

Korean Studies in Spain. A new field in Spanish academia

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Introduction

The international projection of the Korean peninsula in the world is very important nowadays. The division of the peninsula and the confrontation between both Korea, the militaristic region in the North, the economic presence of South Korean companies, the international success of Korean cultural products, music band, or food are some of the many reasons to pay attention to the situation on the Korean peninsula and Korean culture, requiring as many points of view. Long gone are the times when Spanish people could or wanted to live unencumbered by the developments in Korea.

Spanish society had news of Korea since long ago. The first contact of a Spanish person with the peninsula happened during the Imjin

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War, when Gregorio de Céspedes travel with the Japanese to evangelize the Korean population. Years later, in late 1870s, a Spanish woman, Amalia Amador, was among the first women to set foot in Chemulp'ŏ. Since then, the connections and exchanges between both countries continued developing to the current situation. Despite holding diplomatic relationships with both Koreas, the relations are far from being the same. In 2001, Spain established officially diplomatic relationships with the DPRK, but in 2017 the Foreign Affairs Ministry expelled the North Korean diplomat in Madrid in protest against the nuclear tests. The relationships with the Republic of Korea and Spain are clearly more fluid and positive. This has led to mutual state visits such as the visit of King Felipe VI in 2019 to Korea, the visit of President Moon Jae-in in 2021 to Spain, and the visit of President Pedro Sánchez in 2022. Both countries share an important economic bound: South Korea is the third largest export market for Spanish economy (€1.9 billion in 2021), while Korea invested in Spain €1.3 billion.¹⁾ These shared interests had their translation also in the cultural relations. The Spanish government decided to open a Cervantes Institute in 2022 to promote the teaching of Spanish language,²⁾ and the Republic of

1) La Moncloa, "Pedro Sánchez highlights future collaboration between Spain and Korea in the areas of technology and innovation," https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/presidente/news/paginas/2022/20221117_trip-to-korea3.aspx (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

2) Instituto Cervantes, "El Gobierno aprueba la creación del Instituto Cervantes de Seúl, que empezará a funcionar en 2023," https://www.cervantes.es/sobre_instituto_cervantes/prensa/2022/noticias/congreso-aprueba-ic-seul.htm (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

Korea opened the Korean Cultural Center in Madrid in 2011.³⁾ The intensity of these relations have had an impact on the academic interest on Korea, main interest of this piece.

This article will present a history of the development of Korean studies in Spain. Despite the health of the diplomatic and economic relations between Korea and Spain, the development of Korean studies as an academic discipline is a more recent phenomena than the interconnections between both countries. This exposition will consider the institutional and academic development of the field, considering its path of introduction in the universities. For that reason, the article is organized around the development of higher education studies on Korea as an area of study.

The history of Korean studies in Spain is relatively short if compared with other countries such as France or Russia. The introduction of these studies in Spain happened under the umbrella of East Asian studies, and up to today this has a large impact on how Korea is studied and research in Spanish universities. For that reason, the first task of the article will be to provide a context about the development of these studies. Then, the article will consider in detail the different programs that teach themes related to Korea at Spanish universities. Most of this presentation will deal with the implementation of undergraduate programs, but it will also consider specific postgraduate programs. The next point of interest will be the research on Korea properly speaking by looking into lines of research,

3) Korean Cultural Center, "Nuestro centro," <https://spain.korean-culture.org/es/6/contents/314> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

professional associations, and academic journals. The article will argue for a progressive consolidation of research institutions. This is product and result of a larger community of scholars engaged in the field of Korean studies. However, the overall university system presents some complexities that difficult its complete development, as it will be obvious when discussing the academic journals on Korean studies in Spain.

East Asian Studies in Spain and the European Higher Education Area

Studies on Asia in the Spanish context started relatively early when the Spanish crown contacted more directly with the continent through its colonial possessions in the Philippines. Since the 16th century, mostly catholic religious orders aimed at the evangelization of China and Japan, being Jesuits, Franciscan, and Dominican orders the most involved. Such attempts at evangelization required some knowledge of the local language and culture to succeed.⁴⁾ This activity led the way for learning and teaching languages, producing religious texts in Chinese.⁵⁾ Unfortunately, this early effort of catholic priests and

4) Moncó, B., "The China of the Jesuits: Travels and Experiences of Diego de Pantoja and Adriano de las Cortes," *Culture & History Digital Journal* 1, 2 (2012); Luo, Huiling, "La "política de adaptación" de la Compañía de Jesús en dinastía Ming: las primeras comunicaciones culturales entre Europa y China," *Revista de Antropología y Filosofía de los Sagrados* 6, 1 (2022): 51-68; Busquets Alemany, Anna, "Primeros pasos de los dominicos en China," *Cauriensia: revista anual de ciencias eclesíasticas* 8 (2013): 191-214.

monks did not produce an academic tradition over time at the university.

The academic interest in Spain for East Asian studies started a new chapter during the early 2000s with the establishment of the first university level programs on the field. At the same time, this consolidation was the result of earlier initiatives to promote such kind of studies. During the 20th century, Spanish scholars and foreign scholars have been developing PhD dissertations on several topics on the field of East Asian Studies, they have also been organizing lectures and academic events related to the field. One of such examples was the Kim Sue Hee's academic activities. Kim defended her PhD thesis in 1987 at the Complutense University of Madrid, titled *La presencia del arte de extremo oriente en España a fines del siglo XIX y principios del siglo XX* [The presence of Far East art in Spain at the end of 19th century and beginnings of 20th century].⁶⁾ She sent the first report to the Association of Korean Studies in Europe (AKSE) in 1996 on her activities in Spain related to Korean Studies, indicating the establishment of an Institute on Korean Studies in Spain and an Association of Korean Studies in Spain.⁷⁾ Although the efforts of Kim Sue Hee did not prosper in the establishment of a program, they attest for the early initiatives in the field.

More impactful were the efforts that led into the development of

5) Busquets Alemany, Anna, "Primeros pasos de los dominicos en China," *Cauriensia: revista anual de ciencias eclesíasticas* 8 (2013): 204-205

6) Ministry of Universities, *Teseo Database*, Kim Sue Hee, <https://www.educacion.gob.es/teseo/mostrarSeleccion.do> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

7) AKSE, "Spain," *AKSE Newsletter* 20 (1996): 74-75.

the first degree on East Asian studies, due to their meaning in terms of research, teaching and professional development for specialists. The earliest consolidation of the academic efforts in the field was the organization for the first time in Spain of an official degree with Ministry sanction, on East Asian Studies in 2003.⁸⁾ This degree was a 2º level *licenciatura*. Before the reorganization of the European Higher Education Area, Spain organized Higher education in *diplomatura*, 3-year-long degrees, and *Licenciaturas* 4 or 5-year-long degrees. *Diplomatura* was considered the first level of Higher education and *licenciatura* includes a 1º level education and a 2º level. A 2º level *licenciatura* meant that after any education that covered the first level, a student could access a 2º level program *licenciatura*. The program on East Asian Studies accepted by the government assumed a 2-year program with the possibility of choosing between two itineraries: China and Japan. The first universities to offer this kind of program were the Autonomous University of Barcelona with the Pompeu Fabra University, the Open Catalanian University, and the Autonomous University of Madrid, defining an inflexion point for this field at the Spanish university system.⁹⁾ These universities gathered the first university professors on the field, and established the first research lines on East Asian studies.

The academic content of these programs, despite the freedom of

8) Fisac, Taciana, "La formación sobre Asia-Pacífico en España," *Anuario Asia Pacífico*, 1 (2004): 401-406.

9) Fisac, Taciana, "La formación sobre Asia-Pacífico en España," *Anuario Asia Pacífico*, 1 (2004): 401.

each university to adapt their curriculums, was conceived from a strong interdisciplinary perspective. The law establishing these studies defined the subjects based on 5 basic areas or studying as expressed on table 1.

Table 1. Basic structure of East Asian studies degrees as a 2° level licenciatura.

Basic Modules	Credits	Knowledge Area
East Asian contemporary civilization	12	Social Anthropology, Political and Administration Science, Applied Economy, East Asian Studies, Human Geography, Contemporary History, History and Economic Institutions, Sociology
East Asian history	12	Archaeology, East Asian Studies, Ancient History, Contemporary History, History, History and Economic Institutions, Medieval History, Modern History, Prehistory
East Asian language	18	East Asian Studies, General Linguistics
East Asian literature	12	East Asian Studies, Theory of Literature, Comparative Literature
East Asian thought and culture	12	Social Anthropology, East Asian Studies, Philosophy, Ancient History, Art history, History of Thought and Social and Political Movements, Logic and Philosophy of Science

* BOE-A-2003-6376¹⁰⁾

10) Real Decreto 360/2003, of march 28th, <https://www.boe.es/eli/es/rd/2003/03/28/360> (accessed June 5th, 2023).

Table 1 presents the basic modules of the degree, the credit units and the knowledge area, serving all as a basic structure over which each individual university could tailor their own programs. In order to explain the meaning of this last column it is necessary to say that university professors organized in Departments are, at the same time, sub-organized by knowledges area. Thus, a History Department can host inside the area of Ancient history, Medieval history, etc. These knowledge areas are relevant structures, because they are responsible of teaching the subjects attached to them. Thus, the above table shows the high degree of interdisciplinarity under which these studies were first thought. It also shows the important role of language in the degree from its earliest forms.

The establishment of these degrees were important structural elements for the configuration of a field on East Asian Studies at the university level within national itineraries. The same law that established the basic structure for the degree, established that within it there would be three possible itineraries: China, Japan, Korea. Most of the programs at that time focused on China or Japan as main itineraries, although some also taught Korean language, like the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

These studies reached a new point of inflexion with the adaptation of the Spanish university system to the European Higher Area of Education, popularly known as the Bologna Process. In 2009-2010 universities in Spain had to transform and adapt their degrees into the undergraduate and postgraduate system dominant nowadays. Most Spanish degrees turned into the 4+1 system, meaning that undergraduate programs, *grados*, would be 4-year-long programs

with 240 credit units (European Credit Transfer System, ECTS hereafter), and master degrees would be 1-year-long programs with at least 60 ECTS.¹¹⁾ Although, there are master programs that can be 2-year-long and up to 120 ECTS.

The university reorganization under the Bologna Process affected directly the degrees on East Asian Studies, opening the possibility to structure them as undergraduate and postgraduate programs. The only document that guided the process of reorganization to some degree was the *Proyecto de Estudios en el Ámbito de las Lenguas, Literatura, Cultura y Civilización* [Project of Studies on the field of Language, Literature, Civilization and Culture].¹²⁾ This study coordinated by the National Agency of Quality Evaluation and Accreditation (ANECA by its Spanish acronym) opened the possibility of an undergraduate degree on languages and cultures of Asia and Africa to accommodate what traditionally had been degrees on Arab studies, Hebrew studies and Asian studies.¹³⁾ This Project argued for the organization of degrees on Arab and Islamic studies, Hebrew

11) European Education Area, "European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)," <https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/inclusive-and-connected-higher-education/european-credit-transfer-and-accumulation-system#:~:text=ECTS%20allows%20credits%20taken%20at,of%20study%20programmes%20for%20students>. (Accessed June 5th 2023).

12) ANECA, *Libro blanco del Proyecto de Estudios en el Ámbito de las Lenguas, Literatura, Cultura y Civilización*. (Madrid: ANECA, 2005) https://www.aneca.es/documents/20123/63950/libroblanco_lengua_def.pdf/04b2610a-b65f-c858-d531-ecdfdf7ce599?t=1654601680609 (Accessed, June 5th, 2023).

13) Ibid. 431.

studies and East Asian Studies (Chinese language, Japanese language, Korean language, etc.) as areas of education with the possibility of itineraries of specialization after a basic education relevant for the whole region object of study.¹⁴⁾ Most of the programs of 2^o level evolved into *grados* (undergraduate programs), but some evolved into master level programs.

The reorganization of East Asian Studies into a four-year undergraduate degree allowed to the university leaders in the field to enlarge their programs, mainly on Chinese and Japanese Studies (Autonomous University of Madrid and Barcelona, University of Granada), while other universities took the chance to start new programs of their own (University of Seville and University of Malaga through the joint project of International Campus of Excellence, Andalucia TECH). Each university program keeps their particularities and focus of attention, but some common points are the language bound perspective for the specialization (Chinese, Japanese or Korean language), and a clear multidisciplinary approach that relates them with the Area Studies model common in the rest of Europe.

Programs on Korean Studies at the Spanish University, 2011–2023

The history of Korean Studies in Spain, as seen above, is closely connected to the frame established by East Asian Studies. Before 2011,

14) Ibid. 435.

the efforts on the development of Korean Studies mostly focused on Korean languages classes and some courses on Korean culture or history within programs focused on the China or Japan itinerary. Despite the early mentions in the legislation about the possibility of establishing an itinerary of specialization on Korea, the first time that a university in Spain developed a Korean itinerary within the degree on East Asian Studies happened under the joint project of the University of Seville and the University of Malaga.¹⁵⁾ Since that moment, other universities also started their Korean Studies itineraries, fostering a diversified system of Korean Studies. These academic programs are based on an analysis of their academic and professional interest. Each program has developed their own analysis regarding these issues, but they share some common ideas for the establishment of the degree. The first common point is the understanding of a social request for more specialized knowledge on the region of East Asia and Korea.¹⁶⁾ The resolution of that demand presents a strong consensus. Most, if not all, the programs defend the importance of knowledge on the dominant language of the region of specialization (Korean language), and a multidisciplinary education

15) Comisión Mixta para el desarrollo y seguimiento de titulaciones conjuntas Universidad de Sevilla-Universidad de Málaga, *Formulario para la elaboración de la memoria de verificación de títulos oficiales de grado*, (University of Seville: Seville, 2011).

16) Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, *Memoria de Verificación*, 132; Comisión Mixta para el desarrollo y seguimiento de titulaciones conjuntas Universidad de Sevilla-Universidad de Málaga, *Formulario para la elaboración de la memoria de verificación de títulos oficiales de grado*, 3

based on the humanities and social sciences.¹⁷⁾ The following section will introduce the programs on Korean Studies currently active in Spain.

The University of Malaga is an important center for Korean studies in Spain as it was the first university to launch an undergraduate degree on East Asia, specialized on Korean Studies. In addition, this university also offers a postgraduate program for PhD. The University of Seville and the University of Malaga organized jointly an undergraduate degree which started in 2011-2012. This joint degree on East Asian Studies, established under the umbrella of the International Campus of Excellency Andalucia TECH, organized the three itinerary of specialization between both universities. The University of Seville launched the itineraries on Japan and China, and the University of Malaga focused exclusively on the itinerary on Korean Studies. Thus, they both share a common set of subjects on East Asian subjects that conform the basic education for students in both universities, but the itineraries of specialization are completely independent. Due to that agreement, the University of Malaga is the only university whose East Asian program is established only by Korean Studies specialists. The itinerary on Korean studies at the

17) Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, *Memoria de Verificación*, 146; Comisión Mixta para el desarrollo y seguimiento de titulaciones conjuntas Universidad de Sevilla-Universidad de Málaga, *Formulario para la elaboración de la memoria de verificación de títulos oficiales de grado*, 8; Universidad de Salamanca, “Grado en Estudios de Asia Oriental. Presentación” <https://www.usal.es/grado-en-estudios-de-asia-oriental/presentacion> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

University of Malaga follows the following subjects on table 7.

Table 7. Korean studies subjects at the University of Malaga.

	Subject	ECTS
Year 1	Korean language I	6
	Korean language II	6
Year 2	Korean language III	6
	Korean language IV	6
Year 3	Korean language V	6
	Korean language VI	6
	Korean language VII	6
	Korean language VIII	6
	Korean Aesthetic and Art	6
	Korean literature through its texts	6
	Thought and Religion in Korea through its texts	6
	Politics and Geostategy in Korea	6
Year 4	Scenic arts, dance, and music in Korea	6
	Shamanism, nature, and religious practices	6
	Korean language IX	6
	Korean language X	6
	Business Korean language	6
	Business culture and negotiation in Korea	6
	Popular and Modern culture in Korea	6
	Introduction to translation Korean-Spanish	6
	Relations of Spain and Latin America with Korea	6
	Tourism, Cultural and Educative exchanges with Korea	6

*Academic plan for undergraduate degree on East Asian Studies¹⁸⁾

18) University of Malaga, "Academic plan for undergraduate degree on East Asian Studies," https://www.uma.es/centers/subjects_center/fest/5159/ (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

The diversity of subjects is the first conclusion from the curriculum. The Korean language acquisition at level VIII, the last mandatory course for earning the specialization on Korean studies reaches the level 3B of the Sogang University method for teaching Korean language. However, the program still offers two more elective courses and one course specialized on Business Korean language. *Korean language X* finishes the language acquisition at the end of the level 4B of the above-mentioned Sogang University system.¹⁹⁾ The Korean language acquisition allows students to take the subject on Introduction to translation Korean-Spanish. This subject is directed to introduce students in the process of translating a Korean literary or historical piece, in order for them to learn through such practice the methodology of translating from Korean language into Spanish.²⁰⁾ Besides the Korean language, students are offered a variety of courses on cultural aspects of Korean culture, history, and modern society from the third year. *Korean Aesthetic and Art* presents a historical survey of Korean art history.²¹⁾ *Scenic arts, dance, and music in Korea* can complement that artistic education with a focus on the performative arts in Korea. This subject provides a theoretical knowledge on Korean performative arts through a historical survey

19) University of Malaga, "Coreano X," https://www.uma.es/centers/subjects_center/fest/5159/ (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

20) Universidad de Malaga, "Introducción a la traducción Corano-Español," <https://www.uma.es/centers/subject/5159/54789/> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

21) University of Malaga, "Estética y Arte Coreanos," <https://www.uma.es/centers/subject/5159/52967/> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

and challenges students to put such knowledge into practice in a creative way.²²⁾ The subjects of *Korean literature through its texts* and *Thought and Religion in Korea through its texts* take on Korean culture from two different fields but stressing textual analysis of Korean documents as a key element of the subject. *Korean literature through its texts* presents a survey on the history of Korean literature through the reading of Korean pieces and their comment.²³⁾ Meanwhile *Thought and Religion in Korea through its texts* does works on a similar direction but considering the main religious and philosophical movements in Korean history during the premodern and modern period.²⁴⁾ Another subgroup of subjects deals with cultural aspects of Korea. Thus, the subjects on *Shamanism, nature, and religious practices*,²⁵⁾ *Popular and Modern culture in Korea*,²⁶⁾ and *Business culture and negotiation in Korea*,²⁷⁾ they provide students with

22) Universidad de Malaga, "Artes escénicas, danza y música en Corea," <https://www.uma.es/centers/subject/5159/52985/> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

23) Universidad de Malaga, "Literatura Coreana a través de sus textos " <https://www.uma.es/centers/subject/5159/52971/> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

24) Universidad de Malaga, "Pensamiento y religions en Corea a través de sus textos" <https://www.uma.es/centers/subject/5159/52972/> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

25) Universidad de Malaga, "Chamanismo, naturaleza y prácticas religiones" <https://www.uma.es/centers/subject/5159/52987/> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

26) Universidad de Malaga, "Cultura popular y Contemporánea en Corea," <https://www.uma.es/centers/subject/5159/52993/> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

27) Universidad de Malaga, "Cultura empresarial y negociación en Corea," <https://www.uma.es/centers/subject/5159/52992/> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

practical and theoretical knowledge meaningful for their interactions in Korea and Korean people by providing glimpses into modern Korean mentalities. Finally, these subjects are complemented by another subset of subjects looking into Korea's position in the world and its connections with Spain and the Spanish-Speaking world. *Politics and Geostrategy in Korea*,²⁸⁾ *Relations of Spain and Latin America with Korea*,²⁹⁾ *Tourism, Cultural and Educative exchanges with Korea*,³⁰⁾ While the subject on *Politics and Geostrategy in Korea* analyzes the security and political situation of Korean in the region of Northeast Asia specifically, the other two subjects focus on the analysis of the interconnections and potentialities of the relationships between Korean and Spain.

Since 2012, professors of East Asian studies knowledge area at the University of Malaga have been part of the PhD on Advance Studies on Humanities at the University of Malaga. This evolved into the development of a subline of research within Line 1 of the program title "From the Mediterranean Sea to Asia: the expansion of the oikumene."³¹⁾ The result has been the defense of three PhD

28) Universidad de Malaga, "Política y Geoestrategía en Corea," <https://www.uma.es/centers/subject/5159/52983/> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

29) Universidad de Malaga, "Relaciones de España y Latinoamérica con Corea," <https://www.uma.es/centers/subject/5159/53005/> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

30) Universidad de Malaga, "Turismo, intercambios culturales y educativos con Corea," <https://www.uma.es/centers/subject/5159/53007/> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

31) Universidad de Malaga, "Profesorado - Estudios Avanzados en Humanidades," <https://www.uma.es/doctorado-humanidades/cms/menu/informa>

dissertation within this program within the field of Korean studies, the last in 2022.

The University of Salamanca is another of the main centers of Korean studies in Spain, as they offer undergraduate and postgraduate programs. The university launched the degree on East Asian Studies during the academic year of 2015-2016 within the School of Philology and sharing with the degrees at the school several subjects during the first two years.³²⁾ This program offers a specialization in Chinese Studies, Japanese Studies and Korean studies, requiring 90 ECTS credits in order to achieve the Korean studies specialization. Students need to choose their specialization from their first year by enrolling in their main language, without detriment of choosing a secondary one.

Table 4. Korean study subjects at the University of Salamanca

	Subject	ECTS
Year 1	Korean language I	6
	Korean language II	6
	Practice of Korean language I	6
Year 2	Korean language III	6
	Korean language IV	6
	History of Korean literature	6
	Second Asian language: Korean language I	6
	Second Asian language: Korean language II	6
Year 3	Korean language V	9

cion-del-programa/profesorado/ (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

32) Universidad de Salamanca, "Grado en Estudios de Asia Oriental," <https://www.usal.es/grado-en-estudios-de-asia-oriental> (Accessed Jun 6th, 2023).

	Korean language VI	6
	Modern Korean literature	3
	Practice of Korean language II	3
	Practice of Korean language III	6
	Practice Second Asian language: Korean language	6
	Second Asian language: Korean language III	6
	Second Asian language: Korean language IV	6
Year 4	Instrumental aspects (Korean language)	9
	Korean language VII	9
	Korean language VIII	9
	Second Asian language: Korean language V	9
	Second Asian language: Korean language VI	9

*Guía Académica de Grado en Estudios de Asia Oriental³³⁾

The curriculum offered by this program focuses mostly on Korean language and literature. *Korean language VIII*, the highest level subject, and *Korean language with Instrumental aspects (Korean language)* focus on the linguistic acquisition to the level 5 of Ehwa Woman’s University method.³⁴⁾ The only two other subjects on the field of Korean studies, *History of Korean literature* and *Modern Korean literature*, introduce a survey on the history of Korean literature from the first mythological and poetic expressions in the Three Kingdoms period to 1990s.³⁵⁾

33) Universidad de Salamanca, “Guía Académica de Grado en Estudios de Asia Oriental,” <https://guias.usal.es/node/136417> (Accessed Jun 6th, 2023)

34) Universidad de Salamanca, “Guía Docente Coreano VIII”, <https://guias.usal.es/node/136661> (Accessed June 6th, 2023).

35) Universidad de Salamanca, “Historia de la literatura coreana,” <https://www.esasiaoriental.es/docencia/> (Accessed June 6th, 2023); Universidad de Salamanca, “Literatura contemporánea coreana,” <https://guias.usal.es/>

The university also offer two master programs on East Asian studies with the possibility of specializing on Korean studies: the Master on Advanced studies on languages, literature and cultures of East Asia, and the Master on East Asian Studies. Despite their topics are very similar, their focus of attention is different. The Master on Advanced studies on languages, literature and cultures of East Asia, based on its study plan, focuses its attention on furthering the knowledge of their students on Korean languages and linguistic, as well as Korean literature. The program is 60 ECTS, with one subject to chose among three 3-credit subjects. It is completed with a 12 ECTS Master Thesis.

Table 5. Master on Advanced studies on languages, literature and cultures of East Asia. Korean itinerary Study plan

node/136591 (Accessed June 6th, 2023).

Subjects		ECTS
Advance Korean language I: syntactic and lexical analysis		6
Reading and Writing in Korean language: linguistic mode and textual genre		6
Advanced Korean language II: semantic and morphosyntactic structure		4,5
Korean language practice: instrumental and communicative development		4,5
Seminar on literature and translation (Korea)		4,5
Literary movements and genres in postwar Korean literature		4,5
Modern Korean culture: Hallyu (Korean cultural wave, Kpop, Kdrama)		4,5
20th century and current Korean narrative		4,5
Chosŏn dynasty feminist literature	Elective	3
Modernism and realism at the beginning of 20th century Korea	Elective	3
Traditional culture and religion in the history of Korea	Elective	3

* Master on Advanced studies on languages, literature and cultures of East Asia study plan³⁶⁾

The Master on East Asian Studies has a more general approach, although it also allows for a specialization on Korean studies. After a module of common subjects on East Asian studies, the specialization on Korean studies requires to take the courses on Table 6. This program is organized around a common education based on a module on East Asian studies (18 ECTS), and a module of specialization depending on the itinerary (24 ECTS). There is also a methodological or professional module (6 ECTS) and a final Master Thesis (12 ECTS).

36) Universidad de Salamanca, “Plan de Estudios,” https://www.usal.es/estudios-avanzados-de-lenguas-literaturas-y-culturas-de-asia-oriental-0/plan_estudios (Accessed June 6th, 2023).

Table 6. Master on East Asian Studies. Korean itinerary Study plan

Subject	ECTS
Korean language I	3
Modern Korean society	3
Korean cultural history	3
Korean language II	3
Economy and Business organization in Korea	3
Korean art and literature	3

*Master of East Asian studies study plan.³⁷⁾

The University of Salamanca completes its formative offer by providing also a PhD program with the possibility of researching on Korean Studies. the PhD program on Modern languages a line of research on East Asian studies focused on advancing the research in East Asian linguistics and literature.³⁸⁾ There PhD candidates can pursue research projects related to Korea, mostly related to the fields of translation, literature, and linguistics.

Madrid and Barcelona as important cultural and academic centers with well-established programs on East Asian studies in some of their universities, as well as relevant institutions that bring support to some existing Korean studies initiatives. In Madrid, two of its universities offer studies in the field of Korean Studies, although in different formats. The Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM, hereafter) and the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM, hereafter), are the most

37) Universidad de Salamanca, "Plan de Estudios," https://www.usal.es/master-estudios-en-asia-oriental/plan_estudios (Accessed June 6th, 2023).

38) Universidad de Salamanca, "Escuela de Doctorad. Oferta Académica. Lenguas Modernas," <https://doctorado.usal.es/es/doctorado/lenguas-modernas> (Accessed June 6th, 2023).

developed programs on Korean studies in the region, complementing their teaching offer with the presence of a King Sejong Institute at the Korean Cultural Center.³⁹⁾ It is also relevant to highlight that Madrid host the Casa Asia.⁴⁰⁾

The UAM is one of the oldest and more important East Asian Studies center in Spain. The university established one of the first programs on East Asian Studies with a strong focus on the Arab world, China and Japan. The study program plans the offering of a second language during the 6th and 7th semester, the 4th year.⁴¹⁾ The offer is limited to two courses of 6 ECTS each of 57 or 60 hours of teaching in the classroom and 93 or 90 hours of personal work.⁴²⁾ Both subjects cover the curriculum of the level 1.2 of the Ehwa Woman's University method for Korean language acquisition.⁴³⁾

39) Korean Cultural Center, "Introducción. Korean Cultural Center" <https://spain.korean-culture.org/es/1229/contents/697> (Accessed June 5th 2023).

40) Casa Asia, <https://www.casaasia.es/> (Accessed Jun 6th, 2023).

41) Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, *Memoria Verificada del Grado de Estudios de Asia y África: árabe, chino, japonés* (2009), <https://www.uam.es/FyL/03-2Grado-Est-AsiayAfrica-Arabe-Chino-Japon/1446821159080.htm> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

42) Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, "Guía Docente Segunda lengua 1 (Coreano)" [https://secretaria-virtual.uam.es/doa/consultaPublica/look\[conpub\]MostrarPubGuiaDocAs](https://secretaria-virtual.uam.es/doa/consultaPublica/look[conpub]MostrarPubGuiaDocAs); Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, "Guía Docente Segunda lengua 2 (Coreano)" [https://secretaria-virtual.uam.es/doa/consultaPublica/look\[conpub\]MostrarPubGuiaDocAs](https://secretaria-virtual.uam.es/doa/consultaPublica/look[conpub]MostrarPubGuiaDocAs)

43) Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, "Guía Docente Facultad de Filosofía y Letras. Grado en estudios de Asia y África," [https://secretaria-virtual.uam.es/doa/consultaPublica/look\[conpub\]BuscarPubGuiaDocAs?entradaPublica=true&idiomaPais=es.ES&_anoAcademico=2022&_centro=101&_planEstudio=744#](https://secretaria-virtual.uam.es/doa/consultaPublica/look[conpub]BuscarPubGuiaDocAs?entradaPublica=true&idiomaPais=es.ES&_anoAcademico=2022&_centro=101&_planEstudio=744#) (Accessed June 6th 2023).

The Complutense University of Madrid offers a minor on Korean Language within the undergraduate degree on Modern Language and Literature. The University started during the academic year of 2021-2022 the Major on Chinese language, and the Minor in Korean language started in 2022-2023. This program plans an important weight on learning the Korean language, complemented with several subjects on Korean culture and literature. Due to the recent establishment of this program, not all the subjects are already open. During the academic year of 2023-2024 the second-year subject will be offered for the first time, and during the 2024-2025 the next year subjects will be offered. Thus, the curriculum will be fully established by 2025-2026.

Table 2. Curriculum on Korean Studied at the Complutense University of Madrid

	Subject	ECTS
Year 1	Korean language I	6
	Korean language II	6
Year 2	Korean language III	6
	Korean language IV	6
	Introduction to Korean language	6
	Early Modern and Modern Korean culture	6
Year 3	Korean language V	6
	Korean language VI	6
	Korean literature: themes and forms	6
Year 4	Oran and written text analysis and translation	6
	History of Korean literature	6

* School of Philology and East Asian Studies website⁴⁴⁾

44) Facultad de Filología, *Grado en lenguas Modernas y sus literaturas*, (Univer

The curriculum of *Korean language I* and *II* consider 4h. of teaching weekly in the class, complemented by supporting classes for oral and writing practice. These two subjects are structured as the level A1.1 and A1.2 respectively of the European Common European Framework of References for Languages.⁴⁵⁾

Barcelona traditionally has been considered the second city in the country after the capital, and as a result the city host some important cultural institutions such as Casa Asia, an important institution in the dynamization of academic activities on Asian studies, or the King Sejong Institute.⁴⁶⁾ Thus, it is a relevant center for Korean Studies in Spain.

The Autonomous University of Barcelona has also a long tradition in the field of East Asian studies, becoming one of the promoting centers of this discipline in Spain. Thus, the university offers a degree on East Asian Studies, and three itineraries within the degree, Specialization on Language and Humanities in East Asia (Chinese, Japanese, and Korean language), Specialization on Economy, Politics and Society in East Asia, Specialization on Culture, Art and Literature in East Asia. Among those lines of specialization the subjects on Korean

sidad Complutense de Madrid: Madrid, 2017-2018); East Asian Studies Knowledge Area, "Información sobre el Maior de lengua china y el Minor de lengua coreana," <https://www.ucm.es/estudiosasiaoriental/maior-de-lengua-china-y-minor-de-lengua-coreana> (Accessed June 6th 2023).

45) East Asian Studies Knowledge Area, "Asignaturas del Minor de lengua coreana" <https://www.ucm.es/estudiosasiaoriental/asignaturas-del-minor-de-lengua-coreana> (Accessed June 6th 2023).

46) Institut Rei Sejong Barcelona, <http://www.sejongbarcelona.cat/> (Accessed Jun 6th, 2023).

studies are as presented in table 3.

Table 3. Korean studies subjects at the Autonomous University of Barcelona.

	Subject	ECTS
Year 4	Korean language I	12
	Korean language II	12
	Korean text and context	6

*Subject curriculum⁴⁷⁾

The curriculum of these subjects states that *Korean language I* and *II* are focused to the Korean language acquisition. Meanwhile the subject on *Korean text and context*, furthers the acquisition on Korean language, but it focuses on providing students with some tools dedicated to the translation of Korean language texts.

Despite it is beyond the scope of this article, it is interesting to mention how Latin America has been also active in the development of their own Korean Studies programs. Thanks to the cultural and linguistic links between Latin America and Spain, some of the professors involved in the above-mentioned programs have also participated in those initiative. Probably, the widest reaching program is the Korea Foundation Global e-School program led by the Autonomous University of Nuevo León (Mexico).⁴⁸⁾ Beside this

47) Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, "Grado en Estudios de Asia Oriental. Guías Docentes," <https://www.uab.cat/web/estudiar/listado-de-grados/plan-de-estudios/guias-docentes/estudios-de-asia-oriental-1345467893062.html?param1=1223967776732> (Accessed June 6th 2023).

48) Centro de estudios Asiáticos, Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, "Programa más importante de estudios de Asia para América Latina: e-School

Pan-American program, there are several universities in the continent providing Korean studies programs and courses to students in Spanish language.

Research on Korean studies in Spain: lines of research, associations and academic journals

The last years of research and publication had a large impact in the ecosystem of Korean studies research. This section is going to consider the evolution of research and its diversification over the last decade through the consideration of PhD dissertations as an indicator. Then, it will investigate the professional associations relevant for Korean studies in Spain. Finally, the section will consider the academic publications on Korean studies.

Research related with Korea has increase over the last years in Spain. The national database on PhD thesis TESEO show a total of 48 PhD thesis defended in Spain with the word Korean or Korea in the title between 1987 and 2023.⁴⁹⁾ Such a search does not show all the thesis on Korean studies, as some dissertations may not include such a word in the title, but it is a good indicator to track the research

program” <http://cea.uanl.mx/portfolio/programa-mas-importante-de-estudios-de-asia-para-america-latina-e-school-program/> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

49) Ministerio de Universidades, “Tesis Doctorales: TESEO,” <https://www.educacion.gob.es/teseo/listarBusqueda.do> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

trends. The first result of such search is the quantitative increase over the last decade, to the point that 26 out of 46 theses have been defended between 2013 and 2023. The period, between the first dissertation registered in the system, in 1987 and 2012, shows a concentration on language related topics (6), followed by history (4) and economy (3). Looking at these last 10 years of research, it is evident the wide diversification of topics, although it is still possible to observe a concentration on topics related to the language: translation (4), teaching of Spanish as a second language for Korean people (3), Korean linguistics (3), economy (2), cinema (2), anthropology (1), law (1), history of philosophy (1), history (1), art history (1), literature (1), musicology (1), international relations (1), tourism (1), urbanism (1). Despite the diversity of universities involved in these theses, it is possible to highlight the University of Malaga (4), Complutense University of Madrid (3), the Autonomous University of Madrid (3), and the University of Salamanca (2).

The multiplication of programs, university professors and researchers have also supported the organization of academic associations. Possibly, the most important of these is the Spanish Association of East Asian Studies (AEEAO). This association was born from a biannual conference that gathered specialists in Asia and the Pacific, but in 2016 a group of scholars decided to launch the first national association to promote the research on East Asian studies and to consolidate the field at the university level.⁵⁰ Many Korean

50) Asociación Española de Estudios de Asia Oriental, "Presentación," <https://www.esasiaoriental.es/presentacion/> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

studies specialists take part in the biannual conference of the association, becoming an important meeting for Spanish specialists in Korean studies and East Asian studies in general. In 2018 the conference was celebrated at the University of Malaga. In 2021 it happened at the Autonomous University of Madrid, and in 2023, the conference is celebrated at the University of Salamanca, and the next conference is planned to happen in 2025. Today the association represents 139 members. Of those, 9 declare Korea as their area of specialization, and another 20 declare Korean and another country or region in East Asia as their area of specialization.⁵¹⁾

In addition to the AEEAO, the Association for the promotion of Korean Studies in Spain (ADECCE) is also a relevant academic association in Spain for the promotion of Korean Studies. Among the main objectives of this association is possible to highlight the promotion of cooperation between South Korean and Spain, the promotion of research on Korean culture and the contribution to the specialization of professional related to Korean and researchers in the field of Korean studies.⁵²⁾ This association also organize academic events such as the “II Jornada de Estudios Coreanos” [II Academic conference on Korean Studies].⁵³⁾

51) Asociación Española de Estudios de Asia Oriental, “Base de datos de socios,” <https://www.esasiaoriental.es/socios/lista-socios-ordinarios/> (access -ed June 5th, 2023).

52) ADECCE, “Nuestros objetivos,” <https://asociacionadecce.wixsite.com/adecce/objetivos> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

53) ADECCE, “Eventos,” <https://asociacionadecce.wixsite.com/adecce/eventos> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

Spain does not have any academic publication focused exclusively on Korean studies. There are several publications dedicated to East Asian studies that accept papers on Korean studies. One of those journals is *Revista Iberoamericana de Estudios de Asia Oriental*, managed by the Iberoamerican research network on East Asian Studies (REDIAO). The managing secretary of the journal is located at the Autonomous University of Madrid, and it is a journal open to all the Spanish and Portuguese speaking world researching on the field of East Asian studies.⁵⁴⁾ The *Inter Asia papers* is another relevant journal, edited by the research group Inter Asia.⁵⁵⁾ As part of a research group focused on Chinese and Japanese Studies, many of the articles published in the journal belong to themes related to those regions, but it is open to other themes as well. *Asiademica* is also an interesting journal on East Asian studies that also publishes contributions on Korean studies, and it is oriented to publish academic contributions by graduate students.⁵⁶⁾ The organization of the Spanish system of science makes very important to publish in journals of high impact, as in many other countries. As a late comer to the East Asian studies field, Spanish journals on East Asian studies are not well positioned yet on international rankings. Thus, Spanish researchers are disincentivized to publish in Spanish academic journals on the

54) REDIAO, "Presentación REDIAO," <http://rediao.llf.uam.es/recursos.php> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

55) Grup de recerca Inter Asia, "Inter Asia Papers," <https://webs.uab.cat/inte-rasia/es/inter-asia-papers-2/> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

56) Asiadémica, "Acerca de," <http://www.asiademica.com/acerca-de/> (Accessed June 5th, 2023).

field which may not be well positioned in the bibliometric rankings, as many chose to publish in other outlets.

Conclusions

The introduction of Korean studies in Spanish universities is a relatively new development, and it has happened under the umbrella of East Asian studies. Despite the earlier connections between Asia and Spain, the knowledge produced through those exchanges could not secure a solid holding in the universities. Thus, scholars interested in the investigation of East Asia, or Korea, had to operate outside academia in Spain. The first step towards their introduction in academic circles happened with the establishment of the first degrees on East Asian as 2^o level *licenciatura*. Thanks to that step, Spanish universities could form the first specialists and conduct interested scholars towards academic careers in the field of East Asian studies.

The second relevant moment in the institutionalization of Korean studies happened in the context of the Bologna process. The reorganization of East Asian studies from a 2^o level *licenciatura* into a 4-year undergraduate degree meant to possibility of training better those students who decided to initiate such kind of studies. This process of degree reorganization was also very relevant in the establishment of the first academic program on Korean studies in Spain. The joint project between the University of Seville and the University of Malaga resulted in the design and implementation of the first 4-year long program of specialization on Korean studies.

Following the professional profile that the East Asian programs aimed at, the University of Malaga established a program that offered a regional context for the specialization on Korean studies. This specialization balanced the education on Korean language and the subjects on Korean cultural and social aspects of Korean society. Years later, the University of Salamanca pursued a similar project, but with more emphasis on the language. This also led to PhD programs opened to projects in the field of Korean studies.

The consolidation of academic programs on Korean studies has also been important for the consolidation of research lines on Korean studies and their diversification. As presented above, the number of PhD candidates who successfully defended their PhD dissertations has increased quite substantially over the last 10 years. This has allowed a diversification of themes and research perspectives in relation to previous studies, highly focused on themes related to language, history, and economy. Recently, young scholars approach Korea from a wider range of interest, creating an impact on the shape of Korean studies. The early establishment of a program on Korean studies also correlates with the development of PhD dissertation, as the University of Malaga also shows.

These new lines of research and those researchers still need to consolidate. The number of scholars at the Spanish Association of East Asian Studies dedicated to Korean studies is encouraging. However, as the publishing system of academic journals on Korean studies shows, there are still significant obstacles to reaching a mature situation. Korean studies in Spain is still a small field. Comparing to other areas of specialization within East Asian studies or more

consolidated disciplines as history or linguistics, it is evident that the field of Korean studies still lacks the critical mass to support academic journals able to make an impact. Thus, the multiplication of academic positions for Korean studies specialists and the development of high-level research are important requirements for the growth of the field in the near future.