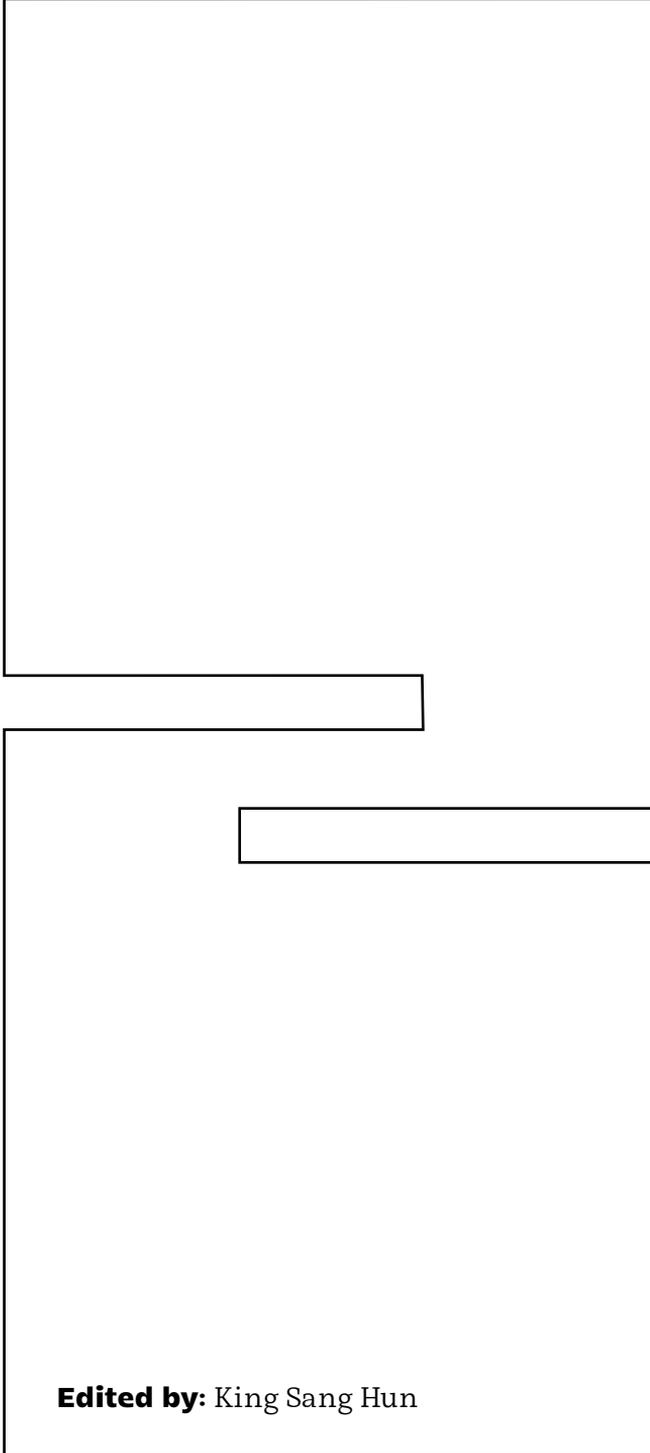


# Cross Cultural Studies Review

A journal for comparative studies  
of culture, literature, and the arts



**Edited by:** King Sang Hun

# Cross - Cultural Korea



# Asian Studies in Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia: Strategies for the Development of Korean Studies at the University of Split\*

Kim Sang Hun\*\*

Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Korea

## Abstract

Unlike Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria—which became satellite countries of the Soviet Union after the Second World War—Yugoslavia maintained its own communist economic and social system as it neither belonged to the United States nor to the Soviet Union. Unlike the earlier introduction of “North Korean Studies” by the other communist countries, Yugoslavia opened departments of “Indology,” “Sinology,” and “Japanology,” recognizing them as representatives of Asian Studies rather than “North Korean Studies.” Asian Studies in Yugoslavia, which disbanded into six countries after the 1990s, was distinct in each of the republics. In the Republic of Serbia, for example, “Sinology” was representative of Asian Studies, while in the Republic of Croatia it was “Indology,” and in the Republic of Slovenia it was “Japanology.” The present study examines the characteristics and backgrounds of “Sinology” at the University of Belgrade in Serbia, “Indology” at the University of Zagreb in Croatia, and “Japanology” and the newly-formed “Korean Studies” (in 2015) at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia. Moreover, it describes the role of Korean government agencies and local universities and scholars in establishing Korean Studies in foreign universities. This study asserts that in order to establish Korean Studies in a foreign university, that university and its scholars must be actively involved, essentially leading the process, while Korean and local government agencies should assume the role of facilitator. This paper has been developed on the basis of “The Current Status of Korean Studies in Slovenia” which was published in the 2016 issue of the *Journal of Contemporary Korean Studies*.<sup>1</sup> However, because of its importance in relation to the establishment of a Korean Studies program in Split, it is being reprinted here with a new focus on “Asian Studies in Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia: Strategies for the Development of Korean Studies at the University of Split.”

**Keywords:** Asian Studies in Former Yugoslavia, Japanology and Korean Studies in Slovenia, Korean Studies in Ljubljana University, Indology in Croatia, Sinology in Serbia, Korean Studies in Split

\* This work was supported by the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies Research Fund of 2020.

\*\* minadir@hufs.ac.kr

1 *Journal of Contemporary Korean Studies* Vol. 3, No. 1-2 (August 2016): pp. 223-241.

## 1. Introduction

The history of Korean Studies in the Republic of Slovenia, which separated and became independent from the Socialist Federal Republic on June 25, 1991, is short compared to that of Sinology or Japanology. Even so, a pattern of rapid development over a relatively short period of time took place due to the popularity of Korean pop culture in Asia, especially in China, in the late 1990s, a popularity that eventually spread worldwide as the so-called “Korean Wave.”

The term “Korean Wave” was actually coined by the Chinese media in 2000,<sup>2</sup> but quickly established itself as a universal term to indicate not only Korea’s modern pop culture but also everything related with Korea. In Slovenia, a small country in Europe, there is rising interest among young people in the language and culture of Korea—a surprising fact considering how very far Korea is from them, not only in terms of distance but culturally as well. In fact, interest in Korean language and culture is not limited to Slovenia, but is present in all six independent countries which belonged to Yugoslavia. Thus there is great potential for Korean Studies in the Balkan Peninsula.

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which has disbanded, was formed during the Cold War between the United States, the leader of capitalist countries after the Second World War, and the Soviet Union, the leader of socialist countries. It comprised six socialist republics. Given its unique position, Asian Studies in the federation differed from that established in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, which were satellite countries of the Soviet Union. That is, whereas the latter focused on North Korean Studies, the former centered on Sinology, Japanology, and Indology.

This study explores Yugoslavia’s overall framework for Asian Studies and its focus on Asian languages, and how these are being carried out at present in the Sinology Department of the University of Belgrade in Serbia, in the Indology Department of the University of Zagreb in Croatia, and in the Japanology and Korean Studies departments of the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia. Notably, the Korean Studies Department at the University of Ljubljana was established quite recently, in September 2015. The ultimate goal of this paper is to explore ways to develop Korean language and Korean studies education at the University of Split in Croatia, which started in 2016, through a review of the history and current status

2 Interest in Korean pop culture, which started in China, spread quickly to Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines. A preference for Korea-related products also occurred after 2000 alongside increased interest in Korean dramas, music, and movies. In a comprehensive sense, all such phenomena is included under the umbrella of the “Korean Wave.”

of Asian studies, including Korean studies in each republic of the Former Yugoslavia.

## **2. Korean Language and Korean Studies Education: Asian Studies in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia**

Eastern European countries, (which today are called Central European countries or the Balkans), which became socialist after the Second World War, had sustained political, economic, military, and cultural exchanges with North Korea for about forty years prior to establishing diplomatic ties with South Korea. However, as part of communist foreign policy, which the regime of the Sixth Republic of South Korea had been actively promoting since 1988, exchange with North Korea gradually decreased in the countries which formed diplomatic ties with South Korea. Accordingly, today there are practically no ties between these countries and North Korea, while active exchanges with South Korea are taking place across various fields. The successful shift from socialism to capitalism in Eastern European countries, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the loss of the political crutch in Eastern Europe were major reasons why these countries came to form stronger relationships with South Korea over the North.

Accordingly, “North Korean Studies,” which was established in Eastern Europe through close academic exchanges with North Korea about forty years previous, transformed naturally into “South Korean Studies” after the 1990s and beyond. The expansion of the “Korean Wave,” which rapidly spread worldwide after the 2000s, played a large role in this. However, Yugoslavia, unlike other Eastern European satellite countries of the Soviet Union, rejected Soviet policies that attempted to control all communist countries and set off on an independent path in June 1948. While its exchanges with the South were not as frequent as those with the North, unlike other communist countries in Eastern Europe, South Korea and Yugoslavia had several exchanges beginning in 1961. For example, after the Yugoslavia soccer team’s visit for the World Cup qualifying match in 1961, mutual exchanges began in athletics, academia, and the arts. As a country, it has had the most mutual visits with Korea. Although Yugoslavia, which established diplomatic ties with South Korea in December 1989, supported North Korea on the international stage externally, after the Seoul Olympic Games in 1988 (where 224 athletes participated), its relationship with South Korea continued to grow, especially in terms of trade.

As countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria— satellite countries of the Soviet Union—became communist

after the Second World War, each established departments of “North Korean Language and Literature” in their universities and sent many graduates to North Korea as international students. It is very interesting that unlike these countries, Yugoslavia did not establish a regular North Korean Studies Department, though it did have student exchanges with universities in North Korea. As a result, in all six republics which constituted Yugoslavia, though Sinology, Japanology, and Indology courses were on offer at universities, a proper Korean language course did not exist prior to the opening of the Basic Korean course at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia in 2003.

Just ten years ago, “Asian Studies” in Yugoslavia was focused on Sinology, Japanology, and Indology. Even before Yugoslavia’s dissolution in the early 1990s and the Bosnian civil war, Yugoslavia was a leader of communist countries—it adhered to a unique social-economic system with an economic scale not comparable with other satellite countries of the Soviet Union. And also unlike other communist countries, it was not greatly interested in North Korean Studies. It showed no interest in South Korean Studies either. This is a symptom of its moderate stance during the Cold War, a time it wished not to appear biased towards either the United States or the Soviet Union. But times have changed. Jumping ahead, South Korea’s rapid economic development after the 2000s, the South’s new status in the global economy, and worldwide interest in the Korean Wave likely spurred the relatively new interest in “Korean Studies” (that is, South Korean Studies) which has occurred in universities across the six republics that previously were a part of Yugoslavia.

Although Yugoslavia prior to dissolution consisted of six republics, the central republics were Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia. What is interesting is that the representative universities of these three republics—that is, the University of Belgrade in the Republic of Serbia, the University of Zagreb in the Republic of Croatia, and the University of Ljubljana in the Republic of Slovenia—fostered the development of Asian Studies in different fields. In other words, Serbia’s University of Belgrade promoted Asian Studies focused on “Sinology,” the University of Zagreb in Croatia focused on “Indology,” and the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia focused on “Japanology.”

It was in 1926 when Asian Studies was established as part of Language and Literature Studies at the University of Belgrade (Filološki fakultet). Belgrade was the federal capital of Yugoslavia prior to dissolution and is presently the capital of the Republic of Serbia, and this was the first Asian Studies Department to be established among universities in the Balkan Peninsula. The founder of the Asian Studies Department at the University of Belgrade was Fehim Barjaktarević, who had received his doctorate from the University of Vienna in Austria. Turkish and Persian

literatures were also taught as elective courses in the World Literature Department of the University of Belgrade beginning in 1925. The scholarly significance here is that this was the first time that the languages of Arab and Turkish regions (including Arabic, Persian, and Turkish) and their literatures had been taught at a university in Yugoslavia.<sup>3</sup> The following year, in 1926, Fehim Barjaktarević established Asian Studies as its own department following the dominant model of Asian Studies in Europe. For Serbia, which was ruled by the Ottoman Empire for almost 500 years, being able to study about East Asia and its impact on its own language and history, culture and religion, in language and literature studies at the University of Belgrade held major significance. Today, departments of Sinology, Japanology, Turkish Studies, and Persian Studies have been established, and in the case of Korean Studies, only two Korean courses are currently on offer.<sup>4</sup>

Chinese was the first East Asian language offered as part of the Language and Literature Studies at the University of Belgrade, and courses began in 1974. Books for the Chinese language course were purchased with special government funds donated to the University of Belgrade from the Chinese government. The university was located in the capital of Yugoslavia at the time. Chinese Language was offered as an elective (rather than being part of a formal department), and was offered continuously until 1985. Considering the fact that the official opening of the Korean Studies Department at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia, on which the present study will focus in particular, was achieved in September 2015, which is about ten years after the first offering of a Korean language course, the establishment of a Sinology Department in Serbia took a similar amount of time.

The founder of the Sinology Department at the University of Belgrade was Dejan Razić, a professor, literary theorist, and translator who held a degree in English literature. He later changed his research interests to Sinology and Japanology and gained fame as the first East Asia expert in Serbia. After the establishment of the Sinology Department, the Chinese government and the government of Yugoslavia signed an academic exchange agreement. The Chinese government sent two Chinese native professors every two years. Particularly, as Renmin University in China

3 The "Orient" in Yugoslavia, including Serbia, does not include the Far East such as China, Japan, and South Korea, but in terms of "the East" refers to Afghanistan and Iran; in terms of "the West," Morocco in North Africa and Mauritania; in terms of "the North," Turkey; and in terms of "the South," the area of Sudan. The area ruled by the Ottoman Empire was called the "Near East" after the nineteenth century. During World War I, the Persian Gulf and the surrounding area was referred to as the "Middle East." After World War II, the "Middle East" became a general name referring to the area including North Africa in Southwest Asia.

4 <http://www.fil.bg.ac.rs/lang/sr/katedre/orijentalistika/kineski-jezik/istorijat/>

and Beijing Language and Culture University regularly donated books relating to Sinology and Japanology to the University of Belgrade, a rich Chinese/Japanese library was formed. Moreover, in 2000 the Chinese government fully funded the building of a large modern language lab facility for language and literature studies at the University of Belgrade. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia and Montenegro cooperated to make Chinese TV broadcasts available. Such efforts had a decisive impact on placing Sinology at the center of Asian Studies at the University of Belgrade in Serbia. The Chinese government continues to provide support to the University of Belgrade to this day, selecting from three to five outstanding students among the senior students of Sinology as recipients of scholarships to study at Chinese universities for one year.

The full Sinology curriculum for a four-year program (eight semesters) is shown in Table 1 below. The table can be compared with the slighter “Korean Studies” curricula on offer at the Indology Department of the University of Zagreb in Croatia and at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia, both of which will be explored in a later section.

**Table 1.**

Semester	Course name	Note
First semester	Introduction to Chinese Graphology Chinese Language 1 Modern Chinese Language 1	While three credits are assigned to most courses, nine credits are assigned to the “Modern Chinese Language” course that is offered for first and second-year students from the first to the fourth semester. However, the number of credits assigned to the “Modern Chinese Language” course in the third and fourth years is reduced to six. Instead, the “Chinese Language” course increases from three to six credits.
Second semester	Introduction to Sinology Introduction to Chinese History Chinese Language 2 Modern Chinese Language 2	
Third semester	Chinese Culture 1 Chinese Literature 1 Chinese Language 3 Modern Chinese Language 3	
Fourth semester	Chinese Culture 2 Chinese Idiom Chinese Literature 2 Chinese Language 4 Modern Chinese Language 4	
Fifth semester	Chinese Culture 3 Chinese Literature 3 Chinese Language 5 Modern Chinese Language 5	

Sixth semester	Chinese Culture 4 Chinese Literature 4 Chinese Language 6 Modern Chinese Language 6	
Seventh semester	Chinese Culture 5 Chinese Text Translation 1 Chinese Literature 5 Chinese Language 7 Chinese Classic Text Modern Chinese Language 7	
Eighth semester	Chinese Culture 6 Chinese Text Translation 2 Chinese Literature 6 Chinese Language 8 Modern Chinese Language 8	

Source: <http://www.fil.bg.ac.rs/lang/sr/katedre/orientalistika/kineski-jezik/istorijat/>

The first Korean language lecture convened at the University of Belgrade took place in the latter half of the 1990s. The East Asian Languages Department of the College of Literature hired a Korean graduate student to teach a “Beginners’ Korean” course as an optional language course. At the time, the class was not that popular,<sup>5</sup> but with the spread of the Korean Wave worldwide in the early 2000s, and with the interest and support of the South Korean embassy in Serbia, more students gradually began to enroll. From 2008, the Korea Foundation began to provide support for visiting professorships in Korean Studies, which helped to build a more solid foundation for a time. However, in September 2011, the Korea Foundation suddenly withdrew its support for visiting faculty. Thus from October 2011, Korean graduate students have led Korean language lectures, and because of their involvement, the program has survived.

The South Korean embassy in Serbia<sup>6</sup> has throughout its existence held a wide variety of cultural festivals to spread awareness about Korean culture. Particularly noteworthy is the first Korean speaking contest held in March 2015, aimed encouraging students to study Korean language, history, and culture. A second speech contest was held in 2016. Though this is certainly a positive step, it appears that due to internal issues at the University of Belgrade, it will take considerable time and effort to establish an actual Korean Language Department. The conservative

<sup>5</sup> Amidst the general social dislocation resulting from NATO bombardment, beginner Korean lectures, which had started in October 1998, were suspended for a time in 1999.

<sup>6</sup> In December 1989, after the breakup of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, South Korea officially established relations and an embassy in Belgrade. However, due to the NATO bombardment, and the breakup of Yugoslavia into six separate independent states, it closed its embassy. It again opened an embassy in Belgrade in March 2002, and it remains there to this day.

attitude prevalent on campus as well as slow decision-making processes are major reasons why the establishment of a new department is so complex—administratively and otherwise.

Since 2014, thanks to the continued efforts of the South Korean embassy in Serbia, plans have been put in place for a new Korean language program in the city of Niš in southern Serbia, which is also the location of Yura Corporation's production facilities. There are also plans to resume the visiting professorship program discontinued in 2011. Furthermore, it is expected that Serbian scholars who hold degrees in Korean literature from the Academy of Korean Studies will begin Korean-language classes at Belgrade University and Novi Sad University. Because in order to establish a new department at a Serbian university there must be a PhD holder in that field present, the latter plan is a particularly positive development because it fulfils a necessary prerequisite for the establishment of a Korean Language Department.

Among Asian Studies, Sinology takes center stage at the University of Belgrade in Serbia and has seen the most significant development, whereas "Indology" has the longest history at the University of Zagreb in Croatia and also boasts the most prominent academic achievements. Currently, Asian Studies at the University of Zagreb in Croatia is carried out under "Indology and Far Eastern Studies" (Odsjek za indologiju i dalekoistočne studije).<sup>7</sup> Each major under Asian Studies once belonged to "General Linguistics/Oriental Studies" and later to "Oriental Studies/Hungarian Studies." The majors were then divided into sub-majors and put under the umbrella of the present "Indology and Far Eastern Department."

While Sinology and Japanology have a relatively short history at the University of Zagreb, in comparison the Indology Department was established along with the university, in 1874. In other words, prior to the formation of Yugoslavia as a country after the Second World War, Indology was already studied in Croatia under Oriental Studies and thus, the University of Belgrade, located in the capital of Yugoslavia, had no choice but to develop Sinology as the representative subject of Oriental Studies.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Indology was recognized as the foundation of humanities research and education since elements of Indo-European linguistics could be found in many languages and literatures.<sup>8</sup> At the University of Zagreb, Indology— prior to becoming its own

7 The Far Eastern Asian Department is divided into "Sinology" and "Japanology."

8 Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829), a nineteenth-century German Romanticist, never neglected the central position of language. He distinguished two types of language, that is, virtuous inflected language and non-inflected language of which the level of completeness is reduced. Inflected language has a psychological origin whereas non-inflected language is an "animal" or instinctual language. He believed that clear and sharp intellect or having high universal ideals is only possible through the inflection (refraction) of language based on Indian languages. See Bernal (2006).

department—had been included as part of Indo-European Studies and had a strong presence as it was considered the basis of Slavic linguistics. Sanskrit, an ancient Indian language, was important to understanding the entire Indo-European language. As it was Indology that formed the root of Slavic languages, even professors of Croatian could not avoid Sanskrit. Thus, Slavonic Studies, which included Croatian Studies, also included Indology, which had been established at the university at the very beginning. Indology in Croatia is not simply a field of Asian Studies but significantly contributes to the development of national literature in Croatia.

A key Indology scholar today is Mislav Ježić, who specializes in the relationship between Vedic and ancient Greek literatures and Indian linguistics and philosophy. He is also a member of the Croatian Academy (HAZU, Hrvatska Akademija Znanosti i Umjetnosti). Klara Gönc-Moačanin is another key scholar whose research interests focus on Asian culture, in particular ancient Indian literature and Japan's ancient theater. The University of Zagreb's Indology Department is currently made up of the following faculty: Professor Krešimir Krnić, who specializes in Indian and Sanskrit; Professors Goran Kardaš and Ivan Andrijanić, who specialize in Sanskrit and Indian philosophy; Professors Višnja Grabovac and Biljana Zrnić, whose research explores Indian and early Indian literature; Professor Sheoraj Singh Jain, who has translated multiple works of Indian literature into Croatian; and Visiting Professor Bharat Singh. Particularly, India-born professor Sheoraj Singh Jain, who received a doctoral degree in Croatian literature from the University of Zagreb in the 1980s, is a native professor of Indology who has made many efforts to broaden the study of Indology in Croatia.<sup>9</sup>

Although the Indology curriculum at the University of Zagreb in Croatia is almost identical to the Sinology curriculum at the University of Belgrade in Serbia, the biggest difference is that in the case of Croatia, students must choose two majors mandatorily in both the undergraduate and graduate programs. While these are usually four years (undergraduate) plus two more years (graduate) in South Korea, the study of Indology in Zagreb is completed in four years (undergraduate) plus one year (graduate) at the University of Zagreb. In addition, among the courses on offer in the Indology Department, the "Gypsy Literature / Culture" course is offered separately from the first to the fourth year.

Table 2 below provides a breakdown of the curricula of the Indian, Chinese, and Japanese language and study programs at Zagreb University. With the exception of foundation language classes, each department has its own characteristic subjects.

9 <http://www.ffzg.unizg.hr/indolog/>

Table 2.

Year	Indian Language and Studies	Chinese Language and Studies	Japanese Language and Studies
First Year (Freshman)	Indian Civilization Gypsy Literature and Language Sanskrit Literature 1	Chinese History	Japanese History and Culture Introduction to Japanese Literature 1
Second Year (Sophomore)	Indian Arts 1 Indian History and Culture Seminar 1 Sanskrit Literature 2	Chinese Philosophy	Introduction to Japanese Literature 2
Third Year (Junior)	Indian Arts 2 Indian History and Culture Seminar 2 Introduction to Indian Religions 1 Sanskrit Literature 3	Chinese Cultural History	Japanese History and Culture Introduction to Japanese Literature 3
Fourth Year (Senior)	Indian Arts 3 Indian History and Culture Seminar 3 Introduction to Indian Religions 2 Indian Mythology Sanskrit Literature 4		

Source: <http://www.ffzg.unizg.hr/indolog/>

Japanology opened at the University of Zagreb in Croatia beginning in the 2004/2005 academic year following a decision made by the university's Council of Philosophy Studies. It has a strong presence at the University of Zagreb alongside Indology and Sinology. However, as in Sinology, a certificate is issued rather than a formal undergraduate degree after three years of undergraduate study. Accordingly, after the program, students obtain an undergraduate degree by continuing their studies at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia, which I will discuss in more detail in the next section, or at Japanese universities with which the university has an exchange agreement. The joint-degree academic exchange agreement in Japanology with the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia is a step toward the University of Zagreb establishing a formal academic degree in Japanology on its own campus.

The faculty of Japanology, in cooperation with the Japanese embassy in Croatia and the Croatian Japanese Teacher Committee, hold the "Japanese Speaking Contest (日本語スピーチコンテスト)" on an annual basis, and also actively promote Japanese language and culture through a partnership with the Japanese Foundation. In addition, students majoring in Japanology

are sent to Budapest, Hungary, each year to take the Japanese Language Proficiency Test.<sup>10</sup>

While Japanology was established in the 2000s, Sinology was established as an elective foreign language course long before, in the 1970s. However, in the 2004/2005 academic year the course was reclassified under “Indology and Far Eastern Asian Studies” after a decision made by the Council of Philosophy Studies at the University of Zagreb in Croatia. In the 2006/2007 academic year, Sinology professors of Asian and African Studies at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia began to teach regular Sinology courses. At present the Sinology faculty at the University of Zagreb in Croatia includes two native professors dispatched by the Chinese government, three visiting professors from Slovenia, and one local Croatian professor who completed a doctoral program in Sinology and Korean Studies at Heidelberg University in Germany. As with Japanology, students of Sinology are issued a certificate rather than a formal undergraduate degree after completion of a three-year program. After obtaining the certificate, students can then obtain an undergraduate degree by continuing their studies of Sinology at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia or at Chinese universities with which the university has established an academic exchange. In addition to teaching, Sinology faculty play a cultural-exchange role by participating in so-called “crosslinking activities” (Kineski most, hanyuqiao, 汉语桥) that strengthen the relationship between the Chinese and Croatian governments. Faculty also prepare students for the official Chinese Proficiency Test (hanyu shuiping kaoshi, 汉语水平考试) with support from the Chinese government.<sup>11</sup>

Although Korean Studies is not an official department at the University of Zagreb in Croatia, a Korean language curriculum is available (to first through third year students) under the Chinese Language and Studies Department. The program is taught by a Croatian, a scholar who completed a PhD program in Korean Studies at Heidelberg University in Germany. However, it is worth paying attention to the fact that Korean is not offered within the framework of a Korean Studies-related department, nor is it offered as a second foreign language. Rather, it is offered, unusually, as an elective within the Chinese Language and Studies Department.

Moreover, even within the former Yugoslavia, compared to Slovenia, in which a formal degree in Korean Studies was created in 2015, and Serbia, where a program has existed since the late 1990s, Korean Studies has not received the same attention in Croatia. Given the geographic distance, the lack of cultural similarities and shared relations, as well as the lack of shared economic and political interests, from a certain point of view it is

10 <http://www.ffzg.unizg.hr/japanologija>

11 <http://www.ffzg.unizg.hr/sino/>

not surprising that Korean Studies has not developed spontaneously in Croatia. However, a television show about Croatia broadcast in November 2013 raised the interest of South Koreans in things Croatian. By late 2015, the number of Korean tourists that had visited Croatia exceeded 350,000. This rapid rise in tourist numbers is expected to continue, and in such circumstances, it is expected that interest in Korean language and culture will grow in Croatia. But while interest in Korea may suddenly rise in a short period of time, for such interest to be maintained and further developed, it must be accompanied by a “mutual economic exchange.” For Korean language and studies classes to be taught, and for such courses to become the basis for a department, and moreover, for students of such departments to find jobs in areas related to the Korean language, and for some students to pursue graduate studies— that is, to foster an academic virtuous circle—bilateral exchanges must continue and develop along constructive lines. In that respect, if we can combine the rapid rise of interest in Croatia amongst Koreans and the positive and productive way in which Croatians perceive the visits of Koreans to their country, it is much more likely that Korean Studies will become an established department in Croatia’s university system.

In July 2016, steps were made in this regard when Hankuk University of Foreign Studies and Split University concluded an agreement to establish a Korean language center. The center will offer two tracks of instruction: 1. “lectures in Korean language and culture targeting the general public”; and 2. “elective courses for students at Split University.” In October 2016, lectures in track one were set to begin, with elective courses for Split University students starting in October 2017.

The University of Ljubljana in Slovenia is the only university in the region of the former Yugoslavia that has established a Korean Studies Department (in September 2015). Asian Studies-related departments in general were not established independently at the University of Ljubljana until 1995 because of the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Even so, interest and investment in Asian Studies are rather larger than in other departments. Korean Studies as a new department within the Humanities and Arts College is heavily indebted to the active support and contributions of Andrej Bekeš, who is a Japanese researcher as well as professor of Japanology at this university. Andrej Bekeš served as dean of the Asian Studies Department at the University of Ljubljana (Oddelek za azijske študije) and played a leading role in promoting the education and research of Japanology within Slovenia as well as in the establishment of other Asian Studies departments. Professors of Sinology Jana S. Rošker and Mitja Saje were also a great help in the establishment of the Korean Studies Department. Jana S. Rošker, after obtaining a doctoral degree in Sinology from the University of Vienna in Austria and studying in China for four

years, created a Sinology curriculum which adapted Vienna's learning systems. Furthermore, Andrej Bekeš introduced into the Japanology curriculum of the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia various Japanese learning systems which he experienced while attending Tsukuba University in Japan.<sup>12</sup>

Asian Studies-related courses at the University of Ljubljana in the early 1980s were managed by the first generation of academics who had studied Sinology and Japanology at Chinese and Japanese universities, such as Andrej Bekeš, Jana S. Rošker, Mitja Saje, and Maja Lavrač. Unlike the Indology Department that was established by the Croatian government and the University of Zagreb, or Sinology at the University of Belgrade in Serbia, which was established as its own department through the active support of the Chinese government, the scholars who helped establish the Asian Studies Department at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia did so out of pure passion for the subject matter. Fortunately, their active efforts were complemented by positive advancements in the external environment. In economic terms, it was clear that China and Japan could not be disregarded in Slovenia's economic policy. Similarly, Korean Studies perhaps took only ten years to become its own formal department at the University of Ljubljana due to Korea's rapid economic development after 2000.

The University of Ljubljana in Slovenia seems to be building a framework for Asian Studies much more aggressively than any other university in the former Yugoslavia. It is reasonable to see this as a result of the Slovenian government's education policy, which focuses on practicality, rather than pure academic interest. This is reflected in the introduction to the Asian Studies Department at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia:

Thus, the studies offered by our department are not restricted to studying the languages and writings of Asian countries, but they regard them as a basic tool which helps us to understand their cultures on the whole. Sinology, Japanology and the future Korean Studies and Indology are therefore to be understood not only as philological but also as cultural studies. (<http://as.ff.uni-lj.si/predstavitev-oddelka/predstavitev-oddelka>)

Activities in Asian Studies at the University of Ljubljana go beyond just course offerings. Since 1997, the department has published an international journal called *Asian Studies* and holds annual international academic symposiums related to Sinology and Japanology. Furthermore, it has academic exchange agreements with Japan's University of Tsukuba, the University of Gunma, the University of Tokyo, the Tokyo Institute of

<sup>12</sup> <http://as.ff.uni-lj.si/>

Technology, the University for Foreign Studies in Tokyo, Japanese Women's University, and University Tohoku Fukushi. Among Chinese universities, it has academic exchange agreements with Chengdu University, Nankai University, Renmin University, Nanjing University, Qinghuangdao University, and Jingzhou University. Among Korean universities, it has academic exchanges with Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, ChungAng University, and the University of Seoul.

The Korean Studies program, which started with basic and intermediate Korean language courses in the 2003/2004 academic year and expanded in the 2008/2009 academic year to include enough courses to satisfy a double major, further developed in 2015 into its own department in which a formal undergraduate degree in Korean Studies can be obtained. At the time of its establishment the Korea Foundation reinstated support for faculty exchange, inviting Korean professors to teach in the department to strengthen its foundation. Furthermore the active efforts of Andrej Bekeš, who was dean of Asian Studies during the establishment of the Korean Studies Department, helped immensely to move the project forward. Moreover, the Academy of Korean Studies assisted the establishment with its "Seed Program for Korean Studies," under which support will be offered to the department over a three-year period from 2015 for academic materials development and research in South Korean literature. The department plans to invite Korean literary scholars as guest lecturers and to hold international conferences in Korean Studies to facilitate knowledge sharing on Korea. Korean cultural events and the translation and dissemination of Korean language works throughout Central Europe and the Balkans are also being planned. Korean Studies was approved as a formal subject of study for the 2015/2016 academic year by the Slovenian Ministry of Education. Fifteen students each year are selected to major in Korean Studies. In 2015, Korean Studies at the University of Ljubljana ranked ninth in enrollment among a total of fifty-one subjects. Given that it is a new department, it has received unusually high interest.

It goes without saying that the best way to effectively turn such interest into academic results is to develop an excellent curriculum. In order for this to happen, experienced, specialist teachers with an understanding of the requirements on the ground must be allowed to design new courses. With respect to Korean language education, a program already exists: Korean 1, 2, and 3. Attention should instead be directed to the creation of Korean literature and culture classes. Literature is not just language, but can be linked to cultural education. Providing Korean classes to Japanology and Sinology majors is another way to ignite interest. Moreover, developing classes for master and doctoral programs is now a matter of urgency. Thus, expanding the variety of courses on offer is undoubtedly essential.

For all this, Ljubljana University will have to support the development of an optimized set of teaching materials. While there is a wide range of Korean language textbooks on the market, mostly developed in South Korea, there are relatively few Korean literature-related materials available. There are, in particular, few if any literature-related textbooks targeting students in Central Europe and the Balkans. In Slovenia, all students have a command of English, but there is a need to devise and publish a set of literature-related textbooks to raise the effectiveness of education—this should reflect an awareness of the fact that the countries of the former Yugoslavia share, to some extent, a language and culture.

There are a total of ten courses on offer in the Korean Studies Department at the University of Ljubljana, with the exception of two courses in Chinese Language Practice added in July 2016. The course contents are shown in Table 3.<sup>13</sup>

**Table 3.**

Original language course name	English course name	Note
Korejska pisava	Writing Korean	Currently, as an elective, "Chinese language practice 1, 2" has been established. In 2013-2014, before the establishment of a formal department, "Korean language 1, 2" was initiated.
Korejska umetnost	Korean Arts	
Korejska literatura	Korean Literature	
Fonetika korejščine 1	Korean Phonetics 1	
Metodologija medkulturnih raziskav 2	Cross-cultural Research Methodology 2	
Sodobni korejski jezik 1	Modern Korean Language 1	
Sodobni korejski jezik 2	Modern Korean Language 2	
Sodobni korejski jezik 3	Modern Korean Language 3	
Sodobne družbene razmere v Vzhodni Aziji	The Modern Social Environment in East Asia	
Korejske študije - arhiv	Korean Studies - Material	

Source: <https://e-ucenje.ff.uni-lj.si/course/index.php?categoryid=131>

The establishment of Korean Studies as formal major is the result of active efforts by the Slovenian and Korean governments in addition to the continuous interest and efforts of the Asian Studies faculty at the

<sup>13</sup> <https://e-ucenje.ff.uni-lj.si/course/index.php?categoryid=131>

University of Ljubljana. Slovenia has no Korean embassy; it falls under the jurisdiction of the Korean embassy in Austria. In March 2015, the ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Austria, Youngwan Song, and the president of the University of Ljubljana, Dr. Ivan Svetlik, held active discussions on the development plan for Korean Studies in Slovenia. Shortly thereafter, Slovenian Foreign Minister Karl Erjavec visited Korea and announced that Korean Studies would begin at the University of Ljubljana beginning from the fall semester of 2015, and requested support from the Korean government in this regard.

The University of Ljubljana case provides us with many lessons on establishing Korean Studies departments at foreign universities. What is needed first and foremost is for local scholars to actively promote such a department based on academic or practical needs, and then for them to start from the beginning by offering a simple language course. Next, there is a need to garner close cooperation and support from the local Korean embassy, the local government, and the Korean government. However, it is vital to keep in mind that without the support of local universities and scholars, any effort by the Korean government or local embassy to launch a Korean Studies department will soon collapse. As well, the following question must be asked and answered: Who will take the responsibility and lead Korean Studies with a long-term developmental vision? Governments should collaborate with universities, not lead the establishment of Korean Studies on their own, and they should remember that even things that look easy to achieve are often not. In this sense, the answer to the above question has to be the university and local scholars.

## Conclusion

Unlike Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, which were satellite countries of the Soviet Bloc during the Cold War, Yugoslavia, which created an independent communist economic and social system located somewhere between the United States and the Soviet Union after the Second World War, did not introduce “North Korean Studies” at its universities as other communist countries did prior to the 1990s. It had no “South Korean Studies” either. Rather, its Asian Studies focused on Indology, Sinology, and Japanology.

Asian Studies in Yugoslavia, after it disbanded into six countries after the 1990s, came to be divided into distinct academic fields according to each republic. In the Republic of Serbia, for example, “Sinology” became representative of Asian Studies, while in Croatia and Slovenia, the focus was on “Indology” and “Japanology,” respectively

However, due to Korea’s economic development after the 2000s, the

country's increased status in global society, and the influence of the "Korean Wave" (which began in China), "North Korean Studies" came to be replaced with "South Korean Studies" in former communist countries. Through steady support from the Academy of Korean Studies, which pursues the globalization of Korean Studies, and the Korea Foundation, a formal Korean Studies Department was established at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia for the first time in the 2015/2016 academic year. This department is also the first of its kind among the six republics that formally comprised Yugoslavia. In the future, establishment of Korean Studies is expected in other countries including Croatia and Serbia.

Given the complexity of establishing new departments at universities the role of local scholars should not be underestimated. Indeed, governmental support alone cannot solve all problems for departmental establishment. If appropriate economic support from the Korean government is added to the willingness and efforts of local universities and scholars of Asian Studies, including Korean Studies, the process of department establishment can be less complicated and take a shorter amount of time. This fact needs to be recognized by Korean governmental agencies. Governments should collaborate with universities, but take the position of facilitators rather than leaders in order for the establishment to succeed.

The University of Split established the Korean Studies Research Center in 2018 through "the Seed Program", which supports Korean Studies programs at overseas universities, which are often lacking Korean studies education and research. The Center has been given the role of a central institution that manages Korean language and Korean studies education at the University of Split in an integrated manner and publishes an international journal. In addition, through cooperation with the Research Center for Comparative Culture of the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, the scope of the research will be expanded to a comparison of cultures across Asia and the world, including Korea. Furthermore, the University of Split must strive to expand research capabilities not limited to Croatia through ties and cooperation with Korean departments established at universities in Eastern Europe and cooperation with universities in Korea. The University of Split in Croatia is to be at the center of Korean studies education and research beyond the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia, where undergraduate and graduate programs are currently installed, as well as Belgrade University and Novi Sad University in Serbia, where Korean language courses are operated. For such an ultimate goal, a regular Korean department must be established, and through this, it is necessary to draw support from Korea.

## Works Cited

- Baek, Young-Seo. 2007. "The direction that Koreanology studies in the humanities area should take in the future: Ideology and Institution." *Korean Studies* 17: 41-55. Center for Korean Studies, Inha University.
- Bernal, Martin. 2006. *Black Athena 1* [블랙 아테나]. Translated by Oh Heungsik [오흥식]. Seoul: Sonamoo [소나무].
- Kawashima, Delakorda Tinka. 2016. "The re-evaluation of Weber in Japan and some perspectives for the treatment of religion in relation to consumerism." [Ponovno ovrednotenje Webra na Japonskem in nekatere izhodšća za obravnavo religije v povezavi s potrošništvom]. *Asian Studies IV* (1): 247-263.
- Kim, Dongtaek [김동택]. 2006. "How to support Korean studies overseas." *Korea Focus on Current Topics* 14 (1): 111-124. Korea Foundation [한국국제교류재단].
- Kim, Dongtaek [김동택]. 2006. "Korean wave and Korean studies: status of foreign Korean studies and support plan" [한류와 한국학: 해외 한국학 현황과 지원 방안]. *Historical criticism* [역사비평] 213- 240.
- Kim, Kyung-Ryung. 2015. "A Study of Korean Learners Language Learning Style." *Korean language and culture* 17: 77-98.
- Kim, So-young. 2013. "The Korean wave and the present situation of Korean language education by using contents of Korean classical literature in Bulgaria - Focused on the educational contents of the Department of Korean Studies at Sofia University." *Korean Language and Literature* 51: 103-125.
- Kim, Tschung-Sun. 2009. "Korean Studies as Cultural Studies: Toward East Asian Korean Studies." *Keimyung Korean Studies Journal* 38: 195-225.
- Kim, Young. 2009. "The Present State of Korean Studies in the U.K." *Korean Studies* 21: 419-440.
- Korea Foundation [한국국제교류재단]. 2007. *Foreign Korean Studies White Papers* [해외한국학 백서]. Seoul: Eulyumunhwasa [을유문화사].
- Kwak, Sumin [곽수민]. 2012. "Analysis of Korean studies trends and research of development factors" [해외한국학 동향 분석 및 발전요인 연구]. *Mental Culture Research* [정신문화연구] 35 (3): 211-241.
- Lee, Wanbeom [이완범]. 2009. "Study on status of foreign Korean Studies and long-term development plan" [해외한국학 현황 및 중장기 발전 방안 연구]. Policy research report of Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [교육과학기술부 정책연구과제 결과보고서] 1-201.
- Min, Chung-Ki. 1990. "A Framework for a Better Relationship between Korea and the European Community." *East and West studies series* 18: 175-202.

- Moskowitz, Karl. 1982. "Korean development and Korean studies." *Journal of Asian Studies* 42 (1): 63-91.
- Park, Jeong Kyung [박정경]. 2015. "Promoting Korean Studies in African Universities: A Case Study on Kenya." *Comparative Korean Studies* 23 (2): 361-389.
- Patterson, Wayne K. 2001. "Korean in America and the Future of Korean Studies." *Comparative Korean Studies* 8: 123-128.
- Provine, R.C. 1995. "Current Korean Studies in Europe." *Asian research trends* 5: 105-114.
- Sasse, Werner. 1996. "Teaching Korean culture through Korean Studies." *Korea journal* 36 (3): 20.
- Shabshina, Fanya. 1990. "The Korean reality and Korea studies in the USSR." *Far Eastern Affairs* 70: 76-90.
- Vorontsov, Vladilen. 1992. "Korean studies at the Oriental Department of Russia's Open University." *Far Eastern Affairs* 83: 7-10.
- Yeon, Jaehoon [연재훈]. 1997. "Status of Korean language education and research in England" [영국에서의 한국어 교육과 연구 현황]. *Gyoyug Han-Geul [교육한글]* 1 (10): 113-140.
- Yeon, Jaehoon [연재훈]. 2001. "The Present State of Korean Language Education at Universities in Europe." *Bilingual Society* 18 (1): 381-401.