

한류를 통해서 본 한국학의 발전

“Hallyu and Korean Studies Education in Hong Kong”

-A case study at the Community College of City University of Hong Kong-

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## 1. Introduction

Hong Kong has a relatively short history of Korean studies, although Hong Kong has a strong economic relation with Korea for more than 50 years. In 1998, Hong Kong University of Science & Technology (HKUST) started to offer Korean courses, and in 2005 Community College of City University (CCCU) launched Korean major program for the first in Hong Kong.

The main purpose of this study is to look for ways to develop the competitiveness of Korean studies in Hong Kong by understanding the students' need. For this, a series of surveys were conducted with the students of Korean major program and the students who took the Korean courses as electives. With the results of the surveys, an attempt was made to explain the impact of Hallyu on the Korean Studies in Hong Kong.

## 2. Surveys

### 2-1. Before Hallyu

It was 1998 when HKUST started to offer Korean courses for the first time in tertiary education institutes in Hong Kong. In 1998 to 1999, HKUST was also offering other foreign language courses, and they were compared at the table below. (Please note that English and Chinese are the major official languages in Hong Kong)

Language	Number of instructor	Number of Student enrolled /year	Course category
Japanese	3	~400	Elective
French	1	~140	Elective
German	1	~100	Elective
Korean	1	~90	Elective

*-Language Centre, HKUST, 1998-1999-*

The new Korean courses were conducted at two levels (basic & intermediate levels). Each course had 3 hours a week without credits.

A series of surveys were conducted at the first lesson of each semester during 1998 to 1999. Total about 100 of students were surveyed in HKUST. The students were requested to choose their two major reasons for taking the Korean courses. The result is shown at the table below:

<i>The reasons to take Korean course</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Interest on the language	12%
Interest on the culture	15%
For employment	1%
For travel	25%
Other reasons	47%

-Korean courses, HKUST, 1998-1999-

Before Hallyu began, Korea and Korean culture were not popular topics to the ordinary people (including the university students) in Hong Kong, even though Korea had been one of the major economic partners for Hong Kong for a long time. (Hong Kong has been the fourth biggest economic market to Korea and Korea has been the fifth to Hong Kong after Japan, Taiwan, USA and Singapore.) The university students' knowledge on Korea was very limited and many of them didn't even know that there were two Koreas and Seoul was the South Korea's capital city. Until that time, Korea was just one of neighboring countries and more like a "hermitage kingdom" to them. (Linkage, CityU Today, May 2001) Hence, as shown in the table above, the interest in Korean language and its culture was not the major reason for their taking the Korean courses.

## 2-2. Hallyu's Impact on Korean Studies in Hong Kong

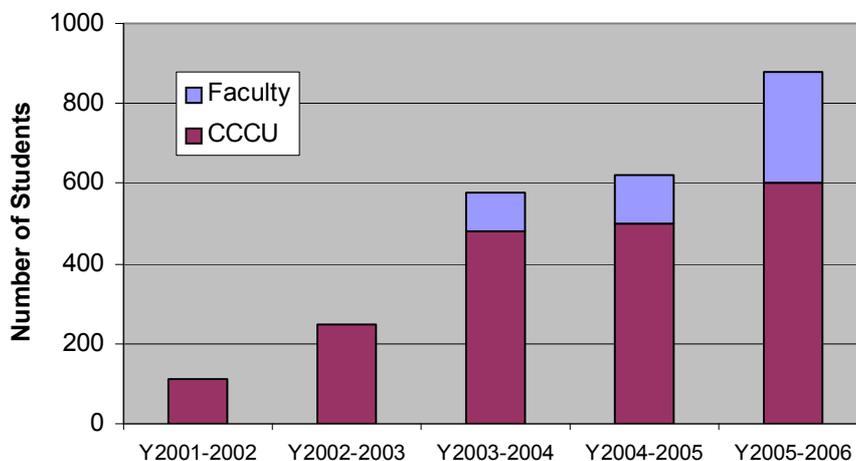
Since 2000, like the other countries in the Asia region, Korean popular culture has gained considerable attention and concern among the young generation in Hong Kong. It was 2001 when Korean television dramas, movies and songs were actively introduced and finally gained a huge popularity in Hong Kong. The milestones of the Korean storm (called "Hallyu") in Hong Kong can be briefly summarized as below:

Title	Category	Year	Remarks
가을동화 (Autumn Tails)	TV drama	2001	The first big hit Korean TV drama in Hong Kong
엽기적인 그녀 (My Sassy Girl)	Movie	2002	The best movie of the year of Hong Kong
대장금 (Dae Jang Keum)	TV drama	2005	The most popular TV drama in Hong Kong TV history (attracted ~40% of TV watchers)

-Hyewon Kang Kim, Rita Takahashi, "Korean Studies in Hong Kong", the 6<sup>th</sup> PACKS, SNU, 2001;  
Hyewon Kang Kim, "Korean Language, Culture and Korean Language Education in Hong Kong", GK, Kyung Hee U, 2006-

Due to Hallyu, more people in Hong Kong, particularly young generation, began to pay more attention to current Korean entertainment business. In 2001, City University of Hong Kong (the Division of Language Studies of the Community College, CCCU) timely decided to introduce the Korean courses for undergraduate and college students. It was the first time in Hong Kong's tertiary educations to establish "Korean Section". From 2001 to 2003, five Korean courses (electives with credits) were developed and offered the university wide. In 2003, the Chinese Department (another department of City University) began to offer Korean Studies as a minor program.

During the last 6 years, the number of students enrolled for the Korean courses at the University (Faculties and College) has been increased significantly. (Please see the chart below.)



-Hyewon Kang Kim, "Korean Language, Culture and Korean Language Education in Hong Kong", GK, Kyung Hee U, 2006-

In 2005, the Division of Language Studies of CCCU expanded its Korean program and launched Korean major program (Associate in Arts) for the first time in Hong Kong. The table below shows the six major language programs that the Division of Language Studies is currently offering:

Program	Number of Students (major)	Number of Teaching Staff	Remarks
Chinese	~ 480	12+3	Appl. Chinese Studies
English	~ 470	18+5	Eng. Prof. Comm., Transl. & Interp.
Japanese	~ 450	7+4	Appl. Japanese Studies, Bilingual
French	95	2+2	Bilingual
Korean	38	1+3	Bilingual
Spanish	20 (year 1)	1+1	Bilingual

The new Korean major program is in a form of "Bilingual Communication Studies" with two options: Korean-Chinese and Korean-English. For the new program, thirteen new Korean courses have been developed and offered:

Practical Spoken Korean I	Advanced Spoken Korean II
Practical Spoken Korean II	Advanced Written Korean I
Practical Written Korean I	Advanced Written Korean II
Practical Written Korean II	Korean in Business Contexts
Korean for Tourism and Hospitality	Bilingual Project (Korean & Chinese)
Introduction to Korean Culture and Society	Bilingual Project (Korean & English)
Advanced Spoken Korean I	

### 2-3. Surveys with the Students Who Took the Korean Courses as Electives

A series of surveys were conducted with total about 600 of students who took the Korean courses (General Korean I) as elective over the last 6 years. For the surveys, the students were asked to answer the questions related Korean popular culture and Korean products. The results clearly showed that, because of Hallyu, more students could tell the names of Korean popular entertainers, Korean companies, and other Korean related things.

Also, they were asked to answer the following questions, which are related to the basic background of Korea:

- (1) What is the official name of South Korea?
- (2) Where is the capital city of South Korea?
- (3) What is the official name of North Korea?
- (4) Where is the capital city of North Korea?
- (5) Where is the international airport of South Korea?
- (6) What is called the Korean national flag?
- (7) What is the famous/the biggest island in Korea?
- (8) What is called the Korean traditional dress?
- (9) What is called the Korean martial arts?
- (10) What is called the Korean fermented vegetables?

The ratio of answering the correct answers for the questions above has been increased year by year, which is summarized at the table below.

Year	Average Score
1998*	5%
2001	10%
2003	15%
2005	30%
2006	40%

*\*For 1998, the students were from HKUST.*

According to the surveys (shown in the table below), the students' interest in the Korean culture has become the main reason for taking Korean courses. It is believed that this is a big change made by Hallyu, compared to the survey done in 1998 (shown in chapter 2-1).

<i>The reasons to take Korean course</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2006</i>
Interest on the language	12%	14%	18%
Interest on the culture	17%	<b>25%</b>	<b>40%</b>
For employment	1%	4%	7%
For travel	<b>36%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>32%</b>
Other reasons	34%	16%	3%

### 2-4. Surveys with the Students of Korean Major Program

A series of surveys (with the same questions described the above) were conducted in the first lesson with the students who took Korean program as their major in 2005 and 2006. As expected, the students of Korean major program had better knowledge about Korea than the students who took the Korean courses as electives. The average scores were more than 70% and 90%, in 2005 and 2006, respectively.

The students of Korean major program were also asked the questions below and the results are summarized at the table below.

<b>Year 1&gt;</b> <b>Why did you decide to take Korean Studies as your major?</b>	<b>Year 2&gt;</b> <b>I continue Korean Studies because:</b>
~40% of Year 1 say: <i>Korean people's unique characters and their general &amp; traditional culture are attractive</i>	~60% of Year 2 say: <i>I like general Korean culture (including traditional culture)</i>
~40% of Year 1 say: <i>I love Korean popular culture very much</i>	~10% of Year 2 say: <i>I like Korean popular culture very much</i>
~20% of Year 1 say: <i>The Korean language are useful and attractive</i>	~30% of Year 2 say: <i>I'm seeking employment opportunities</i>

Here, it is interesting and important to note that employment is not the major reason. There have not been Korean major graduates in Hong Kong yet. Therefore, there are no references for the students. It can be expected that their expectation of employment will be increased, once the graduates have been employed by Korean firms in Hong Kong.

## 2-5. Hallyu's Impact on the Image of Korea and Korean

According to the surveys conducted with the Korean course students, the general image of Korea and its people has been significantly improved. The change in the image of Korea and its people is summarized at the table below.

	2001	2006
Korea	Patriarchy ( <b>Men dominating society</b> )	Clean/ Beautiful/ Unique/ Well organized/ <b>Traditional</b>
Korean People	<b>Men: aggressive/ violent/ macho/</b> be treated superior to women	United like a family National spirit <b>Nice/ polite/ friendly/ simple</b> <b>Handsome/ Pretty people</b> Respect elders
	<b>Women: passive/</b> be treated inferior to men	

For the surveys, the students were asked to describe Korea and its people with a few words. For each, around 200 Korean course students participated. (For the survey in 2006, the students of Korean major program were also included.). Here, it is interesting to note that the comments of 2001 in the table above are very similar to the result of a survey conducted by Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Hong Kong with the participants of their students in 1998-1999.

### **3. Concluding Remarks**

Hong Kong and Korea have over 50 years economic relation and the two countries have been mutually important each other for economic trade. More than 700 Korean firms are currently operating in Hong Kong. The trade volume between Hong Kong and Korea has reached up to USD 24 billion in the year of 2005, which made Hong Kong ranked the fourth to Korea after China, USA and Japan while Korea ranked the fifth trading partner to Hong Kong. Before Hallyu began, however, the importance of Korean language and its culture had been underestimated in Hong Kong, despite of the strong economic relation between the two countries.

For the first time in history, the people in Hong Kong have become interested in Korea and its culture. It is true that the boom of Korean popular culture (“Hallyu”) is the key factor, which made a significant increase in the demand of learning Korean language and its culture. It is also true that Hallyu has not been said only made by Korean pop culture and its entertainers. Korean products with high quality and technology, and their smart design gradually have been recognized and gained popularity in Hong Kong. Also, the dynamic and spiritual people in Korea during the 2002 soccer World-cup made a good impression. I strongly believe that these things also have significantly contributed for the good image of Korea as an advanced country and make a good influence particularly into the students who decide to choose Korean Studies as their major.

Lastly, it should be mentioned that, to attract more students for the Korean Studies, it is needed to cooperate with Korean firms in Hong Kong to provide the students with more employment opportunities. Until today, the Korean firms have not expected to hire Korean speaking local people. So, the cooperation with the Korean firms will be mutually beneficial in the future.