

South Korea

Clare You and Yangwon Ha, eds., *The Spread of the Korean Language: Through the Korean Diaspora and Beyond*

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Since the late twentieth century, Korea has received unprecedented attention from the world due to its large economy which has grown to eleventh in the world based on GDP ranking and the increase in global popularity of South Korean culture, called the Korean Wave. Accordingly, Korean language education is entering into a new era because the number of Korean language learners is rapidly growing throughout the world. It is a huge change considering that Korean language education used to be mostly limited to Korean people overseas.

According to Ministry of Foreign Affairs statistics, there are 7,430,688 Koreans overseas in 2017. Among them, China (2.54 million), United States (2.49 million) and Japan (0.8 million) are the top three countries where Koreans live, followed by Canada (0.24 million), Uzbekistan (0.18 million), Australia (0.18 million) Russia (0.17 million) and Colombia (0.12 million). *The Spread of the Korean Language: Through the Korean Diaspora and Beyond* is a compilation of papers on Korean diasporas and Korean language education from ten contributors spanning over nine countries and covering four major Korean diaspora regions of the world, which include China, the United States, Japan and the Post-Soviet States. However, it is a little regrettable that the editors did not include any European or South American countries where there are sizable populations of Korean people and Korean language learners are rapidly increasing.

Clare You, the main editor of this book, is an experienced Korean language educator who has taught the Korean language for more than 30 years at U.C. Berkeley, and she initiated this project with support from the Center for Korean Studies at U.C. Berkeley. She states in the introduction that “this volume examines each region into which the Korean language has spread, looking at the historical background and

present state of affairs which reference to the effects of economy, politics, education, and society, and considering what the future might hold” (2). Thus, the purpose of this volume is to provide general information about the Korean diaspora focusing on the state of Korean language education around the world. Yangwon Ha, co-editor, specializes in the expansion of education and Korean education policy, and she adds information about the Korean government’s role in the spread of the language and its policy in recent decades.

Chapters 1 through 3 are about three areas in China: Yanbian, Shandong, and Hong Kong. Chapter 1, “The Establishment and Development of the Korean Language in China” by Kim Kuang-su, introduces the history of immigration of Koreans to the northeastern region of China and the changes in Korean language usages since the 1950s. Chapter 2, “How Korean Language Education Spread in Shandong, China” by Jin Zhe and Jin Jiaoling, deals with how Korean language education has progressed in Shandong since diplomatic treaties between Korea and China were signed. According to the authors, the Korean language is taught as a foreign language, not simply as an ethnic language in the Shandong area. Chapter 3, “The Spread of Korean Language Education in Hong Kong” by Hyewon Kang Kim, introduces the history of the Korea-Hong Kong relationship and recent phenomenon of raised interest in learning the Korean language among the local people due to the Korean Wave. The author points out that the Korean Wave alone will not be sufficient to fuel further interest in Korean language learning, but there should be more practical motivations for learning Korean.

Chapter 4, “From a Diaspora Language to a Language Diaspora: The Social Implication of Korean Language Education in Japan” by Nam Sun Song, overviews the history of Korean residents in Japan and Korean education in ethnic Korean schools. The author also introduces the complicated political situation between Korea and Japan, and how North Korea has affected the Korea-Japan relationship. Chapter 5, “The Perishing Language of Diaspora: The Case of *Koryomal* in Kazakhstan,” is a meaningful chapter since the author, Genman Kim, is a third-generation of the *Koryo saram*, Korean people in the Post-Soviet States. He explains the history of Koreans who were forced to move to Kazakhstan and of the Korean language education under the Soviet Union’s unfavorable policy on minority languages. He mentions that the main trend of *Koryomal* (the Korean language spoken by *Koryo saram*) is towards an eventual extinction. Chapter 6, “Korean Language Spread and Korean Language Education in New Zealand, with Comparative Notes on Austria” by Inshil Choe Yoon, introduces the recent surge of Korean immigrants and the challenges of Korean language education in New Zealand. She emphasizes that Korea is New Zealand’s sixth largest export destination, and that the relationship between the two countries will remain strong.

Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 deal with the East Coast and the West Coast of the United States respectively. Chapter 7, “On the Korean Language in Diaspora—Focusing on the Western United States” by Clare You, overviews the history of Korean immigrants, starting from laborers who worked at plantations in Hawaii in the 1920s and how the Korean language has been established as a foreign language course in the United States. Chapter 8, “The Korean Language Diaspora, with a Special Focus on the Eastern United States” by Hye-Sook Wang, introduces the history of immigration to the East Coast, which is shorter but led by a more educated population compared to that of the West Coast. The author emphasizes that the Korean language is now one of the major less-commonly taught languages in the United States.

Chapter 9, “Language Spread Policy in Korea” by Yangwon Ha, concludes this book by examining the Korean government’s cultural and language policies overseas starting from the 1970’s, pointing out the Korean government’s recent proactive attitude compared to their passive attitude in the past, and emphasizing the importance of the Korean government’s role in spreading Korean language and culture abroad.

In summary, this book shows that the status of Korean language education is expanding from one of an ethnic language education to one of the foreign languages in each region. This book provides Korean language educators and administrators over the world with valuable information for them to look back on the history of Korean diasporas and Korean language education, which will be helpful when planning its future.

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