

EXAMINER'S ASSESSMENT

by Assoc. Prof. Polina Valentinova Tsoncheva, PhD – full-time lecturer at St. Cyril and St.

Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo

of the dissertation for conferring the educational and academic degree of PhD

in the field of higher education: 2. Humanities

professional field: 2.1. Modern Languages

Academic specialty: Literature of the peoples of Europe, America, Africa, Asia and Australia

(Korean literature and culture)

Doctoral thesis: **“SOUTH KOREA’S NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING
KOREAN CULTURE AND LANGUAGE ABROAD”**

PhD Candidate: **Tsvetelina Panayotova Borisova** – full-time PhD-student at

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I. Information about the PhD-thesis.

The PhD-thesis “SOUTH KOREA’S NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING KOREAN CULTURE AND LANGUAGE ABROAD” consists of introduction, four chapters, a conclusion, bibliography, an index with mentioned names and an appendix. The research consists of 214 pages, 188 pages of which form the main scientific text. Bibliography of the thesis indicates 154 publications in English, Bulgarian and Korean used in the research and 50 media sources.

The author summarizes in the *Introduction* the areas of interest of researchers worldwide in Korean politics, culture and language, including cinema, literature, music, and in particular “the dynamics of Korean studying in our country” [in Bulgaria]¹ (PhD-thesis, p.7), which demonstrates her excellent orientation in the field of scientific and journalistic publications on this topic. The object and the subject of the research are properly pointed, the goal is determined and the main tasks for achieving it are stated as well.

The PhD candidate makes a scientific assumption, which she structures in two parts: “Hypothesis 1: The spread of *Hallyu* is the main reason for the growth of interest in Korean culture and language around the world and in particular in Bulgaria. Hypothesis 2: The sustainable development of *Hallyu* is a direct result of carefully planned and consistent policy of South Korean governments.” (PhD-thesis, p. 9). The structure of the research is reasonably subordinated to the construction of

¹ Reference in [] is mine.

a logically and scientifically sound piece of evidence. Two methods of approach are used – theoretical and empirical. These methods determine the research approach chosen by the PhD candidate - “1. Methods for theoretical research: analysis and synthesis, comparison and summary; 2. Methods for collecting empirical information: interview and survey.” (PhD thesis, p.10).

In the first chapter “Nature and Characteristics of *Hallyu*” in three subsections a review of the history of *Hallyu* is presented with an analysis of each of the four phases of the Korean wave “around the world and in Bulgaria, considering the specifics of each one” of them (PhD abstract, p.8); presentation of the main factors that contributed to the success of *Hallyu* is made – globalization and technological progress, the specifics of *Hallyu*, consumers and government support; the observed effects caused by the Wave are pointed out.

In chapter two “Key events related to the evolution of the national strategy of the Republic of Korea to promote Korean culture and language abroad” the specific policies of individual governments aimed at spreading Korean language and culture are presented in chronological order, and the main events related to the development of the national strategy of Republic of Korea are analyzed.

The third chapter “Leading government institutions related to the implementation of the national strategy of Republic of Korea to promote Korean culture and language abroad” in three subsections “presents and analyzes the activity of most powerful government institutions related to the implementation of the above-mentioned national strategy” (PhD abstract, p.8).

The fourth chapter “Empirical Research” includes the organization of the study – an interview and a survey, presents results and analysis.

Each chapter ends with a subsection which summarizes the conclusions drawn in the course of study. The final *Conclusion* presents the results of the research in a well-structured form. The *Index with mentioned names* and the *Appendix* are placed at the end of the PhD thesis and form a necessary and important supplement to the whole study. The *Appendix* presents the questionnaire, devised particularly for the needs of the present research.

II. Relevance and significance of the problem presented in the dissertation.

The relevance of the topic is indisputable. On one hand, it derives from the lack of comprehensive and in-depth research on the topic in Bulgaria and Europe. On the other hand, the unprecedented dynamics of the spread of *Hallyu* worldwide provokes the interest of researchers in establishing possible links between the growing enthusiasm in studying Korean language and various aspects of Korean culture. The combination of theoretical and empirical approach to the problem allows drawing of reliable conclusions that could be useful in future research, and as the author herself notes “The study of *Hallyu*, its prehistory and causal relations brings valuable knowledge that

could be used for the purposes of Bulgarian diplomacy, especially in the view of similarities between the two countries.” (PhD thesis, p.185).

III. Main conclusions and scientific contributions of the dissertation.

The dissertation is a comprehensive, complete and logically sound study of the impact of the Korean wave on the growing interest in Korean language and culture study worldwide. The purposive steps of the Korean governments, taken with the idea to improve and direct the mass distribution of *Hallyu* are presented in chronological order. The departments in the state apparatus, whose activities are aimed at implementing the national strategy for promoting the Korean language and culture have been identified. The empirical research is well-organized and detailed analysis of the results allows us to draw conclusions about the current picture of motivation to study Korean in Bulgaria, of evolution of interest in Korean culture and language in our country and of the degree of satisfaction among students in three key Korean language teaching institutions. This makes the study extremely useful for all educational institutions in the country that offer Korean language educational programs. The applied set of methods is a contribution itself. The derived and well-structured results (PhD thesis, pp. 189-190; abstract, p.47) are reliable and would form a solid basis for future comparative scientific and practical research.

IV. Opinions, recommendations and remarks.

The dissertation is structured in a way to ensure the full development of the researched problem. The methods selected and applied in the course of study allow the confirmation of the hypotheses subjected to proving. The contributions of the PhD thesis outlined by the author are correctly indicated and are unconditional.

There are some technical errors in the text that should be corrected, but they do not in any way negatively affect the value of the study. I highly recommend its publication in the form of a monograph as soon as possible, as I am convinced of the need for such research.

V. Conclusion and recommendation.

In view of the above, I believe that this PhD thesis is an original study of a current global problem, which enriches the knowledge available in European and Bulgarian scientific circles. All requirements for such research are strictly met, which gives me reason to give my positive assessment of the thesis and strongly recommend the members of the esteemed scientific jury to vote for conferring of educational and scientific degree “Doctor” to Tsvetelina Panayotova Borisova.

May 9, 2022

Sincerely,

Assoc. prof. Polina Tsoncheva

