

**Review by Assoc.Prof. PhD Andronika Mårtonova, Institute of Art Studies, Bulgarian
Academy of Sciences**

**For
Tsvetelina Panayotova Borisova - PhD candidate**

Dissertation:

**SOUTH KOREA’S NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING KOREAN
CULTURE AND LANGUAGE ABROAD**

for obtaining educational and scientific degree “Doctor” (PhD)

2.1 Philology

**Literature of the people of Europe, America, Africa, Asia and Australia (Contemporary
Korean literature and culture)**

**Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”
Faculty of Classical and New Philologies
Korean Studies Department**

Dissertation Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Irina Vladimirova Sotirova, PhD

The provided documentation on the dissertation and its future defense fully respond to the legal requirements set in the Law for the development of the academic staff in Republic of Bulgaria. The report on the minimum national requirements shows that the candidate Tsvetelina Panayotova Borisova collects a total of 80 (eighty) points according to the necessary evaluation criteria. The protocol for checking the originality of the dissertation clearly shows that there is no plagiarism. The assessment set out in this review is based on an analysis of all the material provided, as well as copies of the necessary documents.

Tsvetelina Panayotova Borisova was enrolled on January 18, 2019, with Order RD 20-150 and the doctoral dissertation itself was completed on time, under the scientific guidance of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Irina Vladimirova Sotirova from the Korean Studies Department, Faculty of Classical and New Philologies, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. The Summary of Dissertation t (53 pages) responds to the legal requirements.

The candidate also presents three articles on the topic of the dissertation, which exceed the required minimum for defence. The publications are as follows and are published in renowned academic publications of Sofia University:

1. A Case Study on the Evolution of K-pop and K-drama Related Fandom in Bulgaria. *Manas: Studies into Asia and Africa*, 2020, 6(1).

2. The Korean Wave in Bulgarian Context. In S. Karteva-Dancheva & S. Y. Kim (Eds.). *Globalization in Korea: On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Korea*, 2020. St. Kliment Ohridski University Press, 146 – 151.

3. The Motivation for Studying Korean Language at the King Sejong Institute in Sofia. In S. Karteva-Dancheva & S. Y. Kim (Eds.). *Globalization in Korea: On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Korea*, 2020. St. Kliment Ohridski University Press, 197 – 201.

The doctoral student has made every effort to approbation her research work.

Tsvetelina Panayotova Borisova graduated with a bachelor's degree in Korean Studies from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski " in 2015. She holds a Master's degree in Pedagogy, majoring in Modern Educational Technologies with Teacher Qualification at Sofia University. In the period 2017 - 2018 she went through various training programs related to Korean language teaching (Seoul, Republic of Korea), financial literacy, information technology. All this betrays the candidate's desire to expand his field of interests and to integrate diverse knowledge for the benefit of his future development. This inevitably affects the choice of the topic of the dissertation and its implementation as a scientific development.

Tsvetelina Borisova also has a pretty good teaching experience - in English at European Schools, and in Korean - at 18 high schools and at the King Sejong Institute. I do not know the candidate personally, so I can't share personal impressions. The above is based on the submitted documentation.

The dissertation '**SOUTH KOREA'S NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING KOREAN CULTURE AND LANGUAGE ABROAD**' is dedicated to one of the brightest phenomenon in the modern globalized world - the so-called *Hallyu* or Korean new wave or soft power of cultural expansion. Over the past 20 years, the Republic of Korea has become an absolute leader in the export of quality cultural products beyond the Asian region. It has established itself as a powerful economic factor, thanks to which it promotes its own, unique identity, originality and specificity, in competition with China and Japan. Last but not least, it imposed the Korean language as a possible alternative to learning and communication, in stark contrast to the widespread global English language.

As for audiovisual products - as a specialist I must mention the great success of Bong Joon-ho '*Parasite*' and the Academy Award 'Oscar' for a foreign language film in 2021. This

acclaimed prize absolutely crowned the success of the cultural state strategy of the Asian country. In this context the topic of dissertation is perfectly specified and has a immense researchable potential, which is very well mastered by the doctoral student. Also - its relevance and actuality is indisputable. The set goals, tasks, object and subject of research are very clearly defined, and Borisova's research tools are completely appropriate. The methodology, naturally and aptly, is interdisciplinary, as the vectors of political, economic and cultural development of the Republic of Korea are integrally intertwined in analyzes.

The doctoral student also very well defends two hypotheses related to her research:

- Hypothesis №1: *Hallyu* is an active agent, powerfully provoking the interest on the Korean language and culture in a global aspect not missing the monitoring of the situation in Bulgaria.

- Hypothesis № 2: the *Hallyu* phenomenon is sustainable, with future development, because it is the result of well thought out, followed and inherited over the decades (!) South Korean`s governments policy.

The dissertation itself has an impressive volume of 214 pages; the full text is up to 188 pages. The bibliography has 154 units (used academic literature is on Bulgarian, English and Korean languages). Apart from them, 50 media sources are listed. To the rich scientific apparatus we must note 154 footnotes. It is commendable that the doctoral student has made an index of the cited names in Bulgarian and Korean languages.

The research work have an important application: a questionnaire for the dissertation`s purposes, provided by the candidate to students from a Korean class in the 18th school; for students majoring in Korean Studies Dept. and South, East and Southeast Asia Studies at Sofia University; for students in King Sejong Institute – Sofia, Bulgaria. The good structuring of the questions is impressive, and the research itself as a result is integrated in the dissertation, not only as text and analysis, but also sociological color graphs are made for clear perception of the information. I consider this as important contribution to the dissertation.

The dissertation is divided into an introduction, four chapters (after each there are conclusions and summaries). Actually in the last fourth chapter the results and analyzes of the empirical research, discussed in the appendix, are presented in a broader plan.

The first chapter is related to the survey of the nature, the origin, the features of the *Hallyu* Borisova research all flourishing factors of the Korean New Wave and analyze the effect of *Hallyu* appearance. The PhD candidate evaluates a historiographical study of the various phases of cultural strategy over the years, where the beginning being is logically

related to the spread of K-pop music and TV series – K drama. The author properly uses the mass definition, as in computer products - e.g. version 1.0, etc. She carefully analyzes the genesis of the term *Hallyu* not only in the context of the Republic of Korea, but also in the broad parameters of transposition in the world. Because there are still differences in geographical and cultural aspects and targeting audiences requires a very good knowledge of communication with the public environment. Each of the phases is presented in its economic dimensions, and the PhD student relies on key and case studies in the field. In fact, Borissova presents very well the evolution of ‘product positioning’, if I may say so, of the ‘Korean brand’. A very important factor in this development is the diversity of audiovisual production, which thanks to technological and media development (social networks and video sharing platforms) is gaining mass popularity. Here we cannot fail to distinguish specific Korean formats such as *Mukbang* (먹방) - life streaming of the eating process and Korean culinary culture. An important element in this first chapter is the search for and analysis of information related to the phases and the presence of the versions of *Hallyu* in the Bulgarian area.

The second chapter – is analytic in deep political and economic context, related to the important topic of continuity and tradition in the governments of the Republic of Korea. Tsvetelina Borissova shows a great ability to summarize the historical periods that give rise to, define and strengthen the national strategy of cultural policy. This doctoral skill is rarely found in majority of doctoral student’s works and is definitely a cornerstone of a scientific research papers, even for experienced scholars. The balance of statement and analysis in presenting the policies of the various Korean presidents is very well maintained. In her conclusions, Borissova rightly emphasizes the reconsideration of priorities in the industries (chemical and heavy) to the shift of culture and education. Of course - all this is related to the analysis of radical reforms. *‘All South Korean governments that have ruled the country since the 1990s see the cultural sector as a priority. This continuity is decisive for the success of Hallyu, and hence for the growth in the popularity of Korean culture abroad’* (p. 79). Last but not least, the focus is well researched in the transformation from local to the regional and global foreign policy.

The third chapter - exposes in great detail the most influential South Korean government institutions related to the implementation of cultural and linguistic strategy globally. As well as their own institutional projects. Among them are the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diplomatic Missions, Ministry of

Education. Specific units such as the Korean Foundation for International Cultural Exchange - KOFICE; Korean Agency for Cultural and Information Services - KOCIS, Korean Agency for Creative Content - KOCCA; Sejong Institute Foundation; Korean Foundation; National Korean Language Institute; Institute for the Translation of Korean Literature; institutions related to the promotion of taekwondo, etc. In general, this chapter for me personally is more descriptive and less analytical. I also think that it was possible to make a separate, very detailed analysis and focus on a specific institution - such as KOFIC or the Korean Film Council. This small remark, of course, does not detract from the qualities of the work.

However, **the fourth chapter** - as mentioned above in the review - presents in great detail the analysis of Borisova own sociological research, which in turn is very conducive to the entire dissertation.

Conclusion:

The dissertation **‘SOUTH KOREA’S NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING KOREAN CULTURE AND LANGUAGE ABROAD’** can be worthily defended and definitely has many merits. I think it could be published - a future monograph will be useful both for researchers and students, as well as for those who were tempted by *Hallyu*, and why not - for Bulgarian politicians. I completely agree with the mentioned contributions of the research - they are precisely and clearly defined. The dissertation covers a very rich source material, is easy to read and the academic style is respected. The work respond to the requirements of Law for the development of the academic staff in Republic of Bulgaria and Statutes for its application. It undoubtedly explores a very important topic for the cultural policies pursued by the Republic of Korea, and in addition I can only emphasize that the experience of the Asian country in this regard is remarkable. I confidently propose to the esteemed Scientific Jury to award the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" to Tsvetelina Panayotova Borisova.

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