

Belyalova A.E.



SDU University, Kazakhstan, Almaty

E-mail: aigerimbelyalova@gmail.com

OVERSEAS KOREAN STUDIES AS A PATHWAY TO GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS IN CENTRAL ASIA

Abstract. This article examines the role of overseas Korean Studies programs in Central Asia as platforms for Global Citizenship Education (GCED). The novelty of the study lies in considering Korean Studies not only as an academic field but also as a means of advancing global education themes, including human rights, sustainable development, and well-being education. The purpose is to assess how effectively these programs cultivate transnational awareness while identifying structural limitations that constrain their impact. The methodology combines literature analysis with survey data from instructors affiliated with the Association of Korean Studies Professors in Central Asia. The findings reveal that faculty members are strongly committed to promoting global competencies among students. However, systemic barriers persist: limited teaching materials that reflect international debates, curricula narrowly focused on language and popular culture, and shortages of faculty with doctoral training in Korean Studies. These gaps risk reducing programs to cultural consumption rather than critical, comparative scholarship, a concern also raised in discussions of the Korean Wave and its policy origins. The article concludes by highlighting digital humanities and online archives as practical tools to overcome resource shortages, while recommending policy coordination, investment in faculty development, and interdisciplinary curricula to strengthen the sustainability and pedagogical value of Korean Studies in Central Asia.

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Keywords: Korean Studies, Central Asia, global citizenship, curriculum policy, Korean Wave

Introduction

The Republic of Korea's rapid post-war recovery and subsequent emergence as a major economic actor have informed a distinctive foreign policy orientation that blends development cooperation, economic diplomacy, and cultural outreach. In this strategic posture, Central Asia occupies a pivotal position as a continental corridor for transportation, energy, and trade linkages that align with Korea's broader Eurasia initiatives. The convergence of geopolitical interest and expanding cultural influence creates a favorable environment for the institutionalization of Korean Studies across the region, where academic programs can serve as vectors for both knowledge exchange and deeper bilateral engagement.

Korean popular culture has been a central mechanism in increasing Korea's visibility abroad: the phenomenon commonly labeled the Korean Wave (hallyu) has reshaped perceptions of Korea and opened new avenues for cultural diplomacy and soft power projection (Jin, Yoon, 2017). State-led cultural industry strategies have historically reinforced this trend, aligning media and creative sectors with broader export-oriented policy objectives and thereby amplifying demand for Korea-related curricula overseas (Kwon, Kim, 2014). These cultural and policy dynamics have, in turn, facilitated the establishment and expansion of Korean Studies programs in non-traditional locales by generating popular interest that academic institutions can channel into more formal pedagogical and research initiatives.

At the same time, the global diffusion of Korean Studies raises critical methodological and epistemological questions. Scholarship has warned of the risks that arise when popular cultural

consumption substitutes for rigorous humanities inquiry, and of the parallel proliferation of contested or pseudo-historical narratives that can complicate scholarly engagement with Korea's past (Logie, 2024). Addressing these risks requires pedagogical designs that integrate critical historiography, interdisciplinary perspectives, and reflexive analyses of popular culture's role in shaping public knowledge about Korea. Equally, recent debates underscore the need for regionally grounded frameworks, such as inter-Asian comparative approaches, that resist uncritical transplantation of metropolitan models and instead promote locally relevant modes of scholarship (Lee, 2019(a)).

Digital and methodological innovations further reshape opportunities for Korean Studies in geographically peripheral contexts. Digital humanities approaches and web-based archives can significantly mitigate material constraints by broadening access to sources, facilitating collaborative research, and enabling new forms of pedagogy that transcend traditional resource limitations (Luhmann, Burghardt, 2021; Brügger, Finnemann, 2013). Harnessing such technologies allows overseas programs to participate in global scholarly networks while developing locally pertinent research trajectories, though this requires investment in capacity building and infrastructural support.

Institutional support mechanisms, ranging from scholarship programs and visiting professorships to targeted seed and core initiatives, have historically underpinned the internationalization of area studies, helping to create sustainable academic ecosystems abroad. In Central Asia, the interplay between governmental cultural diplomacy instruments and university-level collaborations have been decisive in establishing Korean Studies footholds. Yet, sustainability depends on addressing recurring challenges: expanding curricular breadth beyond language and popular culture, strengthening doctoral-level faculty recruitment, and aligning programmatic aims with broader educational goals such as Global citizenship education (GCED) and sustainable development (Gerstner, Lim, Abura, 2024).

This study situates itself at the intersection of cultural diplomacy, higher education policy, and humanities scholarship to explore how Korean Studies in Central Asia can be structured and supported to advance critical global citizenship. It examines the modalities of program formation, prevailing pedagogical trends, and patterns of institutional partnership, while also considering how theoretical and technological innovations – ranging from critical discourse analysis to digital humanities – may be mobilized to strengthen both the scholarly quality and the civic relevance of Korean Studies across the Eurasian region. In this broader context of global interdependence, where the demand for education that equips students to think and act beyond national boundaries is steadily increasing, the study turns to Korean Studies as a framework for cultivating global citizenship. The purpose of this article is therefore twofold: to analyze the current state of Korean Studies in leading Central Asian universities and to assess how academic practices and government initiatives intersect with the broader agenda of global education. More specifically, the investigation pursues three key objectives: first, to review the development of Korean Studies and the policies that sustain it in Central Asia; second, to examine how university instructors conceptualize global citizenship and the pedagogical strategies they employ; and third, to propose measures aimed at ensuring the sustainable growth of Korean Studies as an effective means of preparing students for responsible participation in an interconnected world.

Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative, case-based design to examine how Korean Studies in Central Asia contribute to global citizenship education. Data were collected through documentary analysis and semi-structured interviews across universities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. Institutional documents, including curricula, policy reports, and Korea-funded program records, were reviewed to map structural and policy frameworks.

Fifteen in-depth interviews with Korean Studies professors and instructors were conducted between January and June of the 2024–2025 academic year. The interview protocol was informed by established global citizenship education frameworks (e.g., Oxfam 2006; UNESCO, 2015; Morais,

Ogden, 2011) and focused on three domains: (1) perceptions of global citizenship, (2) pedagogical strategies for integrating Korean Studies into global themes, and (3) institutional needs and feedback. Given COVID-19 constraints, interviews were primarily conducted online.

Data analysis followed a thematic coding approach, combining deductive categories derived from global citizenship dimensions with inductive codes reflecting local conditions such as reliance on cultural content, pseudohistorical pressures, and limited digital access. Triangulation across documents, interviews, and digital resources was used to strengthen validity. Ethical approval was obtained, informed consent was secured, and confidentiality was maintained through anonymization. While modest sample size and reliance on remote interviews limit broader generalization, the comparative case study approach and methodological triangulation ensure robust insights into how Korean Studies in Central Asia can serve as a platform for fostering global citizenship.

Discussion

At present, more than fifty universities and colleges across Central Asia offer courses in Korean language and culture. Yet, the field remains disproportionately centered on language instruction, while areas such as literature, history, political development, and cultural studies receive far less attention (Jang, 2018; Lee, 2019). This imbalance is evident in teaching hours, availability of qualified faculty, and quality of instructional resources. To ensure that Korean Studies contributes not only to linguistic competence but also to the cultivation of global citizenship competencies, a broader curriculum is required. Core elements of GCED, including critical and creative thinking, cross-cultural empathy, and the ability to navigate complexity (Oxfam, 2015), can be effectively integrated into Korean Studies programs. Rather than being confined to a nationally specific approach, Korean Studies in Central Asia should position itself within a comparative and universal framework, presenting Korea's historical and cultural experience as part of wider human knowledge.

The quality of higher education reform is often contingent upon the role of teachers. While in many policy contexts educators have been positioned as passive implementers (Ball, 2008; Braun, 2011), more recent scholarship conceptualizes teachers as active agents of change who shape curricula and pedagogical practices (Fullan, 2003; Biesta, Priestley, Robinson, 2015; Evers, Kneyber, 2015). The findings of this study confirm this view: the expansion of Korean Studies requires empowering teachers with both institutional support and professional autonomy. At present, demand for qualified instructors far exceeds supply, resulting in heavy teaching loads and limited innovation in classroom practice. Building a sustainable teacher support system is therefore critical. This includes developing updated textbooks, creating digital repositories for lesson plans and materials, and supporting professional learning communities that encourage collaboration and peer mentoring.

Despite a steady increase in student interest, academic research in Korean Studies across Central Asia remains fragmented and under-resourced. Geographic distance, limited funding, and political barriers continue to restrict collaboration between universities and research centers (Jang, 2014; AKS, 2018). The absence of platforms for sharing research outputs further reduces the international visibility of regional scholarship. Establishing an online platform for academic exchange and data sharing could significantly mitigate these challenges. Initiatives such as the National Research Foundation of Korea's "International Cooperation Project Information Search Service" already provide models of how access to research databases can stimulate cross-border projects. By adopting similar mechanisms, Central Asian universities could both strengthen internal collaboration and build sustainable ties with international Korean Studies communities.

If Korean Studies in Central Asia is to incorporate the principles of GCED in a systematic way, policy-level intervention is required. A coherent framework should be developed to guide universities in balancing language instruction with broader socio-cultural and global citizenship perspectives. Such reform necessitates not only the creation of management bodies to oversee implementation, but also the production of practical teaching materials that support classroom-level application. Experiences from other contexts – for instance, the UK's *Curriculum & Standards* (2005), which

advocates integrating global perspectives into school subjects – demonstrate the importance of aligning curricula with international educational goals. In practice, this means developing handbooks, workbooks, and reference materials that enable students to engage with issues of diversity, sustainability, and intercultural dialogue through extracurricular activities such as clubs, volunteer projects, and community engagement.

Literature review

Korean Studies Support Policy in Central Asia

The twenty-first century has witnessed the transformation of the world into an interconnected whole, where the rigid boundaries of the traditional nation-state have become increasingly porous. Under the influence of globalization, environmental change, and international trade agreements, countries are seeking to reinforce cooperation not only in economics but also in political, social, and cultural domains (Park, Belyalova, 2017: 212). In this process, particular emphasis is placed on the creation of institutional mechanisms that facilitate the exchange of human resources and promote mutual understanding between nations. Central Asia, in this regard, has gained notable strategic importance in the shifting global order, drawing the attention of major powers and emerging as a significant partner in multilateral initiatives (Park et al., 2017).

After gaining independence, the states of Central Asia became a focus of South Korea's trade and investment activities. However, the shortage of qualified human resources capable of sustaining international cooperation soon became evident (Park, Belyalova, 2017: 216). To address this, since the 1990s organizations such as the Korea Foundation (KF) and the National Institute for International Education (NIIED) have introduced scholarship programs that enable students from the region to study in Korea (Lee, 2019(b): 67). At the same time, Central Asia has been integrated into Seoul's broader foreign policy strategies, including the "New Asia Diplomacy" and the "New Northern Policy" (Lee, 2009: 99). Since 1992, the Korea Foundation has actively promoted Korean Studies abroad by funding professorships, establishing courses in leading universities, supporting Korean language teaching, and dispatching visiting professors. These initiatives, complemented by scholarships for graduate students, are intended to cultivate future specialists in Korean Studies and enhance Korea's cultural presence internationally (KF, 2020).

Cultural diplomacy has also been reinforced through programs by the Korean Culture and Information Service (KOCIS). In 2018, KOCIS unveiled its "Strategies for the Globalization of Korean Arts and Culture 2018–2022," which aimed, among other goals, to transform cultural centers in Russia and Kazakhstan into regional hubs of Korean culture. Parallel to this, the King Sejong Institute Foundation announced plans to expand the number of Korean language learners from 60,000 to 90,000 by 2022 (KOCIS, 2018). Similarly, the Korean Studies Promotion Service (KSPS) under the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS) has supported infrastructure-building projects, academic content development, and translation initiatives in order to strengthen both domestic and international Korean Studies (Song, 2014). According to KSPS data for 2021, funding is distributed across seed, core university, laboratory, strategic research, and translation programs, reflecting a comprehensive approach to the global promotion of Korean Studies.

In Central Asia specifically, initiatives have extended beyond funding. A significant milestone was the international seminar held at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University in October 2018, titled "*Expanding the Horizon and Strengthening the Potential of Research on Overseas Korean Studies.*" The event, which brought together research teams from 15 countries, facilitated the exchange of information on the status of Korean Studies worldwide and highlighted challenges facing seed-type projects. It also emphasized the need to construct updated data platforms and realistic policy strategies, thereby positioning Korean Studies as a dynamic field of international academic exchange (AKS, 2018).

While these policies and programs have undeniably contributed to the spread of Korean Studies, their overall impact is difficult to measure. Each country presents distinct political, cultural, and institutional conditions that affect the effectiveness of Korean Studies support initiatives. In the case

of Central Asia, cooperation between Korea and the region has been expanding in human and economic dimensions, but the scale of academic collaboration in Korean Studies still lags behind its potential. To enhance outcomes, it is necessary to gather systematic information on local educational practices and research priorities, as well as to consult regional expert networks (Kwak, 2012: 236). However, scholarly work focusing specifically on the Central Asian context remains limited. Existing research tends to highlight leading regions such as North America, Europe, and Japan (Lee, 2009; Cho, 2009), while Central Asia is often addressed only in passing or through general references on institutional websites. Therefore, developing a deeper and context-sensitive understanding of both internal and external factors shaping Korean Studies in Central Asia is essential. Such knowledge would make financial support policies more effective and contribute to the long-term growth of Korean Studies as a driver of cultural diplomacy and educational innovation.

The Landscape and Challenges of Korean Studies in Central Asia

Central Asia today Current represents a multi-ethnic and multi-religious environment situated at the crossroads of major trade routes, where Eastern and Western traditions intersect. Its geopolitical significance has been steadily increasing, making the region an important site for cultural and educational exchanges. Against this background, the growing international profile of South Korea has led to a sharp rise in the number of students choosing to learn Korean, often motivated by employment opportunities and an interest in contemporary Korean popular culture. This trend has been accompanied by the consistent support of institutions such as the Korea Foundation, the Education Center of the Korean Embassy, and the Academy of Korean Studies, all of which have contributed to the establishment and strengthening of Korean Studies as an academic field in the region.

Table 1. Status of Korean Studies at major universities in Central Asia

University	Status of Korean Studies
Bishkek Humanitarian University named after K. Karasayeva (Kyrgyzstan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1992 – Korean language course started • 1993 – Korean Department established • 2006 – signed a double degree system contract with the Department of Korean Language, Kyung Hee University, Republic of Korea • 10 faculty members and 100 students • Affiliated College/Faculty: Oriental Studies and International Relations Faculty * Majors: Korean Language, Korean Studies, East Asian Studies
Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies (Uzbekistan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1991 – Korean language course started • 1993–2004 – operated Department of Korean Studies • 2004 – the Department of Far Eastern and South Asian Languages was changed to the Department of Korean Studies • 2015 – Reorganized the Department of Oriental Languages and Korean Studies • 2012–15 and 2015–18 – Completed “Seed Program for Korean Studies” • 2018 – Reorganization of Korean Studies department • 27 faculty members and 308 students • Affiliated College/Faculty: Korean Studies * Majors: Korean Language and Literature, Korean Studies
Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (Kazakhstan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1988 – Korean language course started • 1994 –Department of Korean Studies established • 2017–2020 – carried out “Seed Program for Korean Studies” • Operates double degree educational program with the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Busan University of Foreign Studies, Kangnam University, Republic of Korea • Operates the KF Global e-School, One Asia Program • 23 faculty members and 171 students • Affiliated College/Faculty: Oriental Studies * Majors: Language and Literature, Translation, Oriental Studies
Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1993 – Korean language course as a second foreign language started • 1998 – Korean Language major in the Department of Oriental Languages established

Relations and World Languages (Kazakhstan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2012 – reorganized the Department of Korean Studies and Center for Korean Studies opened • 2013 – Korean Translation major opening • 2012–2015 – completed the “Seed Program for Korean Studies” • 2015–2020 – was selected for “Core University project” • 18 faculty members and 238 students • Affiliated College/Faculty: Oriental Studies <p>* Majors: Language and Literature, Translation, Oriental Studies</p>
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※ Source: Korea Foundation Statistics Center (<https://www.kf.or.kr/koreanstudies/koreaStudiesMap.do>, search: 21.06.2025)

As illustrated in Table 1, major universities in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan now operate dedicated departments or programs in Korean Studies. These departments typically focus on Korean language, literature, interpretation and translation, and broader aspects of Korean culture. Since the early 1990s, the field has expanded rapidly, partly because of the presence of a large ethnic Korean diaspora in Central Asia. In Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, Korean has also been promoted as a heritage language, providing an additional incentive for its institutionalization in universities (Jang, 2013). Through such programs, students acquire not only linguistic competence but also knowledge of Korean history, society, and culture, thereby linking language learning with broader forms of cultural literacy.

Nevertheless, the mission of Korean Studies in the region cannot be limited to heritage or cultural education alone. As Kwon (2014) argues, literature and cultural studies play an essential role in shaping identity and civic values. In multi-ethnic societies like those of Central Asia, where no single ethnic identity defines the educational landscape, the goals of Korean Studies must be adapted to reflect multicultural realities and the need to prepare students as global citizens.

The popularity of Korean Studies has also extended to primary and secondary education, and demand for qualified teachers continues to grow. According to the Korea Foundation Statistics Center, more than 50 universities in Central Asia currently offer courses in Korean, but only four institutions in three countries have developed master’s and doctoral-level programs. This imbalance has created an acute shortage of highly qualified instructors, especially those with doctoral training, making it difficult to maintain the quality of higher-level teaching and research. Although many Central Asian students have studied in graduate schools in Korea since the 1990s, relatively few have returned to pursue academic careers in their home countries (Jang, 2013). As a result, the field continues to face a generational gap in faculty recruitment, delaying the development of a sustainable scholarly community.

Another structural challenge lies in the relatively low economic and social status of academics in Central Asia. Limited research funding and unstable working conditions make it difficult for young scholars to remain in academia, further exacerbating the shortage of qualified personnel (Belyalova, 2019: 16). As Jang (2014) and Lee (2019) note, while student interest in Korean Studies continues to rise, the lack of institutional capacity risks turning this phenomenon into a temporary trend rather than a long-term academic field. Sustained growth will require stronger cooperation between local universities and Korean institutions, as well as more targeted policies to build local expertise and research infrastructure.

Recognizing these problems, educators in the region have begun to form collaborative networks. In 2014, the Central Asian Association of Korean Studies Professors was established during a conference at Bishkek Humanities University under the leadership of Professor Tae-hyeon Back. This organization, together with the Center for Korean Studies at the Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages, has worked to strengthen academic exchange, co-publish journals and newsletters, and maintain regional cooperation through its online platform (<http://canks.asia>) (Jang, 2018). These initiatives show that while Korean Studies in Central Asia

continues to face structural obstacles, collective efforts by local scholars and sustained support from Korean institutions provide a foundation for future development.

Integrating Global Citizenship into Korean Studies: Theoretical and Pedagogical Considerations

The notion of global citizenship, often framed around civic responsibility, intercultural understanding, and commitment to social justice and sustainability, has become a widely cited goal in higher education. Yet, its translation into concrete curricula is not without difficulty: without careful design it risks remaining abstract or symbolic rather than transformative (Davies, 2006). Within the field of Korean Studies, embedding global citizenship requires conceptual models that connect Korea-specific content with broader global themes such as migration, human rights, development, and regional interdependence. By doing so, students are encouraged to approach Korean case studies not in isolation but as part of wider global dynamics (Horey et al., 2018).

A strong curricular framework positions Korean Studies as an interdisciplinary hub, drawing upon history, literature, cultural studies, political science, and digital media. Through comparative methods, students gain tools for reflexivity and empathy, examining Korea's experiences of democratization and rapid economic growth alongside parallel or contrasting national trajectories. This comparative approach allows for the development of transferable insights into governance, civic activism, and policymaking that lie at the heart of global citizenship education (Horey et al., 2018; Smith, Graham 2014). Furthermore, the incorporation of theoretical pluralism, including postcolonial, decolonial, and inter-Asian perspectives, creates opportunities to challenge dominant Western frameworks and to foster engagement with multiple situated forms of knowledge (Lee, 2019).

Korean popular culture, or *hallyu*, has emerged as an accessible entry point into Korean Studies, yet its curricular use requires a critical orientation. Without appropriate framing, it risks being reduced to entertainment consumption. Studies of Korea's cultural industries highlight the intentional role of state policies in shaping cultural flows and demonstrate the potential of this field for cultivating critical media literacies (Kwon, Kim 2014; Jin, Yoon 2017). Courses that interrogate soft power, global image-making, and the political economy of cultural production enable students to reflect on how cultural diplomacy intersects with civic identity and international imaginaries.

Methodologically, several approaches offer promise for integrating global citizenship education into Korean Studies. First, project-based and experiential learning – through policy simulations, service learning, or community-based initiatives – treat citizenship not only as knowledge but as practice, fostering policy literacy and civic engagement (Davies, 2006; Smith, Graham 2014). Second, the comparative case method deepens critical thinking by situating Korean developments alongside those of other regions, thereby illuminating uneven patterns of globalization and shared ethical responsibilities (Horey et al. 2018). Third, the incorporation of digital humanities expands access to primary materials, supports cross-border collaboration, and introduces innovative pedagogies such as text analysis or digital archive projects. These tools are especially valuable in resource-limited contexts where access to traditional materials may be constrained (Luhmann, Burghardt 2021; Brügger, Finnemann 2013).

Nevertheless, curricular innovation is not without challenges. One significant risk lies in the prevalence of politicized or pseudohistorical narratives in public discourse, which can undermine critical learning. Addressing this requires deliberate emphasis on historiography and discourse analysis to strengthen students' capacity for critical evaluation (Logie, 2024). Another difficulty involves structural barriers, overloaded curricula and uneven faculty preparedness, which often weaken the implementation of global citizenship goals. Addressing these challenges necessitates targeted professional development and institutional support so that curricular ambitions translate into genuine educational outcomes rather than superficial additions (Davies, 2006).

The pedagogical objectives of such a curriculum must balance knowledge, values, and skills. Cognitive outcomes include historical literacy, comparative analysis, and policy reasoning; affective

goals encompass empathy and ethical awareness across cultural boundaries; while behavioral dimensions involve civic participation, project management, and collaborative inquiry. Assessment methods should mirror this multidimensionality by combining reflective portfolios, evaluations of experiential projects, and digital research outputs. Evidence suggests that such holistic approaches more effectively capture the competencies associated with global citizenship (Horey et al., 2018; Smith, Graham, 2014).

In conclusion, embedding global citizenship within Korean Studies involves far more than simply adding international content. It requires the construction of a curriculum that links Korea's cultural and historical specificity to global challenges while simultaneously cultivating the competencies required for transnational engagement. By combining interdisciplinary perspectives, critical media studies, experiential learning, and digital methodologies, and by explicitly addressing both epistemic risks and resource constraints, Korean Studies can evolve into a dynamic arena for fostering global citizenship that is academically rigorous, contextually grounded, and oriented toward real-world civic action.

Research results

The interviews conducted across four universities – two in Kazakhstan, one in Uzbekistan, and one in Kyrgyzstan – revealed diverse understandings of how Korean Studies can serve as a platform for global citizenship education. While teachers converged on the importance of cultivating students' ability to engage in an interconnected world, their interpretations varied: some viewed global citizenship primarily as human rights education, others linked it to happiness or well-being, and still others emphasized multicultural coexistence. Despite these differences, most educators connected their own pedagogical beliefs and prior interests with global citizenship, which served as a motivating force for integrating such perspectives into their Korean Studies teaching.

Teachers frequently underscored the relevance of the Central Asian context, where multiethnic societies and geopolitical competition create a unique environment for nurturing global awareness. For instance, respondents in Kazakhstan emphasized the need for preparing students to interact with increasingly diverse populations, while Kyrgyz teachers highlighted values of peaceful coexistence and personal well-being. In Uzbekistan, instructors stressed identity formation as a prerequisite for students to engage meaningfully with broader global issues. These findings aligned with earlier studies show that the lack of a unified theoretical framework for global citizenship education often leaves teachers to interpret and adapt its core values in individualized ways.

In practice, Korean Studies programs addressed global citizenship themes through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Courses commonly incorporated discussions on human rights, multiculturalism, minority inclusion, gender equality, and intercultural understanding. Beyond the classroom, students engaged in activities such as cultural weeks, language exchange programs, volunteer interpreting, and collaborative events with Korean institutions. Teachers also drew upon civil society initiatives and official cultural diplomacy efforts – such as consular lectures or university partnerships – which provided students with direct exposure to global and intercultural experiences.

These educational practices, however, were largely driven by the initiative and enthusiasm of individual teachers rather than institutionalized frameworks. Many educators invested personal time and resources to adapt teaching materials, often relying on international research, materials from King Sejong Institutes, or self-collected digital resources. While this autonomy fostered innovation and a sense of achievement, it also created risks of inconsistency and teacher burnout. The lack of standardized guidelines or policy support left instructors to balance their own visions of Korean Studies with institutional demands.

Pedagogically, several teachers experimented with student-centered approaches, including group work, discussions, and project-based learning, to move beyond rote memorization and encourage practical application of knowledge. Although students were often unaccustomed to such methods, teachers viewed them as essential for cultivating collaboration, critical thinking, and

communicative skills. They acknowledged tensions between the ideals of participatory pedagogy and the traditional exam-driven structures of universities but framed these efforts as “planting seeds for the future.” Creative extracurricular activities provided a structural niche where global citizenship values could be fostered without the constraints of formal evaluation.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that Korean Studies in Central Asia already engages with global citizenship education, albeit in fragmented and teacher-driven ways. Educators’ strong personal convictions and commitment to broadening students’ horizons sustain these efforts, yet the absence of institutional frameworks, teaching resources, and shared definitions limits their scalability. Strengthening policy support, curricular guidelines, and collaborative platforms would allow Korean Studies to evolve from isolated initiatives into a more systematic vehicle for cultivating global citizenship in the region.

Conclusion

Since the early 1990s, the steady growth of Korean Studies in Central Asia has created important avenues for cultural dialogue, educational cooperation, and Korea’s soft-power presence in the region. Yet for this field to develop into a genuine platform for global citizenship – one that encourages critical reflection, intercultural reciprocity, and sustainable local expertise – it must confront the structural and contextual barriers that continue to limit its potential. The historical and transregional character of Central Asia demonstrates that a pluralistic and comparative orientation is more effective than one-directional knowledge transfer, while the popularity of Korean popular culture, although useful as an entry point, should not be reduced to a purely commercial attraction that risks positioning students as passive consumers rather than active contributors. At the same time, systemic weaknesses in local higher education, such as the shortage of qualified instructors and insufficient research infrastructure, hinder the emergence of locally grounded programs capable of cultivating global citizenship skills. Political and social particularities of the region – including clan structures, regime dynamics, and the influence of external powers – also shape the environment in which academic initiatives are designed and implemented, making sensitivity to context a prerequisite for sustainable cooperation.

Against this backdrop, the advancement of Korean Studies requires a reorientation from unidirectional outreach toward reciprocal knowledge co-production, with Central Asian scholars and students engaged as partners in both teaching and research. Investment in human capital is essential, particularly through teacher-training initiatives, co-supervised doctoral programs, and fellowship schemes that can generate long-term academic capacity within regional institutions. Equally important is the expansion of curricular content to encompass comparative and problem-driven themes such as migration, media circulation, governance, and environmental security, which connect Korean experiences with Central Asian realities and global challenges. Programs should be designed in ways that are attuned to the political economy and social structures of the region, while the cultural appeal of the Korean Wave can be leveraged strategically as a gateway to critical inquiry, language learning, and civic-minded exchange.

If Korean Studies in Central Asia succeeds in bridging capacity gaps, embracing multidirectional exchange, and broadening its intellectual agenda to engage with issues of regional and global relevance, it can transcend the role of cultural diplomacy and evolve into a platform that nurtures the core competencies of global citizenship. Its future significance will depend on aligning cultural appeal and diplomatic initiatives with sustained investment in local scholarship, context-aware programming, and genuinely reciprocal partnerships, thereby fostering not only mutual understanding but also the skills of critical thinking, intercultural empathy, and collaborative problem-solving.

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Белялова А.Е.

SDU University, Алматы, Қазақстан

E-mail: aigerimbelyalova@gmail.com

**ЖАҒАНДЫҚ АЗАМАТТЫҚТЫ ҚАЛЫПТАСТЫРУ ҚҰРАЛЫ РЕТІНДЕГІ
ШЕТЕЛДІК КОРЕЙТАНУ: ОРТАЛЫҚ АЗИЯДАҒЫ СЫН-ҚАТЕРЛЕР
МЕН КЕЛЕШЕК МҮМКІНДІКТЕР**

Аңдатпа. Мақалада Орталық Азия елдеріндегі шетелдік корейтану бағдарламаларының жаһандық азаматтық білім (GCED) платформасы ретіндегі рөлі қарастырылады. Зерттеудің жаңалығы – корейтану тек академиялық пән ретінде ғана емес, сонымен бірге адам құқықтары, тұрақты даму және әл-ауқатқа бағытталған білім беру сияқты жаһандық тақырыптарды ілгерілету құралы ретінде талдануында. Мақаланың мақсаты – бұл бағдарламалардың студенттердің трансұлттық санасын қаншалықты тиімді қалыптастыратынын бағалау және олардың әлеуетін шектейтін құрылымдық кедергілерді анықтау. Зерттеу әдістемесі Орталық Азия корейтану профессорлары қауымдастығына мүше оқытушылар арасында жүргізілген сауалнама деректері мен әдебиеттерге талдауды қамтиды. Нәтижелер оқытушылардың студенттердің жаһандық құзыреттерін дамытуға жоғары деңгейде бейілді екенін көрсетеді. Алайда бірқатар жүйелік кедергілер сақталуда: халықаралық пікірталастарды бейнелейтін оқу материалдарының жеткіліксіздігі; тіл мен танымал мәдениетке шамадан тыс басымдық беретін оқу жоспарларының тарлығы; корейтану саласында докторлық дәрежесі бар мамандардың тапшылығы. Мұндай олқылықтар сыни-салыстырмалы зерттеуден гөрі мәдени тұтынуға бағдарлану қаупін тудырады, бұл «Корей толқыны» мен оның саяси негіздері төңірегіндегі пікірталастарда да атап өтілуде. Қорытындыда цифрлық гуманитарлық технологиялар мен онлайн-архивтердің ресурс тапшылығы мәселесін шешу маңыздылығы атап өтіліп, білім беру саясатын үйлестіру, кадрлық әлеуетке инвестиция жасау және Кореяны кеңірек азиялық және жаһандық контексте қарастыратын пәнаралық курстарды енгізу қажеттілігі ұсынылады.

Алғыс: бұл зерттеу Корея қорының (Korea Foundation) «KF Fellowship for Field Research» гранты аясында жүзеге асырылды.

Кілт сөздер: корейтану, Орталық Азия, жаһандық азаматтық, білім беру саясаты, Корей толқыны

Белялова А. Е.

SDU University, Казахстан, г. Алматы

E-mail: aigerimbelyalova@gmail.com

ЗАРУБЕЖНОЕ КОРЕЕВЕДЕНИЕ КАК ПУТЬ К ГЛОБАЛЬНОМУ ГРАЖДАНСТВУ: ВЫЗОВЫ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ В ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается роль зарубежных программ корееведения в странах Центральной Азии как платформ для глобального гражданского образования (GCED). Новизна исследования заключается в том, что корееведение рассматривается не только как академическая дисциплина, но и как средство продвижения глобальных образовательных тем, включая права человека, устойчивое развитие и образование для благополучия. Цель статьи – оценить, насколько эффективно данные программы формируют транснациональную осведомлённость студентов, а также выявить структурные ограничения, сдерживающие их потенциал. Методология исследования основана на анализе литературы и данных опроса преподавателей, входящих в Ассоциацию профессоров корееведения Центральной Азии. Результаты показывают, что преподаватели проявляют высокую приверженность развитию глобальных компетенций у студентов. Однако сохраняются системные барьеры: ограниченность учебных материалов, отражающих международные дискуссии; узость учебных программ, ориентированных главным образом на язык и популярную культуру; нехватка преподавателей с докторской степенью в области корееведения. Эти пробелы ведут к риску смещения акцента с критического сравнительного анализа в сторону культурного потребления, что подтверждается и дискуссиями вокруг феномена «Корейской волны» и её политических истоков. В заключении подчёркивается значение цифровых гуманитарных технологий и онлайн-архивов для преодоления нехватки ресурсов, а также необходимость

координации образовательной политики, инвестиций в развитие преподавательского состава и внедрения междисциплинарных курсов для укрепления устойчивости и педагогической ценности корееведения в Центральной Азии.

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Ключевые слова: корееведение, Центральная Азия, глобальное гражданство, образовательная политика, Корейская волна

Авторлар туралы мәлімет:

Беялова Әйгерім Ермекқызы, PhD, Педагогикалық және гуманитарлық ғылымдар факультетінің доцент м.а., SDU University, Алматы, Қазақстан.

Информация об авторах:

Беялова Айгерим Ермековна, PhD, и.о. доцента факультета Педагогики и гуманитарных наук, SDU University, Алматы, Казахстан

Information about authors:

Belyalova Aigerim Ermekovna, PhD, acting associate professor of the Faculty of Education and Humanities, SDU University, Almaty, Kazakhstan.