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Chong-Jin OH and Young-Gil CHAE*

Prof. Dr., Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Department of Turkish-Azerbaijani Studies

* Prof. Dr., Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Department of Media and Communications

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Constructing Culturally Proximate Spaces through Social Network Services: The Case of *Hallyu* (Korean Wave) in Turkey

Chong-Jin OH and Young-Gil CHAE*

ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand the factors and actors of *Hallyu* (Korean Wave) in Turkey in the context of the characteristic cultural and technological conditions of network society. Two contextual factors -time and space- motivate this particular case study. While the consumption of Korean pop cultural products in European countries has noticeably increased, few studies were conducted on *Hallyu* in the European continent. Especially, network media technologies including blog, SNS, and various online communication platforms enable the international fans to consume Korean cultural products across the time and spatial barriers. In addition, this case study is also interesting because of the shared historical and cultural heritages maintaining and developing cultural linkages between South Korea and Turkey. Thus, this study contextualizes the *Hallyu* phenomenon in the context of historical, cultural, and technological relations between the two countries.

Keywords: Korea, Turkey, SNS (Social Network Service), *Hallyu*, Korean Culture.

Sosyal Ağlarla Kültürel Yakınlık Mekanları İnşa Etmek: Türkiye’de Kore Kültürü (*Hallyu*) Örneği

ÖZET

Popüler kültür, internet ve kablolu televizyon sistemlerinin yaygınlaştığı yirmi birinci yüzyılda milli imaj oluşumunda büyük bir rol oynamaktadır. İnternet ve uydu kanalları sayesinde insanların diledikleri film, dizi ya da müzik kliplerine ulaşmaları popüler kültürün milli imaj oluşumuna katkısını daha da artırmaktadır. Benzer bir durum tedricen Türkiye’de de yaşanmaktadır. Özellikle sosyal ağlar, Kore popüler kültür akımı *Hallyu*’nun Türkiye’de yaygınlaşmasında önemli bir rol oynamakta ve bu sayede yayılan *Hallyu* iki ülke arasında etkileşimli bir kültürel faaliyet alanı yaratmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Sosyal Medya Ağları (SNS) olarak adlandırılan uluslararası kültür ürünlerinin üretim ve dolaşım süreçlerini değişik perspektiflerden analiz etmektir. Bu çalışmada, Türkiye’deki Kore popüler kültürünün yaygınlaşması konusunda bir vaka incelemesi yapılarak sosyal ağlarda oluşan sanal topluma özgü kültürel ve teknolojik şartlar çerçevesinde Türkiye’deki *Hallyu* hadisesinin yapısı ve aktörlerinin anlaşılması amaçlanmaktadır. Böylece, bu çalışmada yeni iletişim teknolojilerinin küresel seyircinin gözlerine ve kulaklarına hitap eden etkili bir eğlence pazarlama platformu haline gelişini irdelenecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler : Kore, Türkiye, SNS (Sosyal Medya Ağları), *Hallyu*, Kore Kültürü.

* Chong-Jin Oh, Prof. Dr., Department of Turkish-Azerbaijani Studies, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, South Korea. E-mail: jin93@hanmail.net. Young-Gil Chae, Prof. Dr., Department of Media and Communications, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, South Korea. E-mail: chaeyounggil@gmail.com. This research was supported by Hankuk University of Foreign Studies Research Fund.

Introduction

Since its inception around the late 1990s, *Hallyu* (Korean Wave) has reached beyond the Asian region to Western countries, including Europe and North America.¹ It evidences that Korean popular media products are competitive even in the highly competitive markets dominated by traditional transnational media corporations (TNMCs) from North America, Europe, and Japan.² Accordingly, the rapid popularity of Korean pop culture has generated ripple effects, vitalizing not only the Korean creative industry but also other industries such as tourism, as well as strengthening the national brand.³

How can we explain the surprising surge of the popularity of the Korean pop culture across these diverse regions? What are the factors of the *Hallyu*? Many suggest that the quality of the *Hallyu* fulfils the tastes of the global audience. Based on a meta-analysis on the subject, Son found that most analysts suggested that Korean cultural products in general have an appealing quality that meets the audiences' general expectations such as visual and non-visual elements.⁴ Foreign audiences choose Korean dramas and music because they find the narrative style and pre/post-production quality to be new, fresh and outstanding.⁵ Others also explain that the success of Korean pop culture is effectively achieved through the active promotions and systematic marketing strategies of the entertainment industry, star marketing strategies, and low product cost. In these respects, *Hallyu* is seen as an industrial phenomenon driven by the rapid development of the private media content industry, backed by strong government initiatives and programs.⁶

However, even though these analyses acknowledge the necessary conditions of the business-wide development of Korean popular culture, they have not clearly explained how these competitive media products are thought of and consumed by the global audiences and how they have gained such global popularity, even in those areas where K-cultural products have not been actively promoted, like in Eastern Europe and Middle Eastern countries. Moreover, the solely economic approach has limited answers to those questions such as why other countries with similar (e.g., Hong-Kong or Taiwan) or better (e.g., Australia or Canada) entertainment industries in both size and quality have not developed such a cultural wave and why certain countries have shown more enthusiasm for *Hallyu* than others. We believe these questions require a deeper understanding of contemporary cultural changes at a global cultural rather than a local business level.

In fact, more profound changes have been developed in the context of global culture and *Hallyu* signifies such ongoing changes, in particular, in the processes of the

1 J. Huh, "Chinese Audience Responses to Korean Broadcast Programs", paper presented at the KABS seminar, Seoul, Korea, 2001.

2 <http://www.france24.com/en/20110612-koreas-pororo-penguin-takes-flight-worldwide>.

3 R Guo, "How Culture Influences Foreign Trade: Evidence from the U.S. and China", *Journal of Socio-Economics*, Vol. 33, 2004, p.785-812.

4 S. H. Son, "Understanding and Evaluation of Public Policy on Hallyu", *The Journal of Cultural Policy*, Vol. 25, 2011.

5 Huh, "Chinese Audience".

6 J. Y. Choi, "Developing Exporting Strategies for Broadcasting Contents", paper presented at the KAIBM conference, Seoul, Korea, 2011.

production and circulation of international cultural flows.⁷ At the center of the changes, individual audiences have emerged to become “the” powerful cultural agents. They passionately network and empower themselves more than ever through diverse media platforms. These individuals have replaced traditionally influential institutions like state governments and TNMCs for choosing, distributing, and creating foreign cultural products. Even though they are geographically dispersed, they easily get together online to form affinity communities of similar cultural interests and tastes. Assisted by various network communication technologies such as social network services (SNS; YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, etc.), blogs, email, and online publication tools, these cultural agents build up international networks of “fans” across borders. Constructing engaged cultural spaces, these network communication technologies rewrite the concept of a global audience and methods of the international flow of popular cultural products.

These network technologies also reshape feelings of belongingness to cultural communities. The cultural links, if they are geographically distant, are not constrained by the physical separation. Peoples living in distant countries but having culturally proximate neighbors now can develop intimate feelings through direct communication. This networked culturally proximate community might explain the reasons why *Hallyu* products are favored more than the others and why audiences in the culturally proximate country are eager to find various ways to express their personal affection and attachment to *Hallyu*.

On the other hand, we should not overlook the roles of traditional public institutions. In fact, the shift of roles and powers from public institutions to private individuals does not mean that traditional processes of production and circulation of international cultural products have lost their legitimacy. On the contrary, such public institutions still hold strong power over the international popular cultural market.⁸ In the case of Japan, whose oriental cultural booming has been prominent across the world before the *Hallyu*, the country’s “coolness” has been systematically led by both public and private institutions. However, the relationship between the once relatively powerless, individual global audience and the public institutions are changing to the extent that they find each other as necessary sources to produce, distribute, and create cultural products. In these interactive and two-way processes, the boundaries between producer, distributor, and consumer are blurred as they try to find new roles to pursue their needs.

Thus, this research assumes that understanding the changing processes in the production and circulation of international cultural products is necessary to contextualize the factors of *Hallyu*. In particular, *Hallyu* in Turkey provides a very interesting starting point. First, few studies have been conducted on *Hallyu* other than in Asia. As it is a recent phenomenon, the consumption of Korean pop cultural products in European countries has noticeably increased. However, *Hallyu* in Turkey is interesting because of the unique relations between the two countries. Even though Korea and Turkey are geographically distant countries, they have been emotionally close due to the shared historical memories

7 M. Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, Oxford, Blackwell Publisher, 1996; P. Levy, *Collective Intelligence: Mankind’s Emerging World in Cyberspace*, Perseus, 1997; H. Jenkins, *Convergent Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, New York, NYU Press, 2006.

8 D. McGray, “Japan’s Gross National Cool”, *Foreign Policy*, May-June 2002, p.44-54.

and origins, the blood-brother relationship established by the strong Turkish help in the Korean War, proximate cultural values, and similar modernization experiences. However, we are not sure how these characteristic historical and cultural factors are related to the changing processes of global cultural flows. Thus, in order to contextualize the *Hallyu* phenomenon in Turkey, we need to combine the historical, cultural, and technological factors embedded in the ways that individual and institutional agents consume, distribute, and create international cultural products. To meet the research purpose, we conducted qualitative research employing content analysis and interview methods. The content analysis examined popular web sites of *Hallyu* in Turkey that have been constructed and maintained mostly by Turks; young members of the Turkey's *Hallyu* online communities who use the Internet were also interviewed. In particular, twenty Turkish fans on Korean pop-culture were interviewed during the research period between September 2010 and October 2012. They include "Korea-Fans" members in Turkey and several students from the Korean Departments (Ankara University, Erciyes University) in Turkey. The interviews were conducted through various communication methods such as face to face, email, and Facebook. Especially views and idea of two founding members of "Korea-Fans" were considered as important source of evaluating the *Hallyu* phenomenon in Turkey. One of them is currently cultural consultant of "Korean Cultural Center" in Ankara and the other one is an academic scholar in Turkey who has done his doctorate degree in Korea. In addition, "Turk-Korea Culture Exchange Association" in Istanbul and "Istanbul Cultural Center" in Seoul were also used as the important place to meet the various interviewees during the research.

Engaged Cultural Space

In June 2011, a Korean Pop music concert, "SM Town Live in Paris" organized as part of a world tour by SM Entertainment, one of the biggest Korean entertainment agencies, shook the young European audiences. The unexpected success of the concert not only surprised the Korean entertainment agency but also the international entertainment industry. Media professionals were quick to suggest that main reason was the new communication technologies. Among others, YouTube (online media content sharing SNS) contributed to the rapid diffusion of K-pop.⁹ Fifty million K-pop videos had been uploaded as of 2011 and Korean entertainment agencies effectively materialized the online content sharing services to promote and expand its market so that more than 800 million global audiences could access its online music videos by that time. It is one of the most recent cases demonstrating the influential power of new communication technologies in the global entertainment industry. In fact, not only the Korean entertainment industry but also the global entertainment corporations in general have made much effort to promote their cultural products on the popular SNS sites such

⁹ K. W. Noh, "A Study on the Transnational Circulation of K-Pop through YouTube-The Case of Girl's Generation's Online Fandom", paper presented at the symposium "Understanding and Analysis of Hallyu 2.0", Seoul, Korea, 2011; H. H. Cha and S. M. Kim, "A Case Study on Korean Wave: Focused on K-POP Concert by Korean Idol Group in Paris", *Communications in Computer and Information Science*, Vol.263, 2011, p.153-162.

as YouTube, Facebook, Vimeo, and online community sites. Such making of “online blockbusters”¹⁰ exemplifies an ongoing cultural trend in the production and circulation of popular culture in the 21st century. While media communication technologies have always played key roles in spreading international cultural products, network communication technologies today are changing the processes of the flow. Among others, SNSs enable individuals to construct a public/semi-public profile within a bounded system, list other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their connections and those made by others within the system.¹¹ Allowing the individual audiences to form “egocentric networks” the SNS now help them construct their own imagined communities of self-expression about “me” and “us”.

In addition to the emergence of egocentric networks of cultural communities, SNS sites also provide very effective and easy-to-use tools for them to find, aggregate, share, modify, and create media content collaboratively in their communities.¹² These creative activities on the egocentric networks transform the meaning and functions of traditional audience. Global audiences are usually conceived as abstract collective individuals commoditized by TNMCs.¹³ However, in the networked communities, the global audiences have become “users” of popular cultural products who are leaning forward rather than leaning back as they choose, share, and recreate original media content.¹⁴ Thus, Japanese SNS users¹⁵ or Korean students in foreign countries¹⁶ are able to construct more stable cultural identities than before as they maintain their friendship or family networks. Thus, unlike traditional media consumption, using SNS can easily become a multicultural experience rather than a monolithic national one so that global users with different cultures are able to generate hybridized cultural practices as they navigate through the connected zones of cultures. In addition, through networking the individual audiences across the world, these engaged cultural communities are reshaping the processes of production, circulation, and distribution of global cultural products, as is the case of *Hallyu*.

10 K. Hess and L. Waller, “Blockbusters for the YouTube Generation : A New Product of Convergence Culture Refractory”, *Journal of Entertainment Media*, Vol.19, 2011, p.1-12.

11 D. M. Boyd and N. B. Ellison, “Social Network Sites: Definition, History and Scholarship”, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, Vol. 13, 2007, p.11.

12 C. McLoughlin and M.J.W. Lee, “Social Software and Participatory Learning: Extending Pedagogical Choices with Technology Affordances in the Web 2.0 Era”, <http://www.ascilite.org.au/conferences/singapore07/procs/mcloughlin.pdf>; A. Russo and D. Peacock, “Great Expectations: Sustaining Participation in Social Media Spaces”, *Museums and the Web*, 2009, p.60–69.

13 W. Herman and R. McChesney, *The Global Media: The Missionaries of Global Capitalism*, Cassell, 1998.

14 S. Livingstone, “Engaging with Media: A Matter of Literacy?”, *Communication, Culture & Critique*, Vol.1, 2008, p.51-62.

15 T. Takahashi, “My Space or Mixi? Japanese Engagement with SNS (social networking sites) in the Global Age”, *New Media & Society*, Vol.12, 2010, p.453-475.

16 K. H. Kim, H. J. Yun and Y. M. Yoon, “The Internet as a Facilitator of Cultural Hybridization and Interpersonal Relationship Management for Asian International Students in South Korea”, *Asian Journal of Communication*, Vol.19, 2009, p.152-169.

The “Space of Flows” of Proximate Culture

Conceiving *Hallyu* as a form of engaged cultural space requires an understanding of the spatial rearrangements under the new networked social and cultural paradigm. Online communications between members of communities are separated in the physical world but emotionally connected so that they engender new forms of imagined cultural spaces. Processes of cultural production move around to overcome the rigid barriers of time and space. This networked space can be understood in the context of what Manuel Castells¹⁷ calls the “Space of Flows”. According to him, traditional space is defined by “space of places” where people are placed and situated within the specific historical environment of those places. Communications between the people and the information they share are not free from the distinguishing quality of history and distance. Places are hardly created by those people but places find and gather people to build communities. However, the network society escapes those constraints in that human communications and interactions are determined not by the institutionalized places but by an individual’s communicative actions at a distance. Nodes of communications constructed by voluntarily participating individual users from different places construct networked spaces of information. Various forms of spaces, real or virtual, are built and move fluidly around beyond territorial boundaries as digitized information flows alongside them. SNS like YouTube and Facebook effectively provide such nodes of “spaces of flows” to construct “engaged cultural spaces”. Our global cultural space, by and large, is structured by the engaged individual global audiences transforming the flows of symbolic expressions on the network technologies that induce the formation of a “real virtuality”¹⁸ that provides reality to the members of the cultural communities whether they exist in synchronous or asynchronous zones of time and space.

On the other hand, the rearrangement of time and space does not totally supersede the existing structure of feelings. Instead, the process of reconstructing patterns of rearrangement is built upon individuals’ preferences that are shaped through historical relations between the places. La Pastina and Straubhaar argue that today’s global audiences tend to choose cultural products that are “most culturally relevant or proximate” to them and that cultural proximity is defined by “historical spaces of cultural and linguistic commonality.”¹⁹ For example, Taiwanese youth see Japanese television and music as culturally proximate, sharing a sense of Asian modernity. Arab audiences watch more Indian TV due to the similarities in traditions and religious elements.²⁰ Thus, the history and locality, i.e., time and space, still moderate the process of constructing a “space of flows”. However, we need to understand that the cultural relevance and proximity are now flex-

17 Ibid.

18 M. Castells, “Materials for an Exploratory Theory of the Network Society”, *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol.51, 2000, p.5-24.

19 A. C. La Pastina and J. D. Straubhaar, “Multiple Proximities between Television Genres and Audiences: The Schism between Telenovelas’ Global Distribution and Local Consumption”, *Gazette: The International Journal for Communication Studies*, Vol. 67, 2005, p.271-288.

20 S. S. Kim and M. J. Kim, “Effect of Hallyu Cultural Products in Thai Society on Enhancement of Korean National Image and Intention to Visit”, paper presented at 2009 KASTM Conference, 2009.

ibly reconstructed by the engaged global audiences in the digitized symbolic forms of expressions to build virtual proximate cultural spaces. For example, ViKi, a pop-culture online community site was created by the participation of the ordinary fans of global cultural products from both Japan and Korea and the site has been developed to include more than 150 language communities. Jung found that the users of the ViKi system transform traditional ways of consuming global pop-culture to a “new revolutionary arena of trans-pop-consumption” as they deconstruct “language barriers,” cross “diverse cultural boundaries,” and reconstruct “transnational-textuality”.²¹

Thus, we believe that the modern global network society enables people to find, share, and create “spaces of flows” as they actively engage in various types of cultural communities in which they rediscover the meanings of cultural relevance and proximity. Cultural preferences are not determined but rather cooperatively managed by those enthusiastic global audiences upon which new meanings and processes of shared cultural relevance and proximity develop. Their symbolic expressions are revived from the below (ex. media consumers) rather than from the above (ex. institutionalized state agencies or entertainment industry).

On the other hand, the study also shows that the network technologies revive and maintain vulnerable identities that might have been lost in situations of detached time and space. For example, people tend to pay particular attention to those communities sharing similarities rather than differences on the Internet especially when they physically separated from the communities of origin. From this perspective, the engaged online communities help maintain transcultural-homogeneity through reconnecting and communicating with communities of similar identities.

***Hallyu* Phenomenon in Turkey: Engaged Cultural Space and Historical Heritage**

Since the modern era, constructing images of a nation belongs to mass media.²² In the contemporary post-modern era, such tendency has been much more evident. Moreover, media today assume “the” role to help citizens picture other nations and countries, because it is the mass media that disseminate the greater part of the information about foreign countries.²³ More and more, people develop an image of other nations without firsthand contact with the image object, and they usually meet with mass-media channels as the main sources of their information.²⁴

21 S. Jung, “K-pop beyond Asia: Performing Trans-Nationality, Trans-Industriality, and Trans-Textuality”, Paper presented at the symposium “Understanding and Analysis of Hallyu 2.0” Seoul, Korea, 2011.

22 B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, NY, New York, Verso, 1991.

23 M. Kunczik. “News Media, Images of Nations and the Flow of International Capital with Special Reference to the Role of Rating Agencies”, Vol.8, 2002, p.39-79.

24 D.D. Smith, “Mass Communications and International Images Change”, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol.17, 1973, p.115-129.

In this century, when Internet and cable channels are so developed, the role that popular culture plays in the construction of national image is immense. By consuming popular culture, people create a certain image in their minds. For instance, Japanese people started to pay attention to Korea because of a Korean TV drama, “Winter Sonata”.²⁵ This one drama totally changed the Japanese perception of South Korea into a positive image. A similar phenomenon is recently appearing gradually in Turkey, where it is creating and encouraging a cultural exchange between the two countries. Especially, SNS is playing a crucial role in spreading *Hallyu* in Turkey. Other *Hallyu* contents conveyed by SNS are creating engaged cultural space between Korea and Turkey.

An unexpected change has occurred in the contemporary Turkish cultural landscape: long-beloved European and Turkish pop music and dramas are no longer items of prime interest. Recently, more and more Turkish youth choose to watch Korean movies, listen to Korean music, and watch Korean dramas. Similar to Korea, since the Republic of Turkey was established, many Turks have begun to prefer something that people consider to be modern and trendy, but at the same time conveying traditional values and sentiments. Since the 1990s, globalization has encouraged local Koreans and Turkish peoples to rediscover the “local” that they had neglected or forgotten in their drive towards Westernization and modernization during the past decades.²⁶ Both Turkey and Korea, as newly emerging economic powerhouses, rather than just imagining the good old days of the past have revisited or strengthened their own developmental routes by embracing and utilizing the new global economic situation. In this transnational context of meeting between the Westernization and preserving traditional values, both Turkish and Korean peoples tend to have a hybridization of new practices of cultural and performative expression. In other words, during the process of globalization, both countries in the realm of popular culture somehow bred a creative form of hybridization that works towards sustaining traditional identities in the global context.²⁷ This cultural hybridity possessed by both has enabled the Turkish people to accept Korean cultural content easily without any rejection. Their cultural proximity played a crucial role in the success of *Hallyu* in Turkey. Since the Korean cultural contents of *Hallyu* skilfully blend Western and Asian values, Turkish audiences could find many similarities and feel closeness with their own culture.

Korea and Turkey share similarities in their cultural, historical and political background. Historically, they both have Altaic heritage which shares many similarities in language, culture, traditional value, and customs.²⁸ They have also experienced a similar

25 Park Jan Sun, *Hallyu, Korea and Japan's Drama War*, Seoul: Communication Box, 2008.

26 R. Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, London, Sage, 1994.

27 J. Straubhaar, “Beyond Media Imperialism: Asymmetrical Interdependence and Cultural Proximity”, *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, Vol. 8, 1991, p.39–59; K. Iwabuchi, “Becoming ‘Culturally Proximate’: The Ascent of Japanese Idol Dramas in Taiwan”, B. Moeran (ed.) *Asian Media Productions*. Richmond, Curzon, 2001, p.54–74.

28 For more information see Oh Chong Jin, “Oğuz Türklri və onların Koreya Yarımadasındaki Yemaekləri Tarixi Əlaqələri”, *Scientific Works*, Vol.4, 2009. For instance, social order, traditional custom regarding with birth, funeral and marriage and seniority rule are some fields that have close similarity. Also, linguistically both people share many common words and logic. Not to mention grammatically both language have common ground as an agglutinative

modernization process in the 20th century. They both have transformed themselves into democratic societies with powerful economic strength in their region. Although both countries share many commonalities in culture and history, citizens in each country lack knowledge of the other due to limited cultural exchanges as constrained by a large geographical distance.

However, the recent *Hallyu* phenomenon in Turkey is playing an important role in transforming the static cultural relationship between Turkey and Korea to open a new window in the cultural exchange program that is inspiring a mutual interest that the geographical distance has hindered until today. In other words, the influence of Korean dramas and pop music in Turkey is renewing and revitalizing the cultural relationship with Korea and shifting Turkish interest from West to East. One of the crucial factors related to the success of South Korean popular culture in Turkey concerns the feelings many Turkish people have for “East Asian sentiment”.²⁹ The connection Turkish audiences feel with Korean dramas and images in Korean pop music videos appeals to a sense of Asian cultural identity, where their original culture and heritage originated. And this connection extends beyond the physical boundaries of Turkey. Many Turkish audiences have said during interviewed that the values and sentiments they see in Korean dramas are much more acceptable than those in Western productions, since Korean dramas derive from Asian traditional values and the sentiments of Asian peoples’ life, such as family values and respecting elders. In this sense, many Turkish audiences have developed a sense of empathy for Koreans because of ideas regarding shared core cultural values embedded in those *Hallyu* products. “Evoking a sense of familiarity among Asians”,³⁰ *Hallyu* seems to provide “new opportunities to construct an alternate consciousness through the sharing of popular culture.”³¹

In this circumstance, for Turkish audiences, the themes and formats of most Korean dramas are not alien. For example, the romantic pursuits in these productions tend to be less explicit in sexual expressions than Hollywood and other European dramas. Along with the emphasis on more formal attire in their productions, Korean dramas have also struck a chord with Turkish Muslim audiences who are less comfortable with content baring too much “sex and flesh”. Considering the fact that females are the dominant audience group who actively and enthusiastically enjoy *Hallyu* products in Turkey, the formality and morality emphasized in the Korean drama are important values to maintain the popularity of the products.

In addition, through in-depth interviews with some of the Turkish audiences, we have discovered that the constant love of Korean pop-culture is not merely due to the

language. Also, emotional codes are similar between the two people.

29 From the experience of the author, many Turks tend to have emotional closeness or sympathy towards East Asian people, such as Korean or Japanese. Although contemporary Turks tend to share many western cultures and value most of them still have the idea that they are originated from Asia and have Asian heritage.

30 Cho Hae Joang, “Reading the Korean Wave as a Sign of Global Shift”, *Korea Journal*, Vol. 45, 2005, p. 177.

31 Ibid.

attractive cultural products, but also reflects many hidden deeper meanings, such as common Altaic heritage, culture, language, participation in the Korean War, and the third place match in the 2002 World Cup. As mentioned, the image and feeling of Turkish people towards Koreans have always been warm and sympathetic regardless of on-again and off-again relations or cultural exchanges between two countries. The emotional closeness should be the advantage factor for the spread of *Hallyu* in Turkey compared to other regions. Résistance against the Korean pop-culture in Turkey was low and its attraction was high. From a different aspect, to a certain extent, *Hallyu* in Turkey can motivate the Turkish people to look into their own cultural content and products that also contain traditional Asian values, which we call Altaic heritage.

Actors of *Hallyu* in Turkey

The discussion above has examined the *Hallyu* phenomenon that emerged in Turkey and its role in constructing and revitalizing cultural relations between Turkey and Korea. Truly, in the last few years, Korean films, TV dramas and pop music have become immensely popular in Turkey. This phenomenon started in Turkey around 2005. By 2010, the phenomenon had succeeded in creating a comfortable niche for itself in the Turkish popular culture.

If MTV or other major Western traditional mass media channels were somewhat of a Trojan horse, providing a very Euro-American keyhole through which cultural products were packed and viewed, new network communication technologies are key channels for the diffusion of *Hallyu* in Europe, including Turkey. YouTube and other SNS services such as Facebook have played a crucial role in spreading Korean cultural content in Turkey and other parts of Europe. In Turkey's case, only a few Korean dramas were aired and introduced in Turkish TV channels, initially. On the contrary, on the Internet and other SNS, *Hallyu* products could be seen much easier. As CEO of one of the leading Korean entertainment companies, SM Entertainment, Lee Soo-mann also acknowledged the role of new media techs. "K-pop is being accessed by fans around the world not through radio and television but through YouTube and social networking sites."³² He adds, "There still appears to be more room for growth of Korean pop-culture in Europe and elsewhere. In my opinion, a key factor is the strengthening of Korean information technology, which enables K-pop fans around the world to access it quickly."³³

However, the initial debut of these Korean dramas was not very successful in the Turkish market. The first Korean dramas were shown in Turkey in 2005 when the Korean public English Satellite channel Arirang TV signed an agreement with Turkish State Television Station (TRT). The first Korean drama shown in Turkey was the "Emperor of the Sea". It was followed by "All In", which was also telecasted in TRT. "All In" was a hit TV program in Korea in 2003, which featured two stars of *Hallyu*, Lee Byung-hun and Song Hye-kyo, against the backdrop of Seoul and Jeju Island.

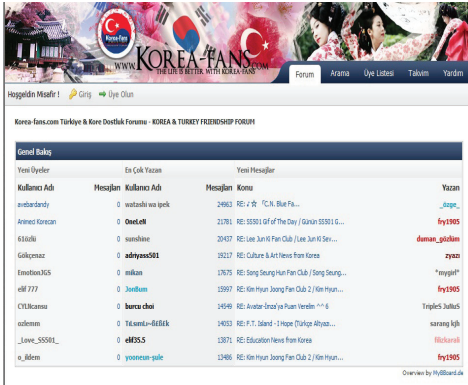
32 "How did SM Entertainment CEO, Soo Man Lee yield K-Pop fever in Europe?", *Chosun Daily Newspaper*, 12.06.2011.

33 Ibid.

Unfortunately, “Emperor of the Sea” received only 1.4 percent viewer ratings. After receiving viewer ratings of 70 percent in neighbouring Iran, “Jewel in the Palace” entered the market ambitiously but the result thus far is disappointing. It recorded tiny ratings of 1.2 percent, even smaller than that of “Emperor of the Sea”. However, the initial failure of Korean dramas to gain popularity was predictable because broadcasters in Turkey considered Korean dramas to be mere “fill-in” programs during off-peak time, when most of the Turkish television audience was away from mass media. Without any serious marketing and commercial commitment from the broadcasters, Korean dramas succeeded in yielding only small viewing ratings. Thus, the environment for the newly debuting Korean dramas was not promising. It is the mass media that disseminates the greater part of the information about foreign culture. However, initial circumstances and bad timing could not overcome the unfamiliarity of Korean culture in Turkey arising from the geographical distance.

On the contrary, the introduction of these Korean dramas in Turkey laid a basic foundation for the booming Korean pop-culture in Turkey. Although the general viewing rating of the Korean dramas remained low, it provided an awareness of Korea, Korean culture and K-pop music (through the dramas’ original soundtrack -OST) to Turkish youth. According to interviewed fans of Korean pop-culture, their curiosity of, and interest in, Korean pop-culture and Korea were born right after watching the first Korean dramas “Emperor of the Sea” and “All In”. They said, “We started to search everything about Korea in the Internet after we watched the program”. Another important phenomenon after the broadcast of the Korean dramas was the popularity of K-pop music in Turkey. Somehow these Korean dramas introduced K-pop music and Korean ballad music to the Turkish viewers. The drama’s OST song called “You went away” sung by Kim Bum Soo got so popular in Turkey that it became one of the Turkish youth’s favourite phone ringtones. Although the lyrics of the song were not properly understood by the Turkish audiences, its emotional ballad melody and sound charmed many Turkish listeners and viewers, who share similar sympathies with Koreans.

With these young Turkish audiences, various Internet forums on Korean dramas, pop music, and movies were established. Two years later, Turkey’s biggest Internet Korean pop-culture community, Korea-Fans, was established in January 2007. Before evolving into the Turkey’s biggest Korean pop-culture community (www.korea-fans.com), Korea-Fans was just a small Internet forum established on one of Turkey’s Internet websites to share information on Korea and Korean dramas after the broadcast of “Emperor of the Sea” on TRT. Turkish netizens were gathered in the Internet forum to share the information on the actors and OSTs of the Korean dramas and other information in 2006. In only a year, this small Internet forum evolved into an independent and unique Internet community in Turkey. It became the largest and the most comprehensive Internet community related with Korean pop-culture and Korea in general. Currently, Korea-Fans Internet community has around 41,000 members and this number is increasing every day. Although most of the members are Turkish, there are foreign members as well. These Korea-Fans activities go beyond the online Internet space. They have monthly meetings offline with their members and share their latest news and release of new Korean pop-culture.



An important factor enabling Korean-Fans to initiate various offline meetings and events in different regions is that they are very much organized and work systematically. Korea-Fans have organized themselves into 14 administrative units (such as administrator, co-administrator, coordinator, super moderator, master translator, translator, Korean Language group) and share their works and projects according to these divided units. The organization of Korea-Fans is very professionalized and divided according to specialization. With these efforts and development, one of the founders of Korea-Fans has launched an e-magazine on Korean pop-culture under the organization of Korea-Fans. The e-magazine “*Dong-Yul*”, which means “passion of the east” in Korean, was opened in the Internet as www.dongyul.com in 2009. Although the main focus of the magazine is Korean pop-culture, including dramas, movies, and music, facts and news about Korea and history are also covered. The main language of the magazine is Turkish but there are some English articles as well. Passionate editors, publishers, and reporters are not only actively expanding *Hallyu* in Turkey but also strengthening the friendship between Turkey and Korea. According to the magazine’s slogan, “Feel the wind of Korea with Dong Yul”, *Dong Yul* is revitalizing the static cultural relationship between Turkey and Korea and opening a new window on cultural exchanges.

If the e-magazine *Dong Yul* is the main monthly publication, another important daily publication from Korean-Fans organization is the e-newspaper “*Hallyu Sinmun*” (www.Hallyusinmun.com), which has been issued since January 2011. If the e-magazine *Dong Yul* is focused on Korean celebrities and Korean pop-culture in general, the e-newspaper *Hallyu Sinmun* covers all issues and news from Korea, from politics and economics to Korean pop-culture. The e-newspaper is one of the most comprehensive and prestige newspaper issued in Turkey that covers all the up-to-date issues and news about Korea including Korean pop-culture. In an average of ten pages, carefully selected rich contents provides the reader with a general daily overview of Korean events. Interestingly, the newspaper plays a gateway role to bridge the two countries to promote not only cultural but also social and economic relations as the media report developments or exchange projects and various events between Turkey and Korea. Another media related activity of Korea-Fans is Internet radio (www.radiokorea-fans.com) airing K-pop music 24 hours a day. Korea-Fans, this online music radio station broadcast with these well-organized various media activities, has placed itself as the mega Internet community in Turkey.

While the Korea-Fans is the one of the most popular in the *Hallyu* community, there have been other active communities since 2007 with similar but diverse interests in Korean pop-culture. For example, “ezgidizi.com”, sends daily e-newsletters about the latest Korean dramas to their registered members. In this respect, many of these websites are informative with easy accessibility. In addition, all the Korean cultural contents in these websites are free of charge, so that Internet access and website membership allows access to unlimited Korean dramas, movies and music videos on their own computer, laptop and other personal electronic devices. Convenience, easy accessibility and free entertaining contents are important reason for the rapid spread of *Hallyu* among Turkish youth in Turkey today.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Korea-Fans related websites</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . http://www.korea-fans.com/ : Main website of Korea-Fans, Internet forum on Korean pop-culture, news about Korea, music videos, and etc. . http://www.dongyul.com/ : e-magazine that covers all entertainment issues and news in Korean pop-culture. . http://Hallyusinmun.com/ : e-newspaper that covers from up-to-date news to release of new K-pop music and movies. . http://www.radiokorea-fans.com/ : radio station airing K-Pop music in Internet. . http://kfdesignsteam.livejournal.com/ : designing Korean pop-star fancy materials, webpage, journal and etc. . http://korea-fansubsteam.com/ : translating and subtitling Korean movies and dramas into Turkish |
| <p>Other K-pop-culture related Turkish Websites</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . http://www.yeppudaa.com (Full of latest Korean movies and dramas, Internet Forum) . http://www.ezgidizi.com/asyadizi/category/kore-dizileri/ (Korean movies and dramas) . http://www.asyadizileri.com/ (Korean movies and dramas) . http://koredizileri.net/ (Korean movies and dramas) . http://www.dizifilm.com/forum/forumdisplay.php?f=475 (Korean movies and dramas) . http://kore.tv.tr.blogfree.net/?f=752850 (Mainly Korean movies, but also TV series) |

Another reason is that the Internet usage rate is increasing in Turkey and occupies a large place in daily life. Recently, connecting to the Internet in Turkey has become easy and inexpensive. According to “comScore, Inc.”, which is a global leader in measuring the digital world, Turkey has 7th largest and most engaged online audience in Europe.³⁴ Their 2009 report shows that more than 17 million people in Turkey age 15 and older access the Internet from home or work, consuming an average 3,044 pages per visitor, which is a high rate compared to other neighbouring countries.³⁵ In other words, Internet users in Turkey spend more time online and consume more web pages than users in other European countries. The table below shows that almost half of Turkey’s population is connected to the Internet and they are very active. If we limit the age to below 40, the rates will be higher. This well-developed Internet infrastructure in Turkey has offered an easier passageway for *Hallyu* to enter Turkey.

Internet Usage and Population Statistics -Turkey

| YEAR | Users | Population | % Pop. |
|------|------------|------------|--------|
| 2000 | 2,000,000 | 70,140,900 | 2.9 % |
| 2004 | 5,500,000 | 73,556,173 | 7.5 % |
| 2006 | 10,220,000 | 74,709,412 | 13.9 % |
| 2010 | 35,000,000 | 77,804,122 | 45.0 % |

Source: ITU (International Telecommunication Union), 2010.

Due to the easier Internet access, TV viewership is falling among Turkish youth, as in other places. They prefer the more open and free Internet media with easy accessibility with their own portable electronic devices. As a result, the young Turkish generation is becoming the pioneers of accepting the Korean pop-culture in Turkey. According to the Korean Embassy’s survey of the Korea-Fans Internet community, around 74.8% of members are aged between sixteen and twenty-four.³⁶ On the other hand, only 1.74% of members are aged above thirty-five.³⁷ Therefore, high school and university students represent about 90% of those who enjoy Korean pop-culture in Turkey. Considering their age and their future role in society, we think the cultural relationship between Turkey and Korea in the coming years will be brighter than today. The table below shows the approximate ratios of the member distribution of Korea-Fans according to age and education. This result is important, since it shows the general information on the potential demand group of Korean pop-culture in Turkey.

34 http://www.comscore.com/Press_Events/Press_Releases/2009/5/Turkey_has_Seventh_Largest_Online_Audience_in_Europe.

35 Ibid.

36 “Survey on the Korea image in Turkey”, Korean Embassy Report, July 2011.

37 Ibid.

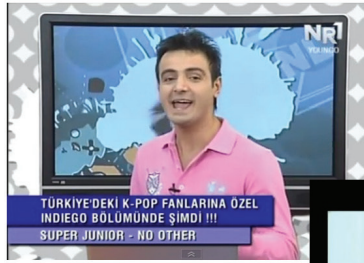
| Audience Group of Korean Pop-culture in Turkey (Survey from the Biggest Korean pop-culture community Korea-Fans) | | % |
|--|-----------------------------|-------|
| | | 100 |
| According to Age Group | Below ~15 | 11.90 |
| | 16~24 | 74.87 |
| | 25~34 | 10.56 |
| | 35~44 | 1.74 |
| | Over 45~ | 0.94 |
| According to Education Level | Primary School | 1.72 |
| | Middle School | 4.85 |
| | High school | 56.65 |
| | University | 33.80 |
| | Graduate School (M.A, Ph.D) | 2.97 |
| According to Region | Mediterranean Region | 8.76 |
| | Black Sea Region | 10.20 |
| | Marmara Region | 37.52 |
| | Ege Region | 8.10 |
| | Central Anatolian Region | 29.54 |
| | South East Anatolian Region | 2.09 |
| | East Anatolian Region | 3.79 |

Source: “Survey on the Korea image in Turkey”, Korean Embassy Report, July 2011.

There is also a regional peculiarity in the consumption of Korean pop-culture in Turkey. As seen from the table above, the Marmara region, which includes Istanbul, and the Central Anatolian region, which includes Ankara, comprises around 70% of all members of Korea-Fans. This indicates that Korean pop-culture is influential in big cities such as Istanbul and Ankara, where trendy and up-to-date young generations live. These young Turkish generations are imagining Korea from their experience in K-pop music or Korean dramas rather than from the Korean War which many older generations have of Korea. Their image and view of Korea are more specific than the older generation, where they tend to have more active desire and action for cultural exchanges with Korea.

After the first launch of Korean dramas in Turkey in the Turkish major channel TRT in 2005, Korean dramas continued to broadcast in Turkish TV channels. After 2007, Korean dramas such as “*Goong S*”, “*Lee San*”, “*Great Seon Deok*”, “*People’s Independent*” and “*Ju-mong*” have aired in Turkey. Unlike the first release of Korean dramas in Turkey, these dramas have gained popularity in Turkey. Recently, not only TRT, the public channel of Turkey, but also other private channels have started to broadcast Korean dramas. With increasing popularity, Korean pop music started to gain attention in the Turkish audience. As mentioned earlier, Korean dramas’ OST have laid the groundwork for the spread of K-pop music. Korea-Fans played a large role in increasing the popularity of K-Pop music in Turkey. Through their own radio station, many K-pop songs were introduced in Turkey.

In addition, members of Korea-Fans and K-pop fans organized themselves to broadcast K-pop music videos in Turkish music channels. They sent a flood of emails to related broadcasters to show K-pop music videos on their channel. With this effort, since 2009, K-pop music has started to air in one of the favourite Turkish music channels in Turkey named “Number 1”. Korean idols such as DBSK, Super Junior, Bing Bang, SS501, Seven, and Girls Generation were officially introduced to Turkish audiences through this channel. In addition, SNS media such as YouTube and Facebook are also utilized as the main distributors of K-pop music in Turkey. Today one can even see K-pop star posters and fancy pictures in the Turkish teen magazines and newspapers.



← Introducing K-pop music video in Turkish leading Music channel NR 1.
Korean idol Super Junior on NR1 channel. ↓

← Korean K-pop Star at Turkish Leading magazine, Trendy from Hurriyet Newspaper



Influence of *Hallyu* in Turkey and Role of Traditional Public Institutions

Actually, the phenomenon of *Hallyu* is relatively new in Turkey and elsewhere in Europe. *Hallyu* itself did not exist a decade ago. After recognizing the importance of developing the nation's soft power so as to compete more effectively in the twenty-first-century global society, the Korean government looked for ways to improve Korea's national image and decided to reinitiate *Hallyu*.³⁸ The sudden circulation of *Hallyu* in neighbouring countries not only confirmed the success of the entertainment industry, but also played an important role in updating South Korea's image. In less than a decade, Korea became a media powerhouse in East and South Asia. To recall, it was only 2005 when the first Korean dramas were aired in Turkey and the *Hallyu* trend in Turkey became visible around 2008. Nevertheless, this remains an on-going process developing and spreading rapidly in Turkish society.

By changing the government's attitude and recognizing the importance of promoting pop culture, the Korean entertainment industry increased the quality of its output. Since the new millennium, especially after the 2002 World Cup, Korea was dissatisfied

38 *Systematic Hallyu Policy 2009*, Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism, Cultural Industry Policy Department, 2009.

with its own image considering its economic wealth and power. The Korean government thought that Korea's global image lagged far behind what Korea thought the nation deserved. Being unsatisfied with the result, Korea launched an ambitious nation-branding program in 2009. The Korean government believed that *Hallyu* could be used to upgrade Korea's image. A National Branding Council was established in 2009 under the presidency to promote the nation's global image and brand. In tandem with the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism, both institutions proposed more detailed policy to reinstate *Hallyu* around the world. With this support and policy, *Hallyu* successfully developed in Turkey in a short time. The engagement of both cultural spaces, such as SNS or Internet forums and traditional public institutions, such as an active government policy exercised through government and private institutions from Korea, played a crucial role in spreading *Hallyu* in Turkey.

Thus, the biggest Korean pop-culture community in Turkey, Korea-Fans, has had a deep collaboration with the Korean embassy since 2008. Since then the Korean embassy has made various efforts to facilitate a variety of activities and events with Korea-Fans. According to the member forum of Korea-Fans, its members were pleased and glad to be invited by the Korean ambassador to his residence. No doubt such events and concern of the Korean embassy have played a part in the booming *Hallyu* in Turkey. In addition, "King Sejong Institutes", that were opened recently in Ankara and Istanbul are contributing to the booming of *Hallyu* in Turkey. The King Sejong Institute, which is Korean language institute launched by South Korea's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in an effort to teach Korean language and culture around the world, opened branches in Ankara in November 2010 and in Istanbul in January 2011 with the collaboration of Ankara University.³⁹

The institute was named after King Sejong, the fourth King of the Chosun Dynasty of Korea, in order to commemorate the king's noble intentions of creating a unique phonetic alphabet for Korean people. With the support of Ankara University, the institute is housed in the Ankara University's TÖMER (Turkish and Foreign Languages Research and Application Center), a leading language teaching institution in Turkey, in Tunalı Hilmi. A couple of months later, in January 2011, the King Sejong Institute Istanbul branch was opened at the TÖMER Taksim branch in order to serve the massive demand from the Korean pop-cultural fans of the cultural centre of Turkey to learn the language and culture of Korea. The institutes are often used as gathering places for Korean pop-culture fans, especially for the members of Korea-Fans in Istanbul and Ankara. Every weekend the King Sejong Institutes and Korea-Fans organize Korean Film Days in Ankara and Istanbul. Thus, every weekend many Koreans in Turkey and Turks gather together to watch Korean movies and share their culture.

In addition, in October 2011, the Korean Cultural Center was opened in the centre of Ankara. In preparation for this opening, the chairmen of the Korean Cultural Center, Counsellor Cho Dong-woo, frequently contacted the members of Korea-Fans to

39 Korean Language Institute Opens in Ankara, *Anatolian news Agency*, 11.2.2010, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=korean-language-institute-opens-in-ankara-2010-11-02>.

reflect the opinion and will of Turkish fans of Korean culture.⁴⁰ The Korean government therefore showed its effort to communicate with the Turkish audience. According to Counsellor Cho Dong-woo, the location of the Cultural Center and its programs were organized in according to the wishes of the Turkish fans of Korean pop-culture. The cafeteria, seminar room, library, exhibition hall, and multipurpose concert hall were designed for the Korean Cultural Center to meet the needs of the Turkish people. The Korean Cultural Center will also house offices of the “Korea Tourism Organization” (KTO) and the “Korea Creative Content Agency” (KOCCA) to help Turkish people to access easily Korean pop-culture and provide information about visiting Korea. These public measures will play a crucial part in advancing cultural and social relations between Turkey and Korea. This demonstrates that the Korean government has been actively supporting and promoting Korean pop-culture recently to reach many Turkish people. Not only the government sector but also several private associations and organizations run by Koreans in Turkey, such as the “Turkey-Korea Cultural Exchange Association” and the “Turkey-Korea Friendship Association”, are teaching and introducing Korean language and culture to the Turkish people. Aside from traditional fan clubs, Korean cultural clubs such as the “Korean Cultural Society” have organized the “Fans of Korean Pop-culture” in Istanbul and Ankara. Such activity also offers the increased possibility for social interaction between Korean and Turkish people, especially, youth and university students.

Along with the boom of *Hallyu* in Turkey, Korean food such as *Bibimbap* and Korean noodles are getting popular in Turkey. In the past, due to high price and the unfamiliarity of Korean food, the major customers of Korean restaurants in Turkey were generally short-term Korean tourists. However, there are an increasing number of Turkish visitors in the Korean restaurants in Turkey today. Also with the greater exposure of Korean pop-culture in Turkey, interest in Korean language has been increasing rapidly in Turkey recently. The growth in the popularity of the Korean language has resulted in television dramas becoming tools of language acquisition and learning, leading to a demand for dual-sound versions. Since much Korean content in Turkey, such as dramas and movies, are spreading via the Internet rather television networks, almost all Korean popular culture was introduced in Korean language with Turkish or English subtitles. Through the interviews, the researchers discovered that many trendy young Turkish audiences prefer to listen to the original Korean vocalization while they are enjoying Korean dramas, movies and K-pop. Many Turkish young audiences have mentioned that enjoying Korean pop-culture with the original Korean language provides greater coherence with the acting and hence allows for more pleasurable and authentic viewing.

As mentioned, this trend has led to a boom in learning Korean language in Turkey. According to Professor Ertan Gokmen, Chairman of the Department of Korean Studies in Ankara University, demand for entrance into the Korean Studies department has been increasing a lot recently and has led to an increase in the qualifying scores for the Korean department at Ankara University. He said, “In these days students have a vision and come to the department to learn Korean and other related subjects”. “Recently, I get students who are hooked on Korean dramas and become curious about life in Korea.” This rise in interest in Korea has increased the number of students who are somewhat proficient in

40 Interview with Counselor Cho Dong-woo, May 2011.

the language before they start their university studies. He adds that some freshmen in 2010 speak better Korean than seniors. As Professor Gokmen mentions, “the background of this phenomenon is the spread of *Hallyu* in Turkey.”

Interest in learning Korean has spurred the growth of language centres offering Korean language lessons in Turkey, which was in the past mainly confined to university students majoring in Korean studies. As mentioned earlier, the King Sejong Institute and other private organizations are offering Korean language courses, increasing the possibility for social interaction between Turks and Koreans. Actually improving the availability of training in the Korean language is an important foundation to ensure the long-term cultural possibilities of popular culture diplomacy. As a result, funding for Turks who wishes to further their interest in the Korean language and culture is crucial to ensuring the prosperity of *Hallyu* in Turkey.⁴¹

If the Korean government could provide various means and policies for the students or working adults to learn Korean language and culture, their hobby will be transformed into long-term career possibilities. Such students will undoubtedly not only play a key role in bridging Korea and Turkey but also become an important pillar for revitalizing the cultural exchanges between Turkey and Korea. Thus, funding for various scholarships and providing opportunities for Korean teachers or professors to work in Turkey is an important task for the long-term success of *Hallyu* in Turkey. Ensuring that the interest in Korean culture continues beyond *Hallyu*, therefore, requires a quick and concerted response to the rising interest in learning Korean language.

Conclusion

This case study has aimed to understand the factors and actors of *Hallyu* in Turkey in the context of the characteristic cultural and technological conditions of network society. Traditional cultural institutions still hold strong power to influence the ways in which cultural processes produce and distribute cultural products. The initial circulation and further diffusion of *Hallyu* in Turkey was accomplished with the systematic business routines of creative industries constituted by national media outlets, entertainment agencies, and state agencies. In fact, these private and public entities provided the key sources for the cultural wave. Moreover, the new communication technologies are becoming effective entertainment marketing platforms for selling the eyes and ear of the global audience. Then, is *Hallyu* becoming nothing more than another recent case of a surprisingly successful media business project?

However, as in the case of *Hallyu*, the processes for constructing the meanings of culture are more inclusive and participatory than ever before. These processes require more mutual relations between both public and private institutions and individuals as they negotiate rather than control the others. In this study, thus, we could identify that the factors and actors of the cultural phenomenon are related with broader and more complicated

41 Kilmi Kesenek, Cultural Consultant of Korean Cultural Center in Ankara and also founding members of Korea-Fans, argues similar ideas for the prosperity of *Hallyu* in Turkey, 3 October 2012, Ankara.

cultural and historical transitions in the network society. Gaining cultural popularity does not happen in a vacuum. Instead, motivations and actions are needed to reformulate the meanings of space and time. The motivations and actions of individual actors are mobilized by structures of feelings deeply rooted in the histories, memories, and values. In the past, the urge to attain them was mainly satisfied without much engagement but was fulfilled with the help of the national mass media and TNMCs. These media institutions occupied central positions in the structure that shapes the motivations and actions to construct cultural relations. Magazines, newspapers, and videos are also provided by these professional and commercial entities as they build images and memories for us about particular space and time. Today, network technologies provide effective conduits to attain those motivations and actions collectively in association with other interested actors ranging from fans to public institutions like government agencies. Thus, the media now render much more important spatial meanings than ever. By constructing engaged cultural space, individuals form communities of actions to publish their media materials through which they not only consume but also rediscover the values, meanings and belongingness once possessed by their grandparents and parents. Hence, the cultural binding between the countries is maintained and strengthened; through this binding newly revitalized cultural identities emerge.

On the other hand, *Hallyu* in Turkey and in general is not totally inclusive or participatory in the sense of generating new patterns of cultural processes and meanings. On the contrary, *Hallyu* consists of contradictory processes that exclude, divide, and thus degenerate alternative forms and ways of cultural production and distribution. We argue that the contradictory aspects of *Hallyu* in Turkey require much more careful attention to further and renew the current cultural relations between Turkey and Korea. As Castells has shown, the global network societies are not evenly developed across the world.⁴² Locally and globally, communities and groups of people differ in their capacities to communicate due to different sets of conditions that are structured by social and economic relations. As we have discussed, in Turkey, assisted by various network communication technologies, the construction of engaged cultural spaces is mainly driven by the youth living around Istanbul and Ankara. Therefore, only a fraction of the Turkish population is able to access, share, and, more importantly, express and create shared meanings of the cultural products. In fact, this is also true in other countries. The highest user group of online communication services is the younger generation from the middle class living in large urban regions, rather than the young generation with middle income living in rural areas,⁴³ which means that the young generation in rural areas or small/ medium urban areas, the old generation living in either urban or rural areas, and low income families may not have the chance to “engage” in the cultural processes. Even though we do not believe that these excluded demographic groups possess less “East Asian sentiment” or “Passion of the East,” we do believe that the omission of these excluded populations is causing them to fail to access, share, and create their feelings and memories about Korea and its cultural products. This may have some implications for the diffusion and development

42 M. Castells, *The Rise of Network Society*, Oxford: Blackwell Publisher, 1996.

43 K. H. Hampton, L. S. Goulet, L. Rainie and K. Purcell, *Social Networking Sites and Our Lives*. Washington D. C., Pew Research Center, 2011.

of cultural relations between Turkey and Korea. We argue that this problem of exclusion requires alternative forms and ways of engagement, and that these should be inclusive, invitational, and encouraging broader voluntary approaches. Regretfully, the current cultural policies of *Hallyu* tend to be business-oriented ones that prioritize profitable areas and populations. Such an aggressive economic approach to *Hallyu* may increase profits but, we believe, may not increase long-term mutual understanding and reciprocal cultural exchanges between the nations. We are certain that the anti-*Hallyu* phenomenon is increasing in those countries, including China and Japan, that we felt close and proximate to culturally and historically.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, the researchers believe that the recent *Hallyu* phenomenon in Turkey provides a good initial opportunity for Turkey and Korea to revitalize their cultural relations and to build a close and positive image between them. We hope that *Hallyu* in Turkey can play a role in strengthening their mutual understanding by inspiring a reunion of forgotten brotherhood between the Altaic East and West.

44 N. Y. Kang, "A research on anti-Korean Wave Trends in China: Focusing on Drama and Film", *China Study*, Vol. 43, 2009, p. 457-508.

2. S. O. Park, "Media Nationalism and Hate Korea Wave in Japan: 2ch and the Four Daily Newspapers in Japan", *Korea Communication and Information Studies*, Vol. 47, 2009, p.120-147.

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