



<b>Title</b>	<b>Korean Language and Korean Studies in Hong Kong (1998–2009)</b>
<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Kang Kim, H</b>
<b>Citation</b>	<b>Electronic journal of foreign language teaching, 2010, v. 7 n. Supp.1, p. 141-153</b>
<b>Issued Date</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>URL</b>	<b><a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10722/193570">http://hdl.handle.net/10722/193570</a></b>
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# Korean Language and Korean Studies in Hong Kong (1998–2009)<sup>1</sup>

**Hyewon Kang Kim**

([hyuhye@hotmail.com](mailto:hyuhye@hotmail.com))

The University of Hong Kong, China

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## Abstract

Hong Kong has a relatively short history of Korean Studies, although Hong Kong has had strong economic relations with Korea for more than 50 years. The main purpose of this study is to examine the development of Korean language learning and Korean Studies in Hong Kong. For this, a series of surveys were conducted among Korean language learners in Hong Kong. From the surveys, it was found that most Korean language learners have a strong interest in Korean popular culture. It was also found that due to the Korean wave (*Hallyu*), the image of Korea and its people has improved significantly over the last decade. However, the strong interest in Korean popular culture and *Hallyu* is not sufficient for Korean Studies or Korean major programs to grow further. In order to attract more students into these programs, it may be necessary to cooperate with Korean firms in Hong Kong to provide students with more employment opportunities.

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## 1 Introduction

Hong Kong is ranked fourth as international financial center in the world, after London, New York and Tokyo, and it has had strong economic relations with Korea<sup>2</sup> over the last half century. In spite of the strong economic relations, however, Hong Kong universities have had a relatively short history teaching and exploring Korean Studies. It was only a decade ago that the first Korean language courses were introduced in Hong Kong's universities for their students. Today, in Hong Kong, around 5,000 people are currently learning the Korean language at universities and other language centers (Kang Kim, 2009).

The first Korean language courses at Hong Kong's universities were started in 1998, by the author of this article, at the Hong Kong University of Science & Technology (HKUST). The purpose of this study is to examine the development of Korean language learning and Korean Studies in Hong Kong, particularly during the last decade, and to try to look for ways to develop their competitiveness in the region by understanding the needs of the Hong Kong society and its students. The current study about Korean Studies in Hong Kong is the first of its kind, since there have been no previously published works on this topic. For this reason, a series of surveys was conducted among various groups of Korean language learners in Hong Kong. Most of the surveys here were carried out by the author in the Korean courses she taught between 1998 and 2009.

## 2 Relations between Korea and Hong Kong

In 1945, just after the Second World War, Koreans who had lived in China came to Hong Kong and settled in the region. In 1949, the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea was established in Hong Kong. It was among the first Korean overseas missions to be established along with

the Embassy in Washington D.C. and the Consulate General in Los Angeles. Since then, Hong Kong has been one of Korea's most important economic partners. Now over 11,000 Korean residents live in Hong Kong and over 520 Korean firms operate in the region (The Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Hong Kong, 2009). Due to the dominant characteristics of Hong Kong as a business society, Korean residents' major businesses are trade, tourism and restaurant businesses, and they belong mostly to the upper middle class in the Hong Kong society (Moon, 2005).

With regard to economic relations, Hong Kong is Korea's fourth largest exporting partner after China, the United States and Japan, while Korea is the sixth largest trading partner of Hong Kong's after China, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore and the United States. Hong Kong holds the fifth place in terms of investments in Korea, behind China, the United States, Vietnam and Indonesia. The bilateral trade volume between Hong Kong and Korea reached 21.9 billion USD in 2008. Due to the heavy traffic between Hong Kong and Korea, 74 flights operate per week (The Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Hong Kong 2009). Over the last decade, the image of Korea and the Korean people has significantly improved. Up till 2000, Korea was not well-known to the Hong Kong people and the Korean language was not popular. Since 2001, thanks mainly to the Korean wave or *Hallyu*<sup>3</sup> (한류/韓流), Korean things have become popular in Hong Kong where it is easy to find taxi drivers and shopkeepers speaking a few simple Korean sentences. The increased interest in Korea became evident in 2005, when Community College of City University of Hong Kong (CCCU) launched the first Korean major programme in Hong Kong. At that time, the Hong Kong media, including all newspapers, magazines and television broadcasting stations, covered the news and introduced this new programme to the Hong Kong public (Kang Kim, 2009).

### 3 Foreign language education in Hong Kong

The Hong Kong population comprises about 7 million people and 95 percent of them are Chinese, and the predominant language in Hong Kong is Cantonese, a dialect of Chinese. Due to the strong influence of the British colonial government, the English language is common in Hong Kong (Central Intelligence Agency [CIA], 2007).<sup>4</sup> According to the census report of 1991 (cf. Dickson & Cumming, 1996), 29.4 percent of Hong Kong people were able to speak English and the current situation is expected to be similar.

Since Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, Standard Chinese, Putonghua, has become more important than ever, and the Hong Kong Government's language policy promotes trilingualism (Cantonese, Putonghua and English) and bi-literacy (Chinese and English). At the same time, the Education Bureau (EDB) of the Hong Kong Government promotes foreign language learning through the Continuing Education Fund reimbursement scheme. Currently, seven languages (English, Putonghua, French, German, Japanese, Spanish and Korean) are covered by the plan. Korean has been included in the scheme since September 2007.

In Hong Kong as a whole, Japanese is the most popular foreign language after English. The table below shows the number of teaching staff at the University of Hong Kong (HKU) and City University of Hong Kong (City U)-Community College of City University (CCCU) for each language.

<i>Language</i>	<i>Number of Teaching Staff*</i>	
	<i>Full time</i>	<i>Part time</i>
Japanese	27	23
French	8	28
German	5	8
Spanish	8	11
Italian	2	2
Portuguese	0	1
<b>Korean</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>

*\*Combined number from HKU & City U-CCCU, 2008*

**Table 1: Number of teaching staff at HKU & City U-CCCU in 2008 (in the order of their establishment)**

#### **4 Development of Korean language education and Korean Studies in Hong Kong**

Korean language education started in 1960 at the Korean Saturday School (한국토요학원) organized by the Association of Korean Residents in Hong Kong for the second generation Koreans. In 1994, the Korean International School of Hong Kong opened to non-Koreans and provided two sections (Korean and English).

There are a small number of local elementary schools and secondary schools which offer Korean language classes as extracurricular activities: St. Clare's Girls' School, Valtorta College and S. K. H. Li Ping Secondary School etc. However, the Korean International School is the only international school to offer Korean language classes.

In Hong Kong, there are eight major universities, which are all government-funded institutions. In 1998, a Korean course was introduced for the first time at the tertiary level in Hong Kong at the Language Centre of HKUST. Between 1998 and 1999, HKUST also offered other foreign language courses, which are compared in the table below.

<i>Language</i>	<i>Number of Instructors</i>	<i>Approximate Number of Students Enrolled per Year</i>
Japanese	3	400
French	1	140
German	1	100
<b>Korean</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>90</b>

*Source: Language Centre, HKUST, 1998–1999*

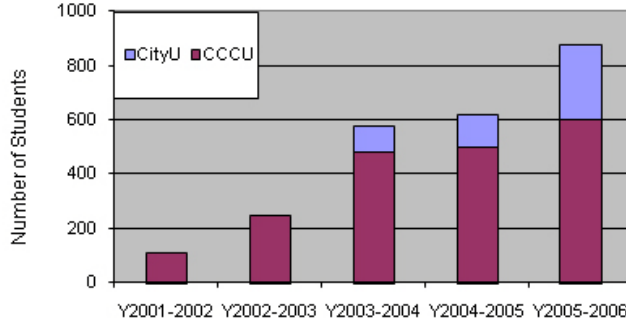
**Table 2: Languages and students numbers at HKUST in 1998–1999 (in the order of their establishment; cf. Kang Kim, 2006, 2009)**

The new Korean language courses were conducted at three levels (basic, intermediate and advanced), with each course consisting of three hours of tutorial a week without credits.

In 2001, CCCU (formerly the Division of Language Studies of City U) started to offer Korean language courses as electives on a university-wide basis. CCCU also offered Korean courses to City U as well from 2001 to 2005. Its Associate Degree is awarded by City U. The language programs which the division had provided at that time were: Applied Chinese Studies, English for Professional Communication, Translation & Interpretation, Applied Japanese Studies, and French courses. For the Korean program, the courses Korean for Tourism and Korean for Business Communication were developed. The design of these courses reflects the characteristics of Hong Kong's special circumstances as a tourism and business city.

During 2001–2006, the number of students enrolled in the Korean courses at both CCCU and City U is shown in the figure below. City U's Department of Chinese, Translation & Linguistics (CTL) launched Korean courses in 2003. In 2001–2002, when the Korean courses were offered for

the first time at the university, there were 110 students enrolled, 250 students in 2002–2003, 580 students in 2003–2004 (480 students in CCCU's courses, around 100 students in City U's courses), 620 students in 2004–2005 (500 students in CCCU's courses, around 120 students in City U's courses), and 870 students in 2005–2006 (600 students in CCCU's courses, around 270 students in City U's courses).



**Figure 1: Student numbers for Korean courses between 2001 and 2006 at CCCU & City U (cf. Kang Kim, 2006)**

Encouraged by the positive feedback from students, in 2005, CCCU launched the Korean Associate Degree Program (Associate of Arts) in the form of a Bilingual Communication Studies program with two language options: Korean-Chinese and Korean-English. It was the first Korean major program among Hong Kong's tertiary education institutions. The table below shows the six major language programs that the Division of Language Studies offered during the years of 2005–2006.

<i>Language</i>	<i>Number of Students (major)</i>	<i>Program</i>
Chinese	app. 220	Applied Chinese Studies
English	app. 500	English for Professional Communication, Translation & Interpretation
Japanese	app. 500	Applied Japanese Studies, Bilingual (Japanese-English, Japanese-Chinese)
French	85	Bilingual Communication Studies (French-English)
Korean	36	Bilingual Communication Studies (Korean-Chinese, Korean-English)
Spanish	20 (Year 1)	Bilingual Communication Studies (Spanish-English)

*Source: Division of Language Studies, CCCU, 2006*

**Table 3: Language programs and students numbers in the Division of Language Studies, CCCU, in 2006 (in the order of their establishment)**

For the new Korean major program at CCCU, thirteen new Korean courses have been developed and offered:

- Practical Spoken Korean I (Speaking & Listening)

- Practical Spoken Korean II (Speaking & Listening)
- Practical Written Korean I (Grammar, Writing)
- Practical Written Korean II (Grammar, Writing, Translations)
- Korean for Tourism and Hospitality
- Introduction to Korean Culture and Society
- Advanced Spoken Korean I (Speaking & Listening)
- Advanced Spoken Korean II (Speaking & Listening)
- Advanced Written Korean I (Grammar, Writing, Essays, News articles, Translations, etc.)
- Advanced Written Korean II (Grammar, Writing, Essays, News articles, Translations, etc.)
- Korean in Business Contexts
- Bilingual Project (Korean & Chinese)
- Bilingual Project (Korean & English)

In addition to the above courses offered by CCCU, the courses, Korean Literature through Translated Works, Contemporary Popular Culture of Korea, Advanced Reading and Writing in Korean, Governance in Modern Korea, and Cultural Heritage of Korea, were offered under the Minor in Korean Studies in City U's CTL. In 2007, the university launched a Bachelor of Arts program with specialization in Korean.

In 2003, Lingnan University of Hong Kong held the annual international conference of Korean Studies, which included various topics such as Korean economy, politics, society, Korean cinema and Korean pop-culture. Since 2004, the history department of the university has introduced Korean history courses.

In 2006, the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) started to offer Korean language course as electives to their students, and the department of Sociology also started to offer a course, "Korean Society and Culture." In 2007, the Language Centre of Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) started to offer Korean language courses as electives to their students.

In 2007, HKU established Korean Section in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures of the Faculty of Arts and started to offer a Minor in Korean Studies from 2008. In addition to Korean minor program, the university offers ten other language and culture programs: Arabic, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish and Thai. The university has also been organizing an annual international conference of Korean Studies since 2007, which focused on themes such as Korean language education, economics, politics and sociology. The newly established Korean minor program and the annual international conference at such a leading university reflect the growing popularity and importance of the Korean language, culture and society in the region.

Apart from the universities' elective courses and degree programs in Korean Language and Korean Studies, there are institutions which offer Korean language courses to the public. These are the School of Continuing Education of HKBU, the School of Continuing & Professional Studies of CUHK, the School of Professional & Continuing Education of HKU, the Labor Union of the Hong Kong Government, the Korean Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, and the Korean Language Culture Center (KLCC, a private learning center. These institutes and learning centers which offer Korean language courses or Korean Studies in Hong Kong are summarized in the table below:

<i>Institutions</i>	<i>Korean Program</i>	<i>Department</i>	<i>Year Launched</i>	<i>Target Groups</i>
The Hong Kong University of Science & Technology (HKUST)	Language	Language Centre	1998–1999	University students
Community College of City University (CCCU)	Language (Electives)	Division of Language Studies	2001	University & college students
	Associate of Arts (Associate Degree)		2005	
City University (City U)	Minor in Korean Studies	Dept. of Chinese, Translation & Linguistics	2003	University students
	BA in Language Studies		2007	
Lingnan University	Korean History (Electives)	Dept. of History	2004	University students
School of Professional & Continuing Education of Hong Kong University (HKUSPACE)	Language	School of Professional & Continuing Education	2004	College students & the public
Chinese University (CUHK)	Language (Electives)	Dept. of Linguistics	2006	University students
	Korean Society & Culture	Dept. of Sociology	2006	
	Language (Certificate)	School of Continuing & Professional Studies	2002	The public
The University of Hong Kong (HKU)	Language (Electives/Certificate)	School of Modern Languages & Cultures	2007	University students
	Minor in Korean Studies		2008	
Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU)	Language (Electives)	Language Centre	2007	University students
	Language	School of Continuing Education	1993	The public
Labor Union	Language	Spare-time Study Centre	1994	The public
Korean Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong	Language		2003	The public
Korean Language Culture Center (Private center)	Language		2005	The public

**Table 4: Institutions and Korean Language/Korean Studies offered in Hong Kong (in the order of their establishment; see Kang Kim, 2009)**

## 5 Survey series I: Korean language learners in Hong Kong

In order to understand the current status of Korean language learners in Hong Kong, a series of surveys were conducted among different groups of Korean language learners in Hong Kong. The first surveys were conducted in 2007 by the author with 600 Korean language learners at the Korean Language Culture Center and at HKUSPACE. Of the 300 respondents at KLCC, 70 percent were working people, 25 percent were students and 5 percent were others. 10 percent were male and the other 90 percent female, and their ages ranged from 7 to 60. The respondents from HKUSPACE were 300 continuing education learners, consisting of 55 percent working people, 35 percent students and 10 percent others. 15 percent were male and 85 percent female, with their ages ranging from 17 to 50. The second round of surveys were conducted in the form of a random survey using an on-line questionnaire with 400 Korean language learners (Chan, Ku, Tsui, To, & Wong, 2007). Of the 400 respondents at the on-line questionnaire, 35 percent were working people, 48 percent were students and 17 percent were others. 7 percent were male and the other 93 percent female, and their ages range from 19 to 40 were 70 percent. The combined results from both rounds of surveys are summarized below.

- The majority of Korean language learners in Hong Kong are female (89 percent) and of age 19 to 40 (73 percent). A large number are actively working in the society as company employees (53 percent), while some are students (36 percent).
- They use mainly private language centers where they can freely choose suitable times to take courses (69 percent).
- All of them (100 percent) think that the Korean language is popular in Asia and will be useful for their business or career.
- The average duration of learning is about one year (63 percent). Most of the students think that one year of study is sufficient to satisfy their basic desire to learn more about Korea and the Korean people. 36 percent of the learners had spent one and a half to two years learning Korean, and only 1 percent of the students had learned Korean for more than three years.
- The motives the students had for learning Korean (more than one option allowed) are the following: interest in Korean dramas and movies (76 percent), Korean pop songs (58 percent) and the language and culture (45 percent).

From the survey results, it could be seen that many of Korean language learners have a strong interest in Korean pop culture. It seems that they learn Korean not for their career development, even though they think that learning Korean may be useful for their career.

## 6 Survey series II: University students taking Korean courses (electives/major)

When HKUST first offered Korean courses, a series of surveys were conducted by the author in the first Korean lesson of each semester in 1998–1999. A total of 90 students were surveyed. There were 70 percent male and 30 percent female students, aged 17–32. The students were requested to choose their two main reasons for taking the Korean courses. The results are shown in Table 5:

<i>Reasons for taking Korean</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Interest in the language	12%
Interest in the culture	15%
For employment	1%
For travel	25%
Other reasons	47%

*Source: Korean courses, HKUST, 1998–1999*

**Table 5: Reasons for taking Korean in 1998-1999 (see Kang Kim, 2006)**



During this period, Korea and Korean culture were not popular among the ordinary people (including university students) in Hong Kong. University students' knowledge of Korea was very limited; many of them did not even know that there were two Koreas or that Seoul was South Korea's capital city. At that time, Korea was just a neighboring country and more like a "hermit kingdom" to them (Gibb, 2001, p. 4). Hence, as shown in Table 5, interest in the Korean language and its culture was not the main reason for taking Korean courses. During the given period, because of Hong Kong society's general disinterest in Korea and Korean culture, it was hard for students to find the motivation to study Korean. Thus, at that time, students took the Korean courses mainly out of curiosity, and only a very small number of students were interested in the language and continued to take higher level Korean courses.

During 1998–2008, the author conducted a series of surveys among a total of 670 university students who had taken Korean courses (25 student from HKUST in 1998; 600 students from CCCU-City U in 2001–2006; 45 students from HKU in 2007–2008). For the surveys, the students were asked to answer questions related to their Korean language learning experience, Korean popular culture, Korean food, Korean products, names of famous Korean people, travel in Korea, images of Korea and comparisons between the Korean and the Hong Kong/Chinese culture (Please see Appendix A for the survey questions). The results clearly showed that, because of the Korean wave or *Hallyu*, more students could list the names of Korean popular entertainers, Korean companies and other Korea-related things. The impact of *Hallyu* will be further discussed in Section 7.

Also, they were asked to answer the following questions on 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 the name of the Korean national flag?
- (7) What is the famous/the biggest island in Korea?
- (8) What is the name of the Korean traditional dress?
- (9) What is the name of the Korean martial arts?
- (10) What is the name of the Korean fermented vegetables?

The percentage of correct answers to these questions has increased with each year, as summarized in Table 6.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Average Score</i>
1998*	5%
2001**	10%
2003**	15%
2005**	30%
2006**	40%
2007***	55%
2008***	65%

\*From HKUST; \*\*From CCCU-City U; \*\*\*From HKU

**Table 6: Percentage of correct answers from students (see Kang Kim, 2006, 2009)**

Table 6 shows that the percentage of correct answers from the students of CCCU-City U increased between 2001 and 2006 from 10 to 40 percent. The survey results from other universities (HKUST in 1998 and HKU in 2007–2008) seemed to follow the same trend. According to the surveys shown in Table 7, students' interest in Korean culture was the main reason for taking Korean courses. It is believed that this was due to the Korean wave and the interest had increased compared to the survey conducted in 1998 (as shown Table 5).

<i>Reasons for taking Korean</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>
Interest in the language	12%	14%	18%	30%
Interest in the culture	17%	25%	40%	60%
For employment	1%	4%	7%	3%
For travel	36%	41%	32%	5%
Other reasons	34%	16%	3%	2%

**Table 7: Reasons for taking Korean in 2001-2007 (Kang Kim, 2006, 2009)**

A series of surveys (with the same questions as those listed above) were conducted during the first Korean language class at CCCU in 2005 and 2006 among students who were taking the Korean program as their major (22 and 16 students, respectively). As expected, students in the Korean major program had more extensive knowledge about Korea than those who took the Korean courses as electives. The average scores were higher than 70 percent in 2005 and 90 percent in 2006.

Korean major students were also asked the following questions and the results are summarized in Table 8.

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

**Table 8: Reasons for choosing Korean Major (Kang Kim, 2006, 2009)**

Here, it is important to note that employment was not the main reason why students chose Korean Studies as their major. This is because no student had graduated yet from the Korean program in Hong Kong when the survey was conducted. It is expected that student's employment expectations will increase, once graduates have been employed by Korean firms in Hong Kong.

## **7 Survey series III: Impact of *Hallyu* on Korean Studies in Hong Kong**

Since 2000, like other countries in the Asian region, Korean popular culture started to gain attention and popularity among the younger generations in Hong Kong. It was in 2001, when Korean television dramas, movies and pop songs were actively introduced and gained huge popularity in Hong Kong. As shown previously (Tables 7 and 8), *Hallyu* is the one of main factors which attracts students to the Korean courses.

A series of survey were conducted by the author on Korea and its people to understand the impact of *Hallyu*. 200 Korean course students from CCCU-City U participated in each of the surveys conducted in 2001–2002 and in 2005–2006. According to the surveys, the general image of Korea and its people has significantly improved. In 2001–2002, as shown in Table 9, the most of the comments were negative and there was no positive comment showed. However in 2005–2006, students' comments changed significantly, and it is found that they had a positive image and a strong interest in Korea and its people. The change in the image is summarized in the table below.

	2001–2002	2005–2006
Korea	Patriarchy, <b>Men dominate society, Gender discrimination, I do not know about Korea</b>	<b>Traditional,</b> Clean, Beautiful, Unique, Well organized, High-technology, Samsung, Cosmetic products, <b>I want to know more about Korea</b>
Korean People	<b>Men:</b> <b>aggressive, violent, rude,</b> macho, considered superior to women	Handsome men, Warm heart, United like a family, National spirit, <b>Nice, Polite, Friendly, Simple, Pretty women,</b> Plastic surgery is popular, <b>Creative,</b> Respect elders
	<b>Women:</b> <b>passive,</b> considered inferior to men	

**Table 9: Changed image of Korea & its people during 2001-2006 (see Kang Kim, 2006, 2009)**

For the surveys, the students were asked to describe Korea and its people in a few words. Here, it is interesting to note that the 2001–2002 comments are very similar to the result of a survey conducted by CUHK and HKU among students in the academic year 1998–1999 about the favorable image of the peoples of Asian countries.

Other surveys were conducted by the author on the image of Korea and its people compared with Hong Kong. 22 Sociology students at CUHK (in October 2006) and 40 Korean language students at HKU (in October 2007) participated in these surveys. The results are summarized in Table 10.

<i>Image of Korea and its people</i>	<i>Comparison between Korea and Hong Kong</i>	
	<i>Korea</i>	<i>Hong Kong</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional, Long history country</li> <li>• Patriotic, United like a family</li> <li>• <b>Gender discrimination, Female’s low status, Men have a greater power</b></li> <li>• Creative, High technology (high quality products with smart design)</li> <li>• Hard working, Similar to Japan, Wealthy</li> <li>• Friendly, Sincere, Easy-going, Nice, Polite, Charming</li> <li>• Cosmetic products, Heavy make-up ladies</li> <li>• Beautiful ladies who take care of their appearances very much</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female’s low status</li> <li>• Men have a greater power</li> <li>• More creative</li> <li>• Traditional</li> <li>• Respect elders</li> <li>• Nationalism, Authority</li> <li>• More sincere &amp; frank</li> <li>• Nicer, Sensible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female’s high status</li> <li>• Passive, Non specific characters</li> <li>• More westernized, Individual, Selfish</li> </ul>

**Table 10: Image of Korea & its people compared with Hong Kong in 2006–2007**

As shown in Tables 9 and 10, the image of Korea and its people has improved significantly between 1998 and 2007. However with regard to the point about gender discrimination, it has not improved between the two periods. In particular, in the case of the Sociology students, it is inter-

esting to note the strong emphasis they have given to gender discrimination and the different status between men and women in Korean society.

## 8 Survey series IV: Comparison with other language majors (Japanese and French)

A series of survey was conducted by the author among major students of Japanese (60 students from CCCU) and French (15 students from CCCU) to determine and examine the main reasons for their choice of majors. The results are summarized in Table 11.

<i>Reasons for choice of major</i>	<i>Japanese</i>	<i>French</i>
Interest in the language	36%	40%
Interest in the culture	44%	50%
For employment/ future career	15%	10%
Other reasons	5%	-

**Table 11: Reasons for choosing Japanese Major/French Major**

The survey shows that the attraction of the culture is the main reason for students' choice of major. Similar to the results from the survey of students taking Korean as their major (Table 8), employment was not the major reason why they chose their majors.

In Table 12, the number of firms from some foreign countries is compared with the number of major students for the languages of these countries.

<i>Language /Country</i>	<i>Number of Major Program students at HKU</i>	<i>Number of Major Program students at CCCU</i>	<i>Estimated total number of language learners in Hong Kong</i>	<i>Number of Firms in Hong Kong<sup>5</sup></i>
Japanese	120	app. 400	app. 30,000	app. 2,000
French	64	app. 70	N.R.	app. 450
Spanish	30	app. 40	N.R.	app. 100
Korean	N.A. <sup>6</sup>	38	app. 4,500	app. 600

*N.A.* – not applicable; *N.R.* – no record

**Table 12: Comparisons of students' numbers and corporate presence in 2007 (see Kang Kim, 2008)**

As shown in Table 12, the large numbers of Japanese major students and Japanese language learners might be explained by the strong presence of Japanese firms in Hong Kong. Compared to French, Japanese and Spanish, it is believed that there is room for Korean Studies to grow extensively in Hong Kong when one considers the strong economic relations between Korea and Hong Kong, and the number of Korean firms in Hong Kong. According to a local newspaper, the demand for local personnel with Korean proficiency has increased, particularly in the fields of entertainment and tourism (Liu, 2006).

## 9 Concluding remarks

Before *Hallyu*, the Korean language and its culture was not considered important in Hong Kong, despite the strong economic relations between the two countries. For the first time in history, Hong Kong people have become interested in Korea and its culture. Around 5,000 people are currently learning Korean language in Hong Kong. As shown from the surveys, most of the Korean language learners have a strong interest in Korean popular culture.

The strong interest in Korean popular culture, however, is apparently not sufficient to fuel the further growth Korean Studies or Korean major programs. The number of students with Korean majors has not grown significantly since the launch of CCCU's Korean major program four years ago. In her study, Guo (2006) has indicated that in Taiwan, the number of Korean major students has not been influenced by *Hallyu*, while the number of students who take Korean courses as elec-

tives or as minors has been growing in relation to the Korean wave. It is believed that students are uncertain if they will find employment after graduating from a Korean major program. Thus, to attract more students to Korean Studies and Korean major programs, greater cooperation with Korean firms in Hong Kong would be necessary to provide students with better employment prospects.

Lastly, it is true that the boom in the interest in Korean popular culture, *Hallyu*, is a key factor which made a significant difference and increased demand for the Korean language and its culture. However, it should be noted that *Hallyu* has not been brought about only by Korean popular culture and Korean entertainers. As the survey results showed, high quality Korean products with smart design and of high technology have gradually gained recognition and popularity in Hong Kong. Thus, the cultural and economic strength of Korea, including its popular culture, its attractive entertainers, people, and high quality products, have apparently contributed to the good image of Korea as an attractive and advanced country significantly.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This paper is a revised and extended version of the author's article in Chinese, "The Change in the Image of Korea in Hong Kong through the Development of Korean Studies" published in *The Journal of Study on Language and Culture of Korea and China* (Kang Kim, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Hereafter in this paper, the term Korea refers to the Republic of Korea (ROK; South Korea).

<sup>3</sup> *Hallyu* or the Korean wave refers to the significantly increased interest in South Korean popular culture. It started as an interest in Korean music, TV dramas and movies and has extended to Korean fashion, food and entertainers etc. It started in East Asia and spread then to the whole of Asia. The term *Hallyu* was first used in China (PRC) in the late 1990s.

<sup>4</sup> Languages in Hong Kong consist of Chinese (Cantonese) 89.2% (official), other Chinese dialects 6.4%, English 3.2% (official) and others 1.2% according to the 2001 census (CIA, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Figures from Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, French Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, Spanish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, and Korean Consulate in Hong Kong, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Korean Major Program has not been offered yet at HKU at that time.

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**Appendix A****Survey on Korea**

Programme (Dept.) \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: F/ M

Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Contact (optional): Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the reason for you to learn Korean language?
2. Write down the names of any of famous Korean people you have heard. (Up to three names and you can write them in Chinese)
3. Write down the names of things related to Korea (the country) which you know about (Up to three things)
4. What is the image of Korea to you?
5. Have you ever bought or used Korean products? If yes, what were they? And what did you like the most about them?
6. Have you ever eaten Korean food? What were they? How many times until now?
7. Do you like the Korean food?
8. How many Korean TV dramas or films have you watched?
9. Can you write down the titles of your favorite TV dramas or films? (it is ok to write the titles in Chinese if you do not know them in English or in Korean)
10. Who is your favorite actor/ actress/ singer? (It is ok to write them in Chinese)
11. What do you think the major difference between Korean and Chinese or Hong Kong culture is? (two things)
12. Have you ever traveled to Korea? If yes, what were the names of cities or places? And why did you want to travel to Korea and the places?