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**KOREAN STUDIES IN KYRGYZSTAN:
INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT, ACADEMIC MOBILITY,
AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

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Abstract. The expansion of Korean Studies beyond the Korean Peninsula has contributed to the growing development of Korean language education and Korean Studies programs in many regions of the world, including Central Asia. While previous studies have examined Korean Studies in Central Asia more broadly, the institutional development of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan has received limited scholarly attention. This article examines the current state of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan and identifies the key factors supporting its development within the country's higher education system.

The study is based on the analysis of university documents, educational programs, institutional reports, academic mobility materials, and information available on official university websites. The research focuses on the major universities involved in Korean Studies education and examines educational programs, human resources, international cooperation, and academic mobility.

The findings demonstrate that Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan has evolved into a relatively stable academic field supported by a network of university-based centers. Its development is sustained through the interaction of educational programs, faculty development, international partnerships, and academic mobility initiatives. The study identifies the principal institutions involved in Korean Studies and highlights the role of cooperation with Korean universities and organizations in strengthening the field.

The scientific significance of the article lies in providing a systematized analysis of the institutional development of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan and in identifying the main factors contributing to its sustainability. The practical significance of the study is related to the possibility of using its findings for the further development of educational programs, academic partnerships, and international cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Korea.

Keywords: Korean Studies, Kyrgyzstan, higher education, academic mobility, international cooperation, educational programs, human resources, Central Asia

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Introduction

The internationalization of Korean Studies has become an increasingly important feature of contemporary higher education over the past three decades. Supported by academic cooperation, educational mobility, and cultural diplomacy initiatives, Korean Studies programs have expanded beyond East Asia and established a growing presence across diverse world regions. Recent scholarship suggests that overseas Korean Studies has evolved from a narrowly defined area studies field into a broader platform for international academic exchange, educational cooperation, and cross-cultural engagement [1; 2]. Among the regions where this development has been particularly dynamic, Central Asia occupies a distinctive position due to its historical connections with Korea, the presence of Koryo-saram communities, and the expanding educational, cultural, and economic ties between the Republic of Korea and Central Asian states [2; 3]. As a result, Korean Studies in Central Asia has developed through a network of university-based programs and transnational academic partnerships that support language education, academic mobility, and international cooperation.

Several studies have examined the development of Korean Studies in Central Asia, focusing on its institutional foundations, educational functions, and international dimensions. Existing research has highlighted the growing role of Korean language education, academic mobility, international partnerships, and cultural diplomacy in supporting the expansion of Korean Studies across the region [1–4]. Scholars have also emphasized the importance of curriculum development, faculty training, and interdisciplinary approaches for strengthening Korean Studies programs in Central Asian universities [1; 2]. More recent studies have situated overseas Korean Studies within broader discussions of global citizenship education and international academic cooperation, pointing to both the achievements and structural challenges of the field [2–4].

Despite these contributions, an important research gap remains, the existing literature has primarily examined Korean Studies at the regional level, treating Central Asia as a relatively unified educational space. Consequently, the institutional trajectories of individual countries remain insufficiently explored. In particular, the development of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan has received limited scholarly attention, despite the expansion of university-based programs, academic mobility initiatives, and cooperation with Korean educational organizations. This gap highlights the need for a focused analysis of the institutional mechanisms that have shaped the development of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan.

Central Asia occupies a distinctive position within the global landscape of Korean Studies. Unlike many regions where interest in Korea emerged primarily through the expansion of contemporary Korean popular culture, the development of Korean Studies in Central Asia has been shaped by a combination of historical and educational factors. The presence of Koryo-saram communities provided

an important foundation for Korea-related education and cultural exchange, while the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Korea and the newly independent Central Asian states in the early 1990s created new opportunities for educational cooperation, academic exchange, and institutional partnerships. These historical and institutional conditions contributed to the emergence of Korean Studies as an increasingly visible component of higher education across the region.

Despite the growing body of scholarship on Korean Studies in Central Asia, existing research remains unevenly distributed across the region. Most studies have focused on Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, where Korean Studies programs are more extensive and institutionally established and where long-term cooperation with Korean governmental and academic organizations has supported their development [1; 2; 4]. The existing literature has primarily examined Korean language education, curriculum development, academic mobility, cultural exchange, and the activities of major universities, contributing significantly to our understanding of regional trends in Korean Studies [1–4].

However, the institutional development of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan has received comparatively limited scholarly attention. Although Kyrgyzstan is regularly included in broader regional surveys, its Korean Studies infrastructure has rarely been examined as an independent object of analysis [1; 4]. Consequently, the historical evolution, organizational structure, educational programs, international partnerships, and institutional mechanisms supporting Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan remain insufficiently documented in the international literature. This gap underscores the need for a focused examination of how Korean Studies has been institutionalized within Kyrgyzstan's higher education system and what factors have contributed to its development.

To address this research gap, this article examines the development of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan from the establishment of diplomatic relations between Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Korea to the present. It seeks to answer two interrelated questions: how has Korean Studies been institutionalized within Kyrgyzstan's higher education system, and what mechanisms have supported its development? Drawing upon university documents, educational programs, institutional reports, academic mobility materials, and official university information, the study analyzes the institutional landscape of Korean Studies, its educational infrastructure, and the role of academic mobility, international cooperation, and university partnerships in sustaining the field.

The contribution of this study is twofold. By focusing on a comparatively underexplored case, the article contributes to the literature on Korean Studies in Central Asia in two ways. First, it provides a systematic overview of the principal institutions involved in Korean Studies education in Kyrgyzstan. Second, it identifies the institutional mechanisms that have facilitated the development

of Korean Studies and examines how transnational academic networks have contributed to its expansion and sustainability. In doing so, the article offers a broader understanding of the diverse trajectories through which Korean Studies has developed across Central Asia.

Description of Materials and Methods

This study examines the development and current state of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan through the analysis of institutional and educational materials collected within the framework of the international research project “Establishment of a Database and Utilization Platform for the Humanities Topography of the Korean Studies Belt in Central Asia,” supported by the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS). The research focuses on higher education institutions in Kyrgyzstan where Korean language instruction, Korean Studies programs, or Korea-related academic activities are currently represented. The selected universities include institutions with identifiable Korean-language education, specialized academic units or programs, and documented international cooperation or academic mobility related to Korean Studies.

The empirical materials include official university websites, educational programs, curriculum documents, graduate competency models, competency matrices, working curricula, faculty and departmental documentation, faculty information, academic mobility records, institutional reports, cooperation agreements, official institutional news materials and other publicly available documents. Particular attention was given to universities identified as major centers of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan, including Kyrgyz National University named after J. Balasagyn, Bishkek State University named after K. Karasaev, Osh State University, Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, Kyrgyz State University named after I. Arabaev, and several additional institutions involved in Korean language education and academic cooperation. The documentary corpus was initially compiled in December 2025 and subsequently expanded and verified through additional documentary collection and institutional updates completed in March 2026.

Methodologically, the study applies qualitative document analysis and institutional mapping. The analysis focuses on four dimensions that reflect the development of Korean Studies within higher education: educational programs, faculty resources, academic mobility, and international cooperation. The documentary materials were organized and compared according to indicators including program level and disciplinary profile, faculty composition, documented academic mobility activities, and institutional partnerships and cooperation arrangements. These indicators were selected because they capture both the organizational capacity of Korean Studies programs and their integration into broader national and international academic networks. Together, they make it possible to examine not only the presence of Korean Studies within individual universities but also the mechanisms through which the field has been sustained and expanded in Kyrgyzstan.

The study does not seek to provide a complete statistical census of Korean Studies in the country. The availability, format, and level of detail of institutional information vary considerably across universities. While some institutions provide detailed data on educational programs, student numbers, academic mobility, and faculty composition, others publish only limited information. Therefore, the analysis is based on verified information obtained from official institutional sources and supplementary project materials. Because the study relied primarily on publicly available institutional documentation, access to complete internal university records was not available, and some institutional information was not publicly available for all universities. The purpose of the study is to reconstruct the current institutional landscape of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan rather than to evaluate or rank individual universities.

The analytical framework is informed by recent scholarship on overseas Korean Studies and Korean Studies education, particularly studies examining the development of Korean Studies in Central Asia and other regions outside the Korean Peninsula [1–4]. Building upon this literature, the present study approaches Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan as an institutional field shaped by the interaction of educational programs, human resources, academic mobility, and international cooperation. The Kyrgyzstani case is therefore examined as part of the broader expansion of overseas Korean Studies and the institutional processes that have supported its development beyond the Korean Peninsula.

Results

Main Centers of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan

Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan has developed through a decentralized institutional structure rather than around a single national center. Korean language education and Korea-related academic activities are currently represented across a network of universities that differ in size, organizational profile, and academic specialization. As of the 2024–2025 academic year, Korean language instruction and elements of Korean Studies education were represented in at least six universities located in both Bishkek and the southern regions of the country. This network includes national and state universities, an intergovernmental university, and a technological university, as well as institutions with pedagogical and regional educational profiles, reflecting the diverse institutional pathways through which Korean Studies has become integrated into Kyrgyzstan's higher education system.

The analysis identified Korean Studies-related activities at Kyrgyz National University named after J. Balasagyn, Bishkek State University named after K. Karasaev, Osh State University, Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, Kyrgyz State University named after I. Arabaev, and Osh Technological University named after M. M. Adyshev.

The institutional structure of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan reflects the broader diversification of the country's higher education system following independence. Korean language education and Korea-related academic activities have been incorporated into a variety of academic units, including departments

of Oriental Studies, international relations, foreign languages, linguistics, and regional studies. At Bishkek State University, Korean Studies is organized through a specialized Department of Korean Philology, established in 1991 and constituted as an independent unit in 1996, whereas at Osh Technological University Korean language education is integrated into Regional Studies and International Relations programs and supported through a King Sejong Institute. As a result, Korean Studies has developed across multiple organizational settings, allowing the field to expand within universities with different educational profiles and academic missions.

A notable feature of the Kyrgyzstani case is the coexistence of different organizational models of Korean Studies. While some universities maintain relatively well-established programs within faculties of Oriental Studies, others incorporate Korean language instruction into broader curricula in international relations, foreign languages, linguistics, or regional studies. Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University illustrates another institutional trajectory: its Korean Language and Culture Center, established in 2001 with support from the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, was formally reorganized as the Sector of Korean Language and Culture in 2025. Kyrgyz State University named after I. Arabaev, by contrast, incorporates Korean language into a pedagogically oriented model focused on the preparation of teachers, linguists, and translators. This diversity suggests that Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan has expanded through adaptation to existing university structures rather than through the creation of specialized national centers. Despite these organizational differences, Korean language education remains the core component of Korean Studies activities across all examined universities and serves as the principal foundation for further academic, cultural, and international engagement.

International cooperation and academic mobility are common features across most Korean Studies programs in Kyrgyzstan and constitute important mechanisms supporting their development. Their role in sustaining Korean Studies and strengthening connections between Kyrgyzstani and Korean institutions is examined in greater detail in the following sections.

At the same time, universities differ in the scope of their educational activities, organizational structures, faculty capacity, academic mobility opportunities, and the availability of graduate-level programs. Master's-level training is available at Kyrgyz National University, Bishkek State University, and Osh State University, whereas Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University and Osh Technological University do not offer graduate-level Korean Studies programs, and Korean at Kyrgyz State University named after I. Arabaev remains integrated into broader linguistic and pedagogical trajectories. These differences reflect the diverse trajectories through which Korean Studies has evolved within Kyrgyzstan's higher education system and illustrate varying levels of institutional development across universities. Nevertheless, the presence of Korean language instruction and sustained international cooperation across multiple institutions suggests that Korean Studies has become an established, though decentralized, component of Kyrgyzstan's higher education landscape.

Based on the analysis of institutional materials, three universities currently represent the *leading centers of Korean Studies* in Kyrgyzstan: Kyrgyz National University named after J. Balasagyn (KNU), Bishkek State University named after K. Karasaev (BSU), and Osh State University (OshSU). These institutions demonstrate the most developed Korean Studies infrastructure among the universities examined in this study, combining established educational programs, academic mobility opportunities, graduate-level training, and sustained cooperation with Korean partner institutions. Their leading position is also reflected in the scale of their educational activity: KNU reports approximately 230 undergraduate students, 10 master's students, and around 100 additional students studying Korean as a second foreign language; BSU reports more than 200 undergraduate and master's students and approximately 80 second-language learners; and OshSU reports approximately 192 undergraduate and master's students, with around 30 additional students studying Korean as a second foreign language. As a result, they play a central role in the development of Korean Studies within Kyrgyzstan's higher education system.

Kyrgyz National University named after J. Balasagyn (KNU) represents one of the principal centers of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan. Korean Studies-related education is conducted within the Faculty of International Relations and Oriental Studies, where Korean language, regional studies, and East Asian studies are incorporated into broader Oriental Studies programs [6]. The Korean-language track is embedded in a formal educational structure based on the main educational program, graduate model, competency matrix, and working curriculum, and includes practical Korean language, country-studies disciplines, and professional training for future Oriental Studies specialists. The university provides both undergraduate and graduate-level training and maintains extensive cooperation with Korean partner institutions through academic mobility, exchange programs, and joint educational initiatives [6]. Its staffing structure includes seven instructors, comprising four local specialists and three instructors from the Republic of Korea. A distinctive feature of KNU is the integration of Korean Studies into a broader framework of international academic cooperation. Available institutional materials indicate active participation in exchange programs, language training opportunities, international educational projects, and cooperation with Korean universities and educational organizations [6]. These activities include the KF Global e-School project in 2025 and academic exchanges with Hanbat National University, Paichai University, and Keimyung University. As a result, Korean Studies activities at KNU extend beyond language instruction and function as part of a wider network of academic, cultural, and institutional engagement with the Republic of Korea.

Bishkek State University named after K. Karasaev (BSU) represents one of the oldest and most specialized centers of Korean language education in Kyrgyzstan. The Department of Korean Philology, established during the early years of Kyrgyzstan's independence, has played a significant role in the training of Korean language specialists, translators, and future educators [7]. The department was established in 1991 and became an independent institutional

unit in 1996. It provides bachelor's and master's-level education in Linguistics and Oriental Studies and African Studies, with Korean as the principal language and courses in Korean history, culture, literature, economy, foreign policy, and religion. Unlike programs that incorporate Korean Studies into broader Oriental Studies curricula, BSU has developed a more specialized philological orientation centered on language instruction and linguistic training.

At the same time, Korean Studies activities at BSU extend beyond language education and include cultural programs, academic exchanges, and cooperation with Korean educational institutions [7]. Long-term partnerships with Korean universities and organizations have contributed to the continuity of educational activities and supported the institutional development of Korean Studies at the university. In the 2024–2025 academic year, 17 BSU students studied in the Republic of Korea as part of the university's international mobility activities. Cooperation with Hanbat National University includes academic exchange and discussion of short-term and 2+2 formats, while a memorandum with Daegu Haany University was signed in September 2025 to support academic and research exchanges, joint educational programs, and faculty development. As a result, BSU occupies an important position in the preparation of human resources for Korean language education and Korea-related professional activities in Kyrgyzstan.

Osh State University (OshSU) serves as the principal center of Korean Studies in southern Kyrgyzstan and represents an important example of the geographical expansion of Korean Studies beyond the capital city. Korean language education is integrated into the activities of the Institute of Oriental Studies, where Korea-related courses form part of broader Oriental Studies programs [8]. Training is provided within program «530900, Oriental Studies and African Studies», which combines eastern-language education with regional studies and includes both undergraduate and graduate-level trajectories. The university offers both undergraduate and graduate-level education and maintains cooperation with Korean universities, educational organizations, and language centers [8]. Its Korean Studies-related staff includes five instructors, four local specialists and one instructor from the Republic of Korea, and the university maintains cooperation agreements with Ansan University, Chungcheong University, Konkuk University, Paichai University, and Hanbat National University for the 2024–2029 period.

A distinctive feature of OshSU is its role in extending access to Korean Studies education to students outside Bishkek. The development of Korean Studies at OshSU demonstrates that the institutionalization of the field in Kyrgyzstan has not been confined to the country's principal academic centers but has also taken place at the regional level. The university also maintains a Center of Korean Language and Culture, reinforcing the institutional presence of Korean Studies beyond the degree program itself. Through educational programs, academic mobility opportunities, and international partnerships, OshSU contributes to the formation of human resources and the strengthening of academic cooperation between southern Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Korea [8].

Taken together, these universities constitute the principal institutional nodes of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan and illustrate the diverse pathways through which the field has been institutionalized within the country's higher education system. While KNU functions as a major center of international academic cooperation, BSU has developed a specialized profile in Korean language and philological training, and OshSU plays a key role in extending Korean Studies beyond the capital city. Collectively, these institutions provide the strongest evidence of sustained educational activity, academic mobility, and international cooperation and have contributed significantly to the consolidation of Korean Studies as an established field within Kyrgyzstan's higher education landscape.

Additional Institutional Platforms

In addition to the leading centers discussed above, Korean language education and Korean Studies-related activities are also represented in several other higher education institutions in Kyrgyzstan. These include Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University (KRSU), Kyrgyz State University named after I. Arbaev (KSU), and Osh Technological University named after M. M. Adyshev (OshTU). Although these institutions generally operate on a smaller scale than the leading centers of Korean Studies, they contribute to the broader institutional diversification of the field by expanding access to Korean language education and Korea-related academic activities across different educational settings. Each institution represents a distinct organizational pathway: KRSU integrates Korean Studies within an intergovernmental university through the Sector of Korean Language and Culture; KSU develops Korean language education within teacher training and linguistics; and OshTU combines Korean language education with Regional Studies and International Relations through the activities of the King Sejong Institute.

The available materials indicate a continuing interest in Korean language education and academic cooperation with the Republic of Korea across these institutions. In most cases, Korean language instruction is incorporated into broader programs in foreign languages, international relations, Oriental Studies, linguistics, or regional studies rather than being organized as an independent academic specialization. At KRSU, Korean is taught within International Relations, Linguistics, and Translation Studies, while OshTU offers Korean language within the bachelor's program in Regional Studies (East Asia profile) and bachelor's and master's programs in International Relations. At KSU named after I. Arbaev, Korean language instruction is integrated into linguistics and foreign-language teacher education, with an emphasis on the preparation of teachers and translators rather than an autonomous Korean Studies degree. This pattern demonstrates the flexibility of Korean Studies within Kyrgyzstan's higher education system and its capacity to develop within universities with diverse academic profiles and organizational structures.

At the same time, differences in institutional resources, program structures, reporting practices, and the availability of publicly accessible information limit the possibility of systematic comparison across universities. Available institutional documentation also demonstrates considerable variation in organizational

capacity. KRSU maintains a dedicated Sector of Korean Language and Culture, originally established as the Korean Language and Culture Center in 2001 and reorganized in 2025; OshTU operates through the King Sejong Institute and broader international cooperation initiatives; while KSU named after I. Arbaev develops Korean language education primarily within its Institute of World Languages and International Relations. As a result, the present study focuses on identifying major institutional patterns rather than evaluating the relative performance of individual institutions.

Taken together, these universities complement the activities of the leading centers and contribute to the broader geographical distribution of Korean Studies within Kyrgyzstan. Their presence demonstrates that Korean language education and Korea-related academic activities have expanded beyond the country's principal academic institutions and have become embedded within a wider network of higher education organizations. Although their scale differs from that of KNU, BSU, and OshSU, these institutions broaden the institutional base of Korean Studies by extending Korea-related education into multilingual, pedagogical, technological, and professionally oriented university environments, thereby reinforcing the decentralized character of Korean Studies development in Kyrgyzstan.

Discussion

Institutional Foundations of Korean Studies

Educational programs constitute a key institutional foundation for the development of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan. The analysis demonstrates that Korean Studies has been incorporated into a variety of academic programs, including Oriental Studies, regional studies, foreign language education, linguistics, and international relations. Rather than developing as a separate academic discipline, Korean Studies has expanded through integration into existing educational structures, allowing universities with different profiles to incorporate Korea-related teaching and training activities. This institutional pattern is evident across the examined universities: Korean Studies is embedded within Oriental Studies at Kyrgyz National University and Osh State University, within Korean Philology and Linguistics at Bishkek State University, within teacher education and linguistics at Kyrgyz State University named after I. Arbaev, and within Regional Studies and International Relations at Osh Technological University.

Despite differences in organizational arrangements, Korean language instruction remains the central component of Korean Studies education across all examined institutions. It serves as the primary entry point for student engagement with Korea-related studies and provides the foundation for subsequent academic, cultural, and professional activities associated with the field. The prominence of language training across universities suggests that the development of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan has been closely associated with practical educational engagement with the Republic of Korea and the growing demand for Korean

language education. Even where autonomous Korean Studies departments are absent, Korean language is systematically incorporated into broader educational trajectories through state-regulated educational programs, graduate competency models, and curriculum frameworks, ensuring continuity of Korea-related education across diverse institutional settings.

Another important characteristic of Korean Studies development in Kyrgyzstan is the gradual diversification of educational programs. While language training remains the central element of most curricula, universities increasingly offer courses related to Korean culture, history, society, intercultural communication, regional studies, and contemporary Korea [1; 3]. This trend indicates that Korean Studies education is gradually expanding beyond language instruction and incorporating broader area studies components. As a result, educational programs increasingly combine linguistic training with knowledge of Korean society, culture, and regional affairs, reflecting the growing institutional maturity of Korean Studies within Kyrgyzstan's higher education system. The findings further demonstrate that this diversification follows different institutional trajectories: while BSU has developed a specialized philological model centered on Korean language and Korea-related disciplines, KNU and OshSU integrate Korean Studies into broader Oriental Studies curricula that combine language education with regional expertise and professional preparation.

Graduate-level education has also become an important component of Korean Studies infrastructure in Kyrgyzstan. Available institutional materials indicate that master's-level programs and advanced training opportunities have been established in several leading universities, particularly within Oriental Studies and related fields [6–8]. The concentration of graduate education in Kyrgyz National University, Bishkek State University, and Osh State University further distinguishes these institutions from universities where Korean language remains integrated into broader undergraduate linguistic or international studies programs. The emergence of graduate education reflects a higher degree of institutional development, as it enables universities not only to provide language instruction but also to support the training of future teachers, translators, researchers, and specialists with advanced expertise in Korea-related studies.

In this respect, graduate programs contribute to the long-term sustainability of Korean Studies by strengthening local academic capacity and supporting the reproduction of human resources within the field. Their presence suggests that Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan has gradually moved beyond introductory language education toward more advanced forms of academic and professional training.

Faculty resources constitute another important dimension of Korean Studies development in Kyrgyzstan. The examined universities demonstrate different levels of staffing capacity, with Korean language instruction being provided by both local specialists and visiting instructors from the Republic of Korea. The

combination of locally trained academic personnel and international educational cooperation has played an important role in maintaining the continuity, quality, and institutional stability of Korean Studies programs. The leading Korean Studies centers illustrate this pattern through mixed staffing models that combine local faculty with instructors from the Republic of Korea, whereas smaller institutional platforms generally rely on more limited teaching capacity integrated into broader academic units.

The availability of qualified faculty members remains one of the key factors shaping differences among universities. Variations in staffing capacity influence the scope of educational programs, the availability of graduate-level training, participation in academic mobility initiatives, and opportunities for international cooperation. In this respect, human resources represent not only an educational asset but also an important indicator of the institutional development of Korean Studies within Kyrgyzstan's higher education system [1; 4]. The report also indicates that faculty development has been supported through overseas training, professional development programs, visiting instructors, and long-term cooperation with Korean partner universities and organizations, demonstrating that staffing capacity has evolved through sustained international collaboration rather than exclusively through domestic institutional resources. These findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing the importance of curriculum development, faculty capacity, and educational infrastructure for the institutionalization of Korean Studies outside the Korean Peninsula [1–4]. At the same time, the Kyrgyzstani case demonstrates that these processes may develop through multiple organizational models rather than a single institutional pathway.

Academic mobility has become one of the most important mechanisms supporting the development of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan. Institutional materials indicate that cooperation with universities and educational organizations in the Republic of Korea has created opportunities for student exchanges, language training, short-term study visits, scholarship programs, and graduate education [6–11]. Through these activities, students gain access to educational experiences that extend beyond the domestic university environment and strengthen their linguistic, academic, and professional competencies. The analysis further demonstrates that mobility opportunities are supported through multiple institutional formats, including semester exchanges, summer schools, joint educational projects, and scholarship-based study programs implemented through long-term university partnerships.

Academic mobility functions not only as an educational instrument but also as an important mechanism of institutional development. By facilitating knowledge exchange, strengthening international academic networks, and supporting long-term cooperation between Kyrgyzstani and Korean universities, mobility programs contribute to the sustainability and continued expansion of Korean Studies within the country. Documentary evidence further indicates that

mobility is embedded within formal inter-university agreements and institutional cooperation frameworks rather than operating as isolated student initiatives, reinforcing its role as a stable component of Korean Studies infrastructure.

The most active mobility initiatives are concentrated in the leading Korean Studies centers, particularly Kyrgyz National University named after J. Balasagyn, Bishkek State University named after K. Karasaev, and Osh State University [6–8]. These universities maintain partnerships with Korean higher education institutions and regularly participate in exchange programs, language internships, summer schools, and other forms of educational cooperation. The evidence suggests that universities with stronger international partnerships generally provide broader mobility opportunities and maintain closer academic links with Korean partner institutions. As a result, academic mobility has become closely associated with the broader institutional development of Korean Studies programs. The findings also indicate that these universities maintain sustained cooperation with multiple Korean partner institutions rather than relying on single bilateral relationships, thereby creating more stable and diversified opportunities for student and faculty mobility.

Academic mobility also contributes to the development of local academic capacity. Students and graduates who participate in educational programs in the Republic of Korea acquire advanced language proficiency, professional competencies, and international experience that may subsequently be applied in education, translation, business, public administration, and international cooperation. In this respect, mobility programs contribute not only to individual educational advancement but also to the formation of future educators, researchers, translators, and specialists capable of supporting the continued development of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan. The analysis further suggests that mobility supports the long-term reproduction of academic capacity by strengthening professional qualifications and expanding the pool of locally trained specialists able to participate in teaching, translation, and internationally oriented educational activities.

At the same time, the scale and intensity of academic mobility vary considerably across institutions. Universities with long-established international partnerships generally demonstrate broader mobility opportunities, whereas smaller programs remain more dependent on external support and project-based cooperation. These differences reflect broader variations in institutional capacity and international connectivity across Korean Studies programs in Kyrgyzstan. This variation is consistent with broader differences in graduate-level provision, staffing capacity, and the institutionalization of international cooperation observed across the examined universities, indicating that academic mobility develops most successfully where these organizational resources reinforce one another.

Nevertheless, the available evidence suggests that academic mobility has become one of the principal mechanisms supporting the institutionalization of Korean Studies within the country. By strengthening international cooperation, expanding academic networks, and contributing to the development of local expertise, mobility programs have played an important role in the long-term

sustainability and growth of Korean Studies within Kyrgyzstan's higher education system. This observation supports previous research identifying academic mobility as a central mechanism in the development of overseas Korean Studies [2–4], while demonstrating that its institutional effects depend on the broader interaction of graduate education, staffing capacity, and long-term university partnerships.

International cooperation represents one of the principal foundations supporting the development of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan. Beyond academic mobility, cooperation with Korean universities, governmental agencies, and educational organizations has contributed to the establishment and expansion of Korean Studies programs, curriculum development, faculty support, educational infrastructure, and the organization of academic and cultural activities [6–11]. Institutional evidence indicates that this cooperation has also been implemented through formal inter-university agreements, joint educational initiatives, and the establishment of specialized Korean language and cultural centers within participating universities. As a result, international cooperation has become an integral component of Korean Studies and functions as a key mechanism linking Kyrgyzstani universities with broader transnational academic networks.

A particularly important role is played by Korean organizations that have consistently supported Korean Studies and Korean language education in Central Asia. Among them, the Korea Foundation (KF), the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS), the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), and the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the Kyrgyz Republic have contributed to educational development, academic mobility, research activities, faculty development, and cultural initiatives [4]. Through scholarships, mobility programs, educational projects, visiting professors, faculty support initiatives, institutional partnerships, and academic exchanges, these organizations have strengthened cooperation between Kyrgyzstani and Korean academic institutions and expanded the educational opportunities available to students and faculty members. Their activities have facilitated the integration of local universities into broader international academic networks and have increased the institutional resources available for Korean Studies education. The analysis further demonstrates that these initiatives have been complemented by university-level cooperation with institutions such as Hanbat National University, Paichai University, Keimyung University, Konkuk University, and Daegu Haany University, thereby linking national support programs with long-term institutional partnerships.

International cooperation has also facilitated the integration of Kyrgyzstani universities into broader regional and global academic networks. Through participation in exchange programs, joint research projects, conferences, institutional partnerships, and educational initiatives, Korean Studies programs in Kyrgyzstan have gained access to academic resources, professional expertise, and opportunities for long-term collaboration [4; 6–11]. These forms of cooperation have strengthened educational infrastructure, supported faculty development, expanded research activities, and enhanced opportunities for academic mobility. The findings further suggest that cooperation has supported not only exchanges

and research collaboration but also the development of teaching resources, specialized library collections, and educational infrastructure that remain embedded within university programs.

The available evidence suggests that international cooperation functions not merely as a source of external support but as one of the principal mechanisms through which Korean Studies has been maintained and expanded in Kyrgyzstan. By connecting local universities with transnational academic networks, international cooperation has played a central role in the sustainability and continued development of Korean Studies in the country. These findings extend previous discussions of international cooperation by showing that external support contributes not only organizational resources but also reinforces the long-term institutional sustainability of Korean Studies through stable academic networks [2–4].

Current Challenges and Development Prospects

The analysis demonstrates that Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan has undergone a gradual process of institutional consolidation over the past three decades. What initially emerged as limited Korean language instruction has evolved into a distributed network of educational programs supported by universities, academic mobility initiatives, and transnational partnerships. The findings indicate that this process has been shaped not by a single institutional center but by the interaction of multiple universities, academic networks, and external educational partners. This distributed model is reflected in the complementary roles of Kyrgyz National University, Bishkek State University, Osh State University, and several smaller institutional platforms that contribute through different organizational profiles rather than a unified institutional structure.

However, the pace and scope of growth vary considerably across institutions. Universities differ in terms of educational infrastructure, faculty resources, graduate-level training opportunities, mobility programs, and external partnerships. These differences affect the capacity of individual institutions to maintain and expand Korea-related activities and contribute to uneven patterns across the country. Strengthening institutional capacity therefore remains one of the principal tasks facing the field.

Another important challenge concerns human resource development. The long-term viability of Korean Studies programs depends on the availability of qualified faculty members, opportunities for professional advancement, and the preparation of new specialists. Given the relatively limited scale of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan, the training and retention of academic personnel remain essential for future progress.

In this context, graduate education, academic exchanges, and collaboration with Korean partner institutions play an important role in strengthening local expertise and supporting the next generation of scholars, educators, and translators. Existing institutional cooperation—including faculty exchanges, visiting instructors from the Republic of Korea, and participation in projects such as the KF Global e-School initiative—illustrates the types of long-term capacity-building mechanisms that can support this objective. The continued expansion

of these opportunities will be critical for maintaining academic continuity and renewing the field over time.

The continuing visibility of the Republic of Korea in the spheres of education, culture, digital media, and international engagement creates favorable conditions for further expansion. The growing presence of Korea-related educational and cultural initiatives across Central Asia has contributed to sustained interest in Korean language education and Korea-related academic programs [2–4].

For Kyrgyzstani universities, these developments create opportunities for the diversification of curricula, the expansion of mobility opportunities, and the strengthening of international partnerships. In this context, Korean Studies possesses considerable potential for future growth through the continued integration of language education, area studies, research activities, and global academic engagement. Sustaining this trajectory will depend not only on expanding external cooperation but also on consolidating graduate education, institutional partnerships, and faculty development across universities with different levels of organizational capacity.

Future trajectories are also likely to be influenced by the broader relationship between Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Korea. Expanding educational, cultural, and academic ties create favorable conditions for strengthening connections between Kyrgyzstani universities and international scholarly communities. Korean Studies may therefore increasingly function not only as a field of language and area studies but also as a platform for academic exchange, professional training, and cross-border collaboration.

Overall, the findings suggest that Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan has advanced through the interaction of educational programs, human resources, academic mobility, and international partnerships. Rather than emerging around a single dominant institution, the field has developed through a distributed network of universities and transnational academic connections. This pattern underscores the importance of interconnected educational and organizational mechanisms in supporting its future growth and resilience.

Conclusion

This article examined the development of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan through the analysis of university documents, educational programs, institutional materials, and publicly available sources. Korean Studies has become an established component of Kyrgyzstan's higher education landscape and has evolved through a decentralized network of universities rather than through a single specialized institution. The Kyrgyzstani case illustrates how Korean Studies can expand through the interaction of university initiatives, academic mobility, and international partnerships within a relatively small higher education system.

The development of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan has been supported by the interaction of educational infrastructure, academic personnel, mobility opportunities, and cooperation with Korean partner institutions and organizations. While Korean language education remains the foundation of most programs,

the field has gradually expanded to include broader educational, cultural, and academic activities. These processes have enabled Korean Studies to become integrated into both national higher education structures and wider transnational academic networks.

The study contributes to the literature on Korean Studies in Central Asia by providing the first systematic overview of Korean Studies in Kyrgyzstan and by identifying the principal mechanisms supporting its expansion. Beyond documenting existing institutions and programs, the analysis highlights the importance of long-term academic cooperation, mobility, and capacity building in sustaining Korean Studies outside the Korean Peninsula.

More broadly, the Kyrgyzstani case demonstrates that the development of Korean Studies depends on the interaction of local educational initiatives and international academic support. This experience may be relevant for understanding the evolution of Korean Studies in other small and decentralized higher education systems. Future research may build upon these findings through comparative studies across Central Asia and through the incorporation of additional statistical, archival, and interview-based materials.

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КОРЕЕВЕДЕНИЕ В КЫРГЫЗСТАНЕ: ИНСТИТУЦИОНАЛЬНОЕ РАЗВИТИЕ, АКАДЕМИЧЕСКАЯ МОБИЛЬНОСТЬ И МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЕ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВО

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Аннотация. Расширение корееведения за пределы Корейского полуострова способствовало развитию преподавания корейского языка и программ по корееведению во многих регионах мира, включая Центральную Азию. Несмотря на то, что в предыдущих исследованиях рассматривалось развитие корееведения в Центральной Азии в целом, институциональное развитие корееведения в Кыргызстане до настоящего времени получило ограниченное освещение в научной литературе. В данной статье анализируется современное состояние корееведения в Кыргызстане и выявляются ключевые факторы, обеспечивающие его развитие в системе высшего образования страны.

Исследование основано на анализе университетской документации, образовательных программ, институциональных отчетов, материалов по академической мобильности, а также информации, размещенной на официальных сайтах университетов. Основное внимание уделено ведущим университетам, реализующим образовательные программы по корееведению. Анализ охватывает образовательные программы, кадровый потенциал, международное сотрудничество и академическую мобильность.

Результаты исследования показывают, что корееведение в Кыргызстане сформировалось как относительно устойчивая академическая область, поддерживаемая сетью университетских центров. Его развитие обеспечивается взаимодействием образовательных программ, подготовки профессорско-преподавательских кадров, международного партнерства и

инициатив в области академической мобильности. В статье определены основные учреждения, участвующие в развитии корееведения, а также показана роль сотрудничества с университетами и организациями Республики Корея в укреплении данной области.

Научная значимость статьи заключается в систематизированном анализе институционального развития корееведения в Кыргызстане и выявлении основных факторов, обеспечивающих его устойчивость. Практическая значимость исследования связана с возможностью использования полученных результатов для дальнейшего развития образовательных программ, академических партнерств и международного сотрудничества между Кыргызской Республикой и Республикой Корея.

Ключевые слова: корееведение, Кыргызстан; высшее образование, академическая мобильность, международное сотрудничество, образовательные программы, кадровый потенциал, Центральная Азия

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КЫРГЫЗСТАНДАҒЫ КОРЕЙТАНУ: ИНСТИТУЦИОНАЛДЫҚ ДАМУ, АКАДЕМИЯЛЫҚ ҰТҚЫРЛЫҚ ЖӘНЕ ХАЛЫҚАРАЛЫҚ ЫНТЫМАҚТАСТЫҚ

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Аңдатпа. Корей түбегінен тыс жерлерде корейтанудың кеңеюі әлемнің көптеген өңірлерінде, соның ішінде Орталық Азияда да корей тілін оқыту мен корейтану бағдарламаларының қарқынды дамуына ықпал етті. Бұған дейінгі зерттеулерде Орталық Азиядағы корейтанудың дамуы жалпы қарастырылғанымен, Қырғызстандағы корейтанудың институционалдық дамуы ғылыми әдебиеттерде жеткілікті деңгейде зерттелмеген. Бұл мақалада Қырғызстандағы корейтанудың қазіргі жай-күйі талданып, оның елдің жоғары білім беру жүйесіндегі дамуын қамтамасыз ететін негізгі факторлар айқындалады.

Зерттеу университеттік құжаттарды, білім беру бағдарламаларын, институционалдық есептерді, академиялық ұтқырлық материалдарын, сондай-ақ университеттердің ресми веб-сайттарында жарияланған ақпаратты талдауға негізделген. Зерттеудің негізгі нысаны ретінде корейтану бойынша білім беретін жетекші жоғары оқу орындары қарастырылып, олардың білім беру бағдарламалары, кадрлық әлеуеті, халықаралық ынтымақтастығы және академиялық ұтқырлық бағыттары зерделенді.

Зерттеу нәтижелері Қырғызстандағы корейтанудың университеттік орталықтар желісінің қолдауымен қалыптасқан салыстырмалы түрде тұрақты академиялық салаға айналғанын көрсетеді. Оның дамуы білім беру бағдарламаларының, профессор-оқытушылар құрамын дамытудың, халықаралық әріптестіктің және академиялық ұтқырлық бастамаларының өзара ықпалы арқылы қамтамасыз етіледі. Мақалада корейтанудың дамуына қатысатын негізгі жоғары оқу орындары айқындалып, бұл саланы нығайтудағы Корея Республикасының университеттері мен ұйымдарымен ынтымақтастықтың рөлі көрсетілген.

Зерттеудің ғылыми маңыздылығы Қырғызстандағы корейтанудың институционалдық дамуына жүйелі талдау жасауында және оның тұрақты дамуына ықпал ететін негізгі факторларды анықтауында жатыр. Зерттеудің практикалық маңыздылығы оның нәтижелерін білім беру бағдарламаларын, академиялық серіктестікті және Қырғыз Республикасы мен Корея Республикасы арасындағы халықаралық ынтымақтастықты одан әрі дамыту мақсатында пайдалану мүмкіндігімен байланысты.

Тірек сөздер: корейтану, Қырғызстан, жоғары білім, академиялық ұтқырлық, халықаралық ынтымақтастық, білім беру бағдарламалары, кадрлық әлеует, Орталық Азия

Қаржыландыру: Бұл жұмыс Корея академиясының (Academy of Korean Studies, AKS) «Орталық Азиядағы Корейтану белдеуінің гуманитарлық топографиясы бойынша деректер базасы мен оны пайдалану платформасын құру» жобасы аясында [Жоба № AKS-2025-INC-2250002] қолдауымен орындалды.

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