.

Jeju  오람쩌  ora-mcce
Korean  오고있다  o-ko iss-da
‘Someone is coming.’

If you are interested in Jeju language documentation and revitalization, please contact the researchers below.

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Jeju phrases

- Note on pronunciation: ‘ㆍ’ is pronounced like the ‘a’ in “aw”.

Hello 펜안홍과
Goodbye! (to somebody leaving) 흔져 감서양/야/예!
Goodbye! (to somebody staying) 잘 이십서양/야/예!
Take care (to somebody leaving) 맹심행 감서!
Yes. 예./양./야.
No, it’s not true/You’re wrong. 아니우다.
Calling to someone: 삼춘!
I am learning Jeju language. 제주돔말 배왐수다!
What? 무시거마씨/무시거마씀?
Do you know... 알암수괘?
Thank you very much!
Can I have a discount?
Thank you very much!

Market phrases

How much is this?
이거 (금지가) 얼마쨔?  
What is this? 무시거쨔?
Where is/are the ___? ... 어디짜?
Do you have ___?... 이수쨔?
Please give me... 삼춘... 흔끔 좀처!  
Sir/Ma’am, It’s a bit expensive.
삼춘, 흔끔 빗나우다. 
Can I have a discount?
이거 환절 내려줍서.
This looks delicious!
맞 잘도 총암적 혼우다!
Make lots of money!
하영 흔써양/야/예!

Vocabulary

Local seafood names and dishes

horse mackerel 각제기
mackerel 고돌이
anchovies 멸
tiny sea snail 보말
seaweed 매역
Sargassum 몸
Sargassum soup 몸쿡/몸국

Vegetables and grains

vegetables 송키
cabbage 녹물
radish 놀뼈, 무수
spring onions 패마뇽
garlic 마뇽, 콩테사니/테사니
leafy salad 부루
potato 지실/지슬
sweet potato 감주/감저
unsteamed rice 콩
white rice 곤
barley 보리
millet 좹
sesame 꿰

Meat

pork 돈궤기
beef 쉐궤기
chicken 돕궤기
egg 독세기
fish 바당궤기