



**Special Review**

# Korean Language Education Overseas

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## Korean Language Education Overseas

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For the past several years, the *Review of Korean Studies* (hereafter, *RKS*) has hosted a group of reviews to examine trends and facets of ongoing Korean studies conducted in foreign countries. For the December 2019 issue we invited 4 reviews which examined some of the Korean studies done in Japan recently, and for the June 2021 issue we asked 4 reviewers to examine the Korean studies—especially in the form of book publications—in China. Then for the December 2022 issue, we gratefully accepted an offer to group-review the current situation of Korean studies in several Southeast Asian countries.

While the first two Special Review sections featured the reviews of Korean scholars, the third one was offered by foreign scholars. Notwithstanding such differences, all these occasions helped us immensely in our effort to understand what kind of issues have been discussed in foreign academic communities, what kind of topics and themes enticed them, and what kind of methodologies the foreign scholars in those communities tended to employ in their respective endeavors.

But for the December 2024 issue's Special Review section, we decided to try a new approach. The general idea was to examine a single individual area—either research or education—but also search for that trend across various countries or even continents. The first area chosen for this new attempt was the area of Korean language education, and we at the *RKS* was lucky enough to invite total of six experts for the occasion.

Lee Jungran at the Academy of Korean Studies provided us with a review entitled “Research Trends of Korean Language Education Overseas in Korea.” This review examines the status of foreign efforts concerning Korean language education around the world, yet in order to cover studies written in languages other than English, Lee chose to examine studies done in Korean (by Korean scholars) on those efforts—in terms of education itself as well as certain policy issues—so that the review could be more balanced and comprehensive.

Through analyzing the methodology and collected data, this review examines the Korean language education overseas in general by covering yearly trends and involved policies, analyzing frequent keywords and topics, and characteristics of both learners and teachers. Lee's review serves as a general overview of this entire Special Review section.

Yeon Jaehoon, of the Academy of Korean Studies and formerly the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at University of London, provided us with a review entitled “Korean Studies in the United Kingdom: History and Prospects.” Unlike others, Yeon expanded the scope of the review to cover not only Korean language education but Korean studies in general, by first recalling the very beginning of Korean studies in the U.K. (with the efforts of William Skillend), as well as subsequent developments. The review then proceeds to discuss the efforts of SOAS and other universities and Institutes such as Sheffield, Oxford, Edinburgh, and Central Lancashire. Also discussed here are the popularity Korean studies began to enjoy since the mid-2010s, the overall research trends and characteristics we should notice from Korean studies in the U.K., and future tasks and prospects.

Ae Ree Nam of the Leiden University provided us with a review entitled “Korean Language Education in the Netherlands.” Like Yeon's review, this review also deals with a European case, but more focused on the Korean language education efforts, which have been going on in the Netherlands. The reviewer first gives us a brief overview of how the KFL (Korean as a Foreign Language) education has been proceeding in the country and its Dutch-speaking environment, thereby informing us of the more recent developments and challenges the program have gone through over the years. The review also presents certain prospects drawn from a larger context of Korean education programs at Leiden, as well as other institutes like Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences and several Korean schools. Nam then proposes potential directions for advancing Korean language education in the Netherlands.

Joowon Suh of the Columbia University provided us with a review entitled “Korean Language Education in North America: Its State of Affairs and Beyond.” If the former two reviews discussed Korean language education efforts in Europe, this one discusses such efforts in the U.S. The reviewer discusses how Korean language education in North America—as well as Canada, to a lesser degree—significantly grew and expanded program-wise over the years, especially in terms of student enrollment and teaching faculties as well as

expanding curriculum and pedagogy. Then discussed in the review are issues and challenges, which Suh chose to comment on within the context of learner diversification, institutional environments, and teacher education. The review also offers suggestions for Korean language educators that may help them progress even further in the future.

Jeong Hyeseon at the Chulalongkorn University provided us with a review entitled “Emerging Trends and Challenges for a New Generation of Korean Language Learners in Thailand.” Unlike previous reviews, this review focuses on the Asian situation, by letting us know how Korean language education has been proceeding in Thailand of Southeast Asia. Jeong first discusses Korean language education in secondary schools, highlighting the yet-to-improve status of the Korean language in the country as well as lack of proper teachers, and then also examines Korean education at universities and challenges they are facing. Finally, the review also examines how interest in the Korean language led to more general Korean studies in the country, citing the needs for further help, heightened interest, development of appropriate curriculum, and teachers who could use them.

Nicola Frascini at the University of Melbourne provided us with a review entitled “At the Crossroad between Community and Additional Language: The Case of Korean Language Education in Australia.” With prior reviews dealing with Europe, U.S., and Southeast Asia, this review provides us with an insight into how Korean language education has been going on in Australia. First the reviewer suggests a frame for discussion, which would be the general landscape of the language education in Australia, and then examines Korean language education at primary and secondary levels, in terms of schools, students, and teachers. This review also highlights recent initiatives and discusses the nature of the need to support Korean language educational provision in the country. The reviewer also raises certain concerns and calls for measures both academic and institutional.

The *RKS* expresses our deepest appreciation for all the six reviewers who graciously agreed to share their insight on Korean language education happening around the world. And special thanks to Professor Lee, as this occasion would not have been possible without her guidance and consultation. Language as we know it is the first and foremost vessel of knowledge and information, so without it, the spread of research or sharing studies would never have been possible in the first place. That is why, for us trying to disseminate

Korean studies all around the world, the education of Korean language is so important. As it is an issue that we would have to be constantly conscious of, this very occasion turned out to be such an informative experience for all of us to hear what kind of efforts have been proceeding in various countries and continents. The *RKS* is again invigorated and encouraged to continue hosting special reviews on individual Koreanology areas in various countries and continents where determined efforts are continued unabated.