

Current Trends and Prospects for the Development of Korean Studies in Russia

Mozol T.*, Pokholkova E.**

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* PhD in Education, Associate Professor, Head of the Oriental languages Department, MSLU(https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=list_works&hl=en&user=IYUrJOQAAAAJ), (https://linguanet.ru/fakultety-i-instituty/perevodcheskiy-fakultet/kafedra-vostochnykh-yazykov/?special_version=Y)

** PhD in Philology, Associate Professor, Dean of the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting, MSLU(https://linguanet.ru/fakultety-i-instituty/perevodcheskiy-fakultet/kafedra-vostochnykh-yazykov/prepodavateli.php?special_version=Y)

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I. Introduction to the History of Korean Studies in Russia

Korean studies in Russia have a long history. They date back to the 17th century when - for the first time ever - Russia and China established bilateral relations. Koreanology took shape as a fully independent field of study in the wake of the 19th century, after Russia and Korea signed the Treaty of Amity and Commerce of 1884.¹⁾

The first documented meeting between Russians and Koreans, took place in 1854, when Frigate Pallada that had set sail around the world from St. Petersburg in 1852, called the island of Gomundo.

On board the frigate was Ivan Goncharov, the famous Russian writer, who in 1858 published a book of essays “Frigate Pallada”, based on his travel notes. In that book, Goncharov familiarized Russian readers with the yet little-known country and fascinatingly described beautiful nature and life of Koreans.

The first Korean peasant settlers began migrating to the Primorski Krai of Russia in 1863 onwards at an ever growing rate. After the signing of the Japanese-Korean Treaty on the Protectorate in 1905, political emigres resisting Japanese occupation, flooded into the Far East. By 1926, the number of Korean settlers had reached 134,412, which was about a quarter of the total population of the city of Vladivostok.²⁾

1) Pokholkova E., “Early Korean Studies and Korean Language Teaching in Russian Empire,” *Outlining the Korean Society. 20th Anniversary of the Korean Studies Program in Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski*, Sofia, 2015, pp. 108~111.

Living side by side with Korean settlers in the Primorski Krai naturally nudged locals to pick up the Korean language learning starting from the second half of the 19th century. This interest in Koreans and Korea, resulted in several books on the Korean language published in St. Petersburg in 1874: the elementary "Korean ABC" by priest V. G. Pyankov and the Russian-Korean dictionary by M. P. Putszillo, the latter being among the very first Korean dictionaries in Europe.

The teaching of Korean in Russia and Europe began in 1897. In May 1896, the first Korean diplomatic mission led by Ambassador Min Yong-hwan, arrived in Moscow to attend the coronation of Emperor Nicholas II; in 1897, Min Yong-hwan travelled to St. Petersburg again, but soon returned, and his translator Kim Byeong-ok stayed in Russia awaiting arrival of a new ambassador.

In 1897, Kim Byeong-ok began teaching Korean at St. Petersburg University. Since 1900, Korean studies started gaining much focus and attention in Primorski Krai. In 1900, for the first time in Russia, the Oriental Institute established a department of the Korean language, to start teaching Korean, following St. Petersburg University.

Korean studies in Russia took a course somewhat different to that of Germany, France and other European countries. Unlike European countries, Russia did have a land border with Korea, and border areas of the Primorski Krai made a home for Korean settlers. Consequently, Russia began to

2) Торопов А.А., "Корейская эмиграция на Дальнем Востоке России: вторая половина XIX в. - 1937," *Вестник Института славяноведения*, 1999, pp. 123-130.

comprehensively research Korea and study Korean earlier than other European countries. Even after Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910, the research of Korea and the teaching of the Korean language never stopped. In Europe, e.g. in France, the situation was different. After signing the Treaty of Amity and Trade in 1886, which marked the beginning of diplomatic relations between Korea and France, the number of French writings about Korea continued to increase, whereas after Korea lost independence, the interest in Korea began to subside. That period witnessed strenuous efforts to research Korea, to write books about Korea and to publish textbooks on the Korean language. This situation continued in the Russian Far East until the forced relocation of the Far East Koreans to Central Asia in the 1930s.

In 1937, the Far East Koreans were forcibly resettled to Central Asia and the Oriental Institute in Vladivostok was closed. After 1937, Korean studies in Russia were in decay, but in the 1940-1950s, scientific and technological cooperation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea intensified and required substantially more scholars in Korean studies; in the 1960-1970s, there was an increase in the number of studies on Korea and the Korean language, thus creating the basis for modern Korean studies in Russia. During these years, many universities begin teaching Korean and researching Korea. Later on, in 1990, the establishment of diplomatic relations between the USSR and the Republic of Korea gave a new impetus to Korean studies. It appears Korean studies in Russia have been burgeoning that since the early 1990s.³⁾

3) Mozol T., 「국외의 한국어 교육 현황: 러시아」, 서울대학교 국어교육 연구소 편,

II. The Current State of Korean Studies in Russia

In recent years, Korean studies have been in renaissance, mainly due to closer cooperation between the Russian Federation and Republic of Korea in economy, politics, trade, culture, education, etc.

Moscow, St. Petersburg and Vladivostok are evidently the biggest major centers of Korean studies in Russia. However, academic Korean studies have also been on the rise in other regions of Russia, e.g. in Novosibirsk, Sakhalin, Khabarovsk, etc.

Dr. Lev R. Kontsevich, and Dr. Tatiana Simbirtseva (2006, 67) pointed out several areas in the Russian Koreanology - academic research, educational, and cultural. The latter area, which is mainly confined to Korean associations, culture centers at the bodies of government of the Republic of Korea and the DPRK, as well as through missionary organizations of various confessions, strictly speaking, lies outside the traditional Koreanology.⁴⁾

The Korean peninsula is the focus of academic pursuits of several institutes and centers of the Russian Academy of Sciences - the Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow and its St. Petersburg branch, the Institute of Far Eastern Studies (Moscow), the N.N. Miklukho-Maklai Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology (Moscow) and Kunstkamera (Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography) named after Peter the Great (St. Petersburg), The Institute

『한국어교육학 사전』, 하우, 2014, 1205~1206쪽.

4) Концевич Л.Р., Т.М. Симбирцева (Сост.), *Современное российское корееведение*, Том 3, М.: Первое марта, 2006, p. 67.

of World Economy and International Relations (Moscow), the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Peoples of the Far East of the Far Eastern Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Vladivostok), and the Institute of Archaeology of the Siberian branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Novosibirsk).

As of 2019, the Korean language and country studies were taught in 37 higher education institutions as major or additional subjects (Moscow State Institute of International Relations of the Russian Foreign Ministry, Institute of Asian and African Studies at Moscow State University, Moscow State Linguistic University, National Research University "Higher School of Economics", St. Petersburg State University, Far Eastern Federal University, Novosibirsk State University and others). These schools of higher learning train fundamental Korean researches, organize an array of conferences, symposia, prepare monographs and collections of research papers.

Russian university students can study Korea and Korean as part of their majors (regional studies, translation and interpretation studies, Korean studies, methods of language teaching, etc.). Depending on the university and the university program, Korea studies can be pursued under Bachelor's Degree Program (4 years) and Master's Degree Program (2 years), or Specialist's Program (5 years), or postgraduate studies (3 years).

As interest in Korea has increased in recent years, so has the number of publications in the Russian language on various Korean issues. Along with the interest in Korea, there is a growing interest in Korean literature, and every year more and more translations of Korean fiction into Russian are published.

As of 2019, the Korean language is taught in more than 200 educational institutions in Russia. More than 17,899 people study Korean under the guidance of more than 800 teachers of Korean. There are about 88 Hangeul schools in Russia and 41 secondary schools that teach Korean. Moreover, 24 universities offer Korean language under additional education programmes for a wide range of applicants.⁵⁾

The popularity of the Korean language and the great interest in Korean culture led to the opening of four Sejong Centers and the Korean Cultural Centre at the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the Russian Federation. In addition to the above educational institutions and centers in Russia, Korea and the Korean language are actively popularized by various missionary organizations and Korean communities.

5) Mozol T., 「국외의 한국어 교육 현황: 러시아」, 서울대학교 국어교육 연구소 편, 『한국어교육학 사전』, 2020(출판예정); 교육부, 『2018년 교육통계연보』, 교육부, 한국개발원, 2018; 교육부(2018), 2018년도 재외 한국교육원 현황(파견자 수, 관할내 한글학교 및 동포 수), (<https://www.moe.go.kr/boardCnts/view.do?boardID=316&lev=0&statusYN=W&s=moe&m=0302&opType=N&boardSeq=74596>); 교육통계서비스(<https://kess.kedi.re.kr/index>); Russian Federal State Statics Service(<http://www.gks.ru>); 한국국제교류재단, 『해외 한국학 백서』, 을유문화사, 2018; Korea Foundation(<http://www.kf.or.kr>).

III. Korean Studies at Moscow State Linguistic University: History and Modern Times

Moscow State Linguistic University (MSLU) was founded 250 years ago and was formerly known as the Imperial Commercial School⁶⁾. All over the world, this university is known as the Maurice Thorez Institute of Foreign Languages or Moscow State Linguistic University. Professor Irina A. Krayeva is the rector of the university is. About 10,000 of MSLU students study 38 foreign languages: Azerbaijani, English, Arabic, Armenian, Bulgarian, Vietnamese, Georgian, Greek, Danish, Hebrew, Icelandic, Spanish, Italian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Chinese, Korean, Kurdish, Latin, German, Dutch, Norwegian, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian sign language, Russian as a foreign language, Serbian, Tajik, Turkish, Uzbek, Ukrainian, Finnish, French, Czech, Swedish, and Japanese. The University actively cooperates with various universities around the world and serves as a hub for cooperation with CIS countries. The university has established relationships with more than 100 universities from 35 countries of the world.

The MSLU Korean branch traces its origins back to the Department of Oriental Languages of the Translation Faculty.⁷⁾ It was established in

6) Russian Association of University Korean Studies (RAUK)(http://www.rauk.ru/index.php?option=com_departments&view=deproot&id=25&itemid=175).

7) Moscow State Linguistic University, Faculty of Translation and Interpreting (<https://linguanet.ru/ko/studies/the-faculty-of-translation-and-interpreting/>).

1990, and marks its 30th anniversary this year. The branch was set up in the same year when Russia and the Republic of Korea established diplomatic relations. The largest faculty of the university - Faculty of Translation and Interpretation - has 1,500 students learning 30 foreign languages. Many political figures, writers, diplomats, artists, journalists, teachers and top-level interpreters graduated from this University division. MSLU has undisputably originated and fostered translation as a science and educational discipline.

Associate professor Ekaterina A. Pokholkova (PhD), the dean of the Faculty of Translation and Interpretation, is a Korean Studies scholar who graduated from the Korean branch of Moscow State Linguistic University. Dr. Pokholkova has been teaching at the Korean department since 2000. Over the years she was in charge of the Association of Korean Teachers of Russian Universities, and the Central and Eastern European Society of Koreanologists. The Department of Oriental Languages (where Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Turkish and Persian are taught) is headed by Associate professor Tatiana S. Mozol, PhD, - a Korean Studies scholar, a graduate of the Far Eastern Federal University (Vladivostok) and Seoul National University.

The Korean language department offers quality teaching more than at the Faculty of Translation and Interpretation. It also promotes and fosters cultural studies and literary endeavours, regional studies, international relations, theory and teaching methods of foreign languages and cultures. The Korean Department is attended by almost 100 undergraduates, master's and postgraduate students majoring in the Korean language and Korean studies. The Korean Department has a faculty of 10 Korean language

teachers, all of whom are active translators and professional teachers. In 2018, the University, supported by the Korea Foundation, opened a Center for Korean Language and Culture, which hosts meetings with Korean writers, people of art and culture, diplomats, professors and other invited guests. Open lectures on Korean culture and Korean are held for schoolchildren. In 2018, a Korean branch was also opened at the MSLU Pre-University to train students of grades 8-11. It is one of the few schools in Russia that teaches Korean as part of the principal educational program.

The school of Korean studies at the MSLU was fostered by the prominent Russian scholar and a luminary in Korean studies, Professor L. B. Nikolsky (1924-1998),⁸⁾ who headed the MSLU Korean language department in 1992 to 1997. He authored one of the most significant works in Russian Koreanology: *The Great Korean-Russian Dictionary and the Russian-Korean Dictionary*, which was compiled by a group of linguists together with Professor J. N. Mazur.

Another important person for the history of Russian-Korean relations, who studied at the university in the 19th century, is the Russian writer I. Goncharov. He is the author of the famous essay "The Frigate Pallada" about his voyages in 1852-1855 as secretary of Vice-Admiral E. Putyatin, who was at the head of the naval expedition to England, Africa, China, Japan, and Korea. In the context of Korean studies, Ivan Goncharov is known not only as a writer, but as the first Russian who stepped on the

8) http://www.rauk.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1537:2014-10-19-16-08-57&catid=126:2011-04-02%2019:33:16&lang=ko&Itemid=143

soil of Korea and shared his memories of the first meeting between Koreans and Russians, which took place on the island of Gomundo.

At different times, well-known Russian Koreanologists, authors of textbooks and scholarly works on Korean studies T. A. Novikov, V. I. Denisov, T. M. Simbirtseva, V. M. Tikhonov, T. V. Gabrusenko, V. V. Kim, N. V. Ivashchenko, Y. E. Pakulova, M. V. Soldatova, E. V. Lachina, and others worked at the MSLU department of oriental languages.

MSLU collaborates on various educational and academic projects with a number of universities: Ewha Womans University, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Kyung Hee University, Pusan University of Foreign Studies, Soongsil University, Pyeongyang University of Foreign Studies etc. MSLU also cooperates on a regular basis with such organizations as Korea Foundation (KF), Academy of Korean Studies (AKS),⁹⁾ Korean Literature Translation Institute (KLTI),¹⁰⁾ Sejong Institute, Academy of Korean Studies in Europe (AKSE), Silkroad Universities Network (SUN), Central and East European Society of Koreanologists (CEESOK), Russian Association for Korean Studies (RAUK),¹¹⁾ Russian Association for Korean Language Educators.

The Korean branch actively cooperates with major Korean think tanks in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Vladivostok, Irkutsk, Novosibirsk and in CIS

9) <https://www.soas.ac.uk/koreanstudies/soas-aks/aks-interim-report/file60570.pdf> (AKS Korean Studies Institution Grant - Interim Report SOAS, September 2010).

10) <http://www.iaas.msu.ru/index.php/ru/novosti/1920-koreiskiyelitvecher>

11) http://www.rauk.ru/index.php?option=com_departments&view=deproot&id=25&itemid=175

countries: Belarus, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan; with the Korean Studies Centers of Universities in Europe: Charles University, University of Vienna,¹²⁾ Sofia University, University of Ljubljana,¹³⁾ University Bucharest,¹⁴⁾ Poznan University,¹⁵⁾ University of Warsaw,¹⁶⁾ Palacký University Olomouc etc.¹⁷⁾

The Korean branch offers the following lecture courses: a practical course in the Korean language, theory and translation practice, the Korean language theory (theoretical phonetics, history of language, theoretical grammar, stylistics, lexicology), history, culture and geography, Korean literature, and other social sciences. An important place in the program is the E-lectures of Ewha Womens University, with the support provided by the Korean Foundation on Language Theory and Economics of Korea. This project is included in the list of official events dedicated to the 30th anniversary of Russian-Korean diplomatic relations. The project uses a cluster network model at the national and international levels, partnering with Irkutsk State University, Russian Diplomatic Academy, and universities of Uzbekistan (Tashkent).

In 2020, MSLU, together with Ewha Womans University, will launch a joint project supported by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea to train bachelors aiming to become teachers of the Korean language

12) <http://koreanstudies.com/img/Berlin-Koreans.pdf>

13) <https://www.koreanistika.si/clani/>

14) <https://koreanstudiesub.wordpress.com/>

15) <http://korea.ff.cuni.cz/system/files/ProgramFinalOctoberPoznan.pdf>

16) http://www.koreanistyka.orient.uw.edu.pl/stara_wersja/CEESOK_2013.pdf

17) <http://seed.upol.cz/about/ekaterina-pokholkova-phd/>

for Russian schools. Together with the Institute of Asian and African Studies of Moscow State University, MSLU will put together a lineup of Korean textbooks for high schools.

MSLU is an active participant in all Korean studies and events in Russia acting as a catalyst for international integration, intercultural communication, drawing together peoples and cultures.

IV. Concluding Remarks: Topical Issues and Objectives of Modern Koreanology in Russia

The Russian Koreanology has an undoubtedly great potential. However, although growth in numbers has been spectacular in recent years, a number of qualitative issues need to be properly attended.

One of the most important tasks for Russian Korean studies is to train highly qualified staff who will be able to maintain a high level of teaching and research in Korean studies at a time of explosive growth. Most of the senior Russian Korean scholars took their studies in the USSR and they received hands-on training in the DPRK, whereas younger generations mostly studied in the USSR/Russia and developed their postgraduate experience in South Korea. Moreover, a relatively small number of Korean experts studied and received academic degrees in South Korean universities lately. As of 2007, only 50% of the academic staff teaching Korean language or country studies had academic degrees at all.¹⁸⁾

18) Симбирцева Т.М., "Российское корееведение сегодня," *Восток*, №6, 2007,

Naturally, the number of academic theses related to Korea in some way or another has been growing. However, it is hard to ascertain whether the percentage of Korean scholars with academic degrees has grown substantially or not. Thus, the Russian Korean scholars need to the quality of training and ensure academic progress and professional development.

There is yet another pressing challenge - to develop new up-to-date textbooks and study guides for Korean language and country studies that would meet the requirements of Russian curricula. Since the Federal Educational and Methodological Association has developed and approved a Korean curriculum for general schools, it is essential to develop a lineup of Korean language textbooks meeting the Federal State Educational Standard.

Furthermore, the high level of Korean studies in Russia may be ensured through stronger ties, academic and scientific exchanges with universities and research centers of the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the rest of the world. Network cooperation between universities is essential to enhance quality training of top level experts, double-degree programmes, etc. being equally helpful.

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