

**MUSIC AND HUMAN MOBILITY  
REDEFINING COMMUNITY IN INTERCULTURAL CONTEXT 2016**

Guest edited by Maria de São José Côrte-Real & Pedro Moreira  
“Henri Coandă” Air Force Academy Publishing House

## **THE SPREAD OF K-POP CULTURE IN ROMANIA**

**Elena BUJA\***

\* Department of Romanian Studies, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Yongin, South Korea / Department of Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, *Transilvania* University, Braşov, Romania

**Abstract:** *The present study aims to investigate the extent to which K-POP (i.e. South Korean popular music) has spread in Romania and the familiarity of the Romanian people with this musical genre, as well as their attitude towards it. Moreover, it attempts to identify how K-POP may influence the Romanians' desire to find out more about the country of origin of this kind of music. The data subjected for analysis have been collected by means of a questionnaire containing 15 questions (both open-ended and multiple-choice ones), which had been administered to a number of 35 Romanian subjects with ages varying between 16 and 29. At the same time, I have also collected information from various Romanian K-POP sites. Hopefully, the study will reveal whether in Romania K-POP has enjoyed the same amount of attention as in many other European countries.*

**Keywords:** *hallyu, K-POP, attitudes, fan clubs, K-POP festivals, K-POP-mania*

### **1. INTRODUCTION: MUSIC AS PART OF CULTURE**

Music is part of culture and all cultures of the world have music with its own specific sounds. If one compares the Western music with the Asian one, s/he will realize that it differs in sound, style and musical instruments employed to make it. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, “the dominant singing style [of the Koreans] stressed emotive wails and melismatic expressions” (Lie 2012: 341). In what the musical instruments are concerned, typical of Asia are the drums, the *gayageum* or *kayagum* (a zither-like string instrument with 12 strings that are plucked) or the *haegum* (a musical instrument resembling a fiddle, only that it has only two strings).

Cross (2010: 36) defines music as “complex, patterned sounds that we find pleasurable to listen to”. But this would be a simplified definition, as music is more than that. In many cases, music is a means by which we can understand our cultural heritage or the heritage of other cultures. If we consider the Korean popular music, its current form is a reflection of the post-Korean War historical evolution. Music is not only meant to enchant our hearing, but it has other functions, too. It helps bring people belonging to different cultures together. An example in this respect is the

event organized by the Romanian Embassy in Seoul for the Romanian National Day on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2015, where the stars of the night were the famous Romanian ballad singer Grigore Leşe and a Korean dancer. After each of them performed their own number, they did something amazing: the Korean performer danced on Romanian music played and sung by Grigore Leşe.

Further on, we could consider music a kind of consumer product. As South Korea’s economic growth focuses on exporting goods, it is not surprising that the government, investment banks, and entertainment companies invest large sums of money to produce high quality K-dramas and successful groups, which will eventually ensure the country a considerable financial gain, even if the return is very distant. Both as an art and as a consumer product, the Korean popular music seems to break the language and culture barriers and to become a huge global influence. The music is very beautiful and even if someone does not understand the lyrics, the melodic line makes people move their bodies. As Hong puts it,

nationality and language can be overcome, because it’s [the music] directly felt. You can make instant friends with somebody if you like the music, even if you don’t speak the same language (2014:133).

In other words, K-POP can be considered a Korean ambassador in the entire world, the country's soft power that can break national boundaries and language barriers.

## 2. HALLYU AND K-POP: FROM A LOCAL TO A REGIONAL AND GLOBAL PHENOMENON

K-POP is part of '*hallyu*', or the Korean Wave<sup>1</sup>, which took the world over with K-dramas, pop music and movies (Nam, 2014, Kim & Lee, 2014).

**2.1 Local.** The birth of the Korean Wave coincides with the financial crisis that hit many Asian countries in 1997, including South Korea. It was in this period that its president, Kim Dae-Jung realized that apart from the information technology, drama, film, and pop music could get the country out of the critical situation. He was aware of how much money the movies contributed to the budget of the United States and Britain. So he decided to follow the example of these countries with a long tradition in the entertainment industry and to create a pop culture for his own country. The current Korean president, Park Geun-Hye, has continued his endeavor. Unlike her father, Park Chung Hee – Korea's president between 1963 and 1979 -, who imposed very strict rules concerning the life of the Koreans under all aspects, she adopted a totally different attitude, at least as far as pop culture is concerned, in that immediately after she took office in 2013, "she created a 1 billion dollar investment fund to nurture it" (Hong, 2014:101).

The three major record labels in Korea, SM, YG, and JYP Entertainment are constantly in search of young talents, organizing frequent auditions throughout the country. Some of the wannabe artists begin their training while in elementary school. The contract usually expands over a period of 7 years, "half of this time being spent on training the stars before they make any public appearances" (Hong, 2014:121). During the contract, the artists have to train hard in dancing, singing, and foreign languages, in preparation of for a future career not only as K-POP singers, but also as actors. Once they are ready and step out on the stage to perform, the K-POP groups have to set an example for their fans.

Almost all idols are very good looking. Oh (2013:402) posits that K-POP companies select and promote "thin, tall, and feminine looks with

adolescent, or very cute facial expressions" both for female and male singers. The success of these singers/dancers contributed to a craze among young Koreans in search for fame. Thus, according to Hong (2014:126), in 2012 "approximately 4% of South Korea's population auditioned for 'Superstar K', Korea's biggest televised competition".

All the efforts of the producers are focused not only on entertaining the Korean audience, but also on exporting these consumer products, making Korea known all over the world. Being aware of the popularity and the importance of the Korean wave, the government is building at the moment a multi-complex theme park, *Hallyu World*, in one of its largest northwestern cities, Ilsan.

**2.2 Regional.** Starting with mid-1990s, Korean dramas and pop music have been broadcast in China. K-POP music became very popular among the Chinese who came in touch with this kind of music through a radio program called *Seoul Music Room*, broadcast from Beijing. According to *Facts About Korea*, a publication of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of South Korea (2015:102),

the decisive moment in igniting Korean pop culture fever in China was the concert of the Korean boy band H.O.T., held in Beijing in February 2000.

Korean news reports employed the term *hallyu*, or Korean Wave, in describing this concert. Starting with 1999, the term *Korean Wave* began to be recognized by the Koreans themselves.

Over time, a number of K-dramas had a strong impact on audiences in different parts of Asia: *What is Love?* was broadcast in Hong Kong, *Fireworks* in Taiwan, *Autumn in My Heart* was shown in the Philippines, while *Winter Sonata* was aired in Japan, via NHK, the Japanese largest broadcasting corporation. According to Hong (2014:171),

this show was the first hard evidence that Korean pop culture could break barriers. *Winter Sonata* (...) won over Korea's former nemesis for time immemorial, Japan.

The relevance for K-POP of this spread of Korean dramas consists in the fact that their theme songs became hits, while their performers turned into stars. Apart from K-dramas, K-POP has also been exported to the Asian continent. Thus, the female singer BoA was the first to perform in Japan in 2002, while Jung Jee-hoon, known by his stage name Rain, sang in Thailand and Hong Kong. The appeal to common values may be the reason why *hallyu* and K-POP were so easily and quickly assimilated by other Asian audiences.

<sup>1</sup> The Korean Wave is the literal translation of the Chinese term *Hán-liú*. The first syllable refers to "Korea" and the second usually evokes "flow" or "current," signifying "style" (Lie, 2012:339).

**2.3 Global.** Cha & Ma, 1996 (quoted in Marinescu, 2014:90) are of the opinion that

in the extra-Asian areas, the impact of this type of cultural industry on consumers was especially connected to the reception of *hallyu* within large Asian communities living in America, and, to a lesser extent, in western Europe.

Recent years have witnessed the expansion of the Korean wave in new areas, such as the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Thus, as reported by Ju (2014:35), the drama *Jewel in the Palace* (Korean title *Dae Jang Geum*) has been exported to “more than thirty countries, including Australia, Canada, Iran, Israel, Mexico, Russia, and Romania”. Nam (2014) stated that the screening of this particular television series saved the Romanian public station TVR from financial crisis.

K-POP boy groups SHInee or Super Junior were among the first to play in Europe. According to Hong (2014:23-24), the paradox is that K-POP has come to be known abroad not because of the beautiful, more conventional bands, but by

PSY (ne Park Yae-sang), the class clown of the Korean music world, a man who intentionally showed off his sweaty, hairy armpits and potato-shaped body, who made fart jokes in his songs, and his outfits looked as though they were picked out by a Las Vegas stage magician.

With his song “Gangnam Style”, Psy became the first Korean singer to enter the Billboard Chart in America.

One reason for the popularity of K-POP both on the domestic market and beyond is the fact that it has not been very much influenced by the Western rock music, due to the ban on this kind of music in Korea during the 1970s (Lie, 2012, Hong, 2014). Another possible explanation for the great success of K-POP artists abroad could be the fact that they are trained by multinational specialists: the songwriters may be European or American, while the dance choreographers are from everywhere. Finally, the popularity of the Korean groups is also “the result of social networks powered by expansion of the Internet. South Korea, as one of the world powers in IT, has enough strength to promote K-POP in the world using YouTube videos through social networks” (Nam, 2014:67). Twitter and Facebook have also made it easier for K-POP bands to reach a wider audience in the West. On the other hand, K-POP fans are using the same social networking tools to proclaim their devotion for their idols, as we shall see in section 4.2 of the paper. What is important to mention is that YouTube acknowledged the

popularity of K-POP and in 2011 added it as a new genre to its music categories.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data I have employed to get a glimpse into the spread of K-POP in Romania comes from two types of sources:

A) On the one hand, I have administered a questionnaire comprising 15 open-ended as well as multiple-choice questions, aiming at identifying the familiarity of Romanian people with the Korean wave, and implicitly with K-POP. The participants in this task were mainly young people (a group of high-school pupils and a group of students<sup>2</sup>) who consented to provide answers to the questions. For ethical reasons, the participants’ names are not revealed. They can be identified on the basis of two codes, formed by letters and numbers (HS1, HS2... employed for high-school pupils, while S1, S2... for the university students).

B) On the other hand, since the two above-mentioned groups represented just one minor sector of the Romanian population and since the completed questionnaires were not very numerous (35 altogether), I thought of taking a look at the social networks, searching for relevant information related to the Romanians’ familiarity with and attitudes towards K-POP and *hallyu*.

The research questions that guided my analysis are as follows: (1) Has K-POP reached Romania and, if so, who are its consumers? (2) What is the attitude of the (young) Romanians to K-POP and to the Korean Wave? (3) In what ways has *hallyu*, and K-POP, implicitly, affected the life of the Romanian people? (4) Will K-POP have a staying power in Romania? With these questions in mind, let us now proceed with the analysis of the data.

### 4. K-POP AND HALLYU IN ROMANIA

The data employed for the current small-scale study on the spread of K-POP and *hallyu* in Romania provided contradictory information: while the administered questionnaires indicated a low degree of familiarity of the 35 young Romanians respondents with K-POP, the internet proved the opposite. Let us have a look at the questionnaire results first.

**4.1 Questionnaire results.** The majority of the questions (Q2-Q10) envisaged the degree of

<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to Răzvan Anton, who gladly consented to help me administer the questionnaire to his pupils in Unirea High-school in Braşov. I am also grateful to all my Romanian students from the Faculty of Letters of Transilvania University of Braşov, who, despite their busy schedules, offered to help me by providing answers to the questions in the questionnaire.

familiarity of the Romanian respondents with K-POP. Others were meant to check their attitude with respect to this kind of music and its impact on how Romanians perceive the Korean culture (Q11-Q14). The last two items in the questionnaire focused on the spread of K-POP beyond the borders of the Korean peninsula and its future in Romania (Q 15- Q 16).

The answers provided to the first question, "Have you ever heard K-POP and by what means?" showed that most of the respondents came across K-POP accidentally in a supermarket, a café or heard it on the radio (13 of the total of 35), only a rather small number of them (9 out of 35) having personally searched for it or heard about its existence from a friend (9 out of 35). Two particular respondents, S2 and HS1 proved to be K-POP fans as they were familiar with almost all of the 51 Korean singers and groups listed in the questionnaire. From among the other participants, all six high school pupils were familiar with Psy, one of them (HS4) also fancying the K-POP solo star IVY. By contrast, the range of K-POP singers and groups known by the Romanian students was a bit wider: almost all have listened to PSY's hit "Gangnam Style" (19 out of 29), and some were familiar with as many as 24 (S6), 28 (S28), or 36 (S26) K-POP names. The second famous K-POP representative after Psy seems to be BigBang (selected by 8 respondents), followed by Girls' Generation (6 times), BoA, Exo and Nu'Est (chosen 3 times each). I had expected my participants to be more familiar with groups such as Nu'Est, LunaFly or LEDapple due to the fact that these performed on Romanian stages (as we shall see in section 4.2). But as the answers to the next question ("Have you ever participated/do you intend to participate in a K-POP concert?") in the questionnaire proved, only three respondents (SH2, S1 and S28) went to LEDapple group's concert, another 15 of them expressing their wish to attend such an event in the near future, while quite a large number of subjects (16) showed lack of interest in K-POP concerts. A possible reason for the scarcity of concert participation of my respondents could be the pricey tickets, which not many could afford.

Money is also an issue when it comes to purchasing or downloading K-POP music (Q 6). Of all respondents, there was just one (S2) who mentioned having spent money on K-POP CDs, the majority of them (27 out of 35) saying that they would never invest in this kind of music either because it is not appealing to them or simply because they can find cheaper solutions for getting it.

The reduced interest in K-POP music among my subjects is also reflected in the answers they provided to questions concerning online K-POP

fanhood (Q8 - Q9). Very few (4 out of 35) are members of an online community that supports idol groups and, at the same time, a small number of them seems to be interested in finding out details related to the singers from the K-POP artists' official accounts, while most of them (18 respondents) stated that they are neither interested in becoming members of K-POP online fan communities or in searching the idols' social accounts.

When asked about "what aspect of K-POP culture they liked best" (Q13), almost half of the participants in the survey said that they did not appreciate anything in connection with K-POP. On the other hand, the ones who seem to fancy this music, even if they are not crazy about it, stated that the main reason why they like K-POP artists is because of their gorgeous appearance and fashion style (12 answers), followed by the dances (11 answers), the nice melodic line and lyrics coming only third (6 answers). There were also 12 respondents for whom K-POP did not appeal at all. This particular question (i.e. Q13) also gave the participants the chance to expand on the topic. Two comments are worth taking a closer look at:

I think that the boom triggered by K-POP culture among the youth has also contributed to the opening of their horizons towards South Korea, a country that was not as popular as it is now among the young Romanian people due to K-POP. I still think it is incredible that the K-POP video clip [Psy-Gangnam Style] managed to reset the YouTube viewing counting system. (S18)

This comment highlights a number of major aspects: on the one hand, it shows that the target audience of K-POP is the youth; on the other hand, the respondent is of the opinion that due to K-POP, more and more Romanians may be motivated to approach other aspects pertaining to the Korean culture. Finally, this student expresses his astonishment at the success enjoyed by Psy, an artist who does not conform to the image of a K-POP idol. In this respect, he seems to share Hong's (2014) opinion about the non-conformist Korean singer.

The other student (S28) made a statement about Asian culture in general, saying that although she is keen on Japanese music, she is happy for the success K-POP has had all over the world. Though many K-POP fans appreciate the English words and lines in the song, she seems to dislike this aspect, but appreciates the quality of the music:

I appreciate the whole Asian culture. I even wish to see that it spreads more abroad. I am more into the Japanese culture, it's true (J-pop and J-rock), but

the success of both countries makes me happy. I can, nevertheless, state that the lyrics are not always appropriate, as they have the tendency to use English in their songs, and their English is not always correct. But even so, the music is wonderful and I am happy to have been offered the chance to listen to it. (S28)

When asked about “their opinions concerning the spread of K-POP culture outside the Korean peninsula” (Q15), the majority of the participants (19) considered that this enabled Korea to be (better) known by people from countries from different continents. In other words, K-POP could be considered an ambassador of South Korea in the entire world. There were also some subjects who considered that the main reason why K-POP is exported is of a financial nature, the entertaining companies that train and launch the K-POP singers aiming to get considerable revenues after having invested large amounts of money in these ‘consumer products’. Five of the respondents opine that despite all efforts, K-POP music is not yet fully accepted in the West. According to them, neither in Romania does this kind of music stand the chance to spread. Only 16 persons from the entire group of respondents were optimistic in saying that in 5 years from now (i.e. 2021), K-POP will have spread more and more, while another 5 subjects considered that K-POP is on the crest of the wave right now, but in the near future the craze for it will die out, as it has happened with other music genres. The other 14 respondents refrained from passing any judgments by simply saying they had no idea related to the spread of K-POP in Romania.

The last item in the questionnaire was meant to identify the extent to which K-POP may motivate the Romanian people to discover other aspects pertaining to the Korean culture, such as the wish to travel to South Korea, to learn its language, to learn to sing and dance K-POP, to taste Korean food, to watch K-dramas, etc. The answers provided by 20 participants who stated that they did not feel tempted to experience any of the aforementioned activities have not come as a surprise at all, given their responses to previous questions. From among those who admitted being influenced by K-POP, most have come to show greater interest in TV dramas or movies starring various K-POP idols and to want to learn Korean. On the other hand, Korean food does not seem to be so appealing to them, only 6 respondents mentioning an interest in it.

All in all, the analysis of the questionnaire responses proved that the spread of K-POP in Romania, or at least in Brasov, where the investigation has been conducted, is in an incipient

stage and that it may take some more time until this musical genre will be embraced by the Romanian youth

Let us now have a look at the data collected from online sources.

### 4.2 K-POP on social networks.

Groups created on Facebook and other community portals are growing in power. People demand concerts and want to take an active role in the Korean wave (Kida, 2014:67).

In this respect, Romania is no exception. Currently there is an online petition of the K-POP fans to get more posters with their idols in the BRAVO magazine - <http://www.petitiononline.com/forum/77346> -, which by the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2016 had been signed by 1277 persons. At the same time, the fans of this music genre also launched another online petition by means of which they demand more K-POP music aired by Romanian radio stations (“Muzică K-POP la radio în România” - <https://petitiononline.net/petitie/37428052>). Their first attempt in 2011 was not very successful in that it totaled only 86 signatures and 2 comments, but the fans would not give up, so that in 2013 they re-launched the petition (“Vrem K\_POP în România - [https://petitiononline.net/petitie/vrem\\_kpop\\_si\\_in\\_romania-p16389057.html](https://petitiononline.net/petitie/vrem_kpop_si_in_romania-p16389057.html)), which by the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2016 had been signed by 671 persons and received 36 comments. Some of these comments show the great admiration of the Romanian fans for K-POP, but at the same time they point to the scarcity of this kind of music on Romanian radio stations (K-POP being aired for just one hour per week by Music Channel) and to the prejudices some Romanians have in connection with the Korean culture. Consider the fragment below (translated into English by me):

Deea Love (24 February, 2013, 21:07)

#### **I love Kpop**

When people say they don't like kpop, they always blame it on the fact that they do not understand the lyrics. But this is not an excuse as there are many Romanians who do not understand the English lyrics either and are still madly in love with the songs. The truth is that the Romanians do not like kpop because they consider Korea a weird country. They all think that Korea is like China and that's why they don't want to listen to Korean songs or to watch Korean movies.

Another comment posted by Dima Flory on the same site shows that in Romania K-POP-mania is, nevertheless, a rising phenomenon, in that one of

the contestants in the X Factor Romania show sang a K-POP song in Korean:

Dima Flory (16 September, 2013, 20:21)

**kpop 4ever**

(...) then comes a ROMANIAN girl!! Who sings kpop in Xfactor; I am proud of her that she sang a song she liked.

Apart from this female contestant who performed a song in Korean, the love of the Romanian youth for K-POP is also reflected in their desire to emulate Korean groups. An example is Junno Girls, a Romanian group formed by four members who performed K-POP in its homeland, in the final of K-POP Roadshow 40120 Festival, in 2012. The success is attributed to their dancing skills and to the use of Korean language in their lyrics.

Moreover, as K-POP groups become more and more popular in Romania, a number of fan clubs have come into being through social networks. Most of their members post pictures and news related to their idol bands on Facebook accounts dedicated to their idol group (2NE1 Romania, Afterschool Romania, EXO Romania, LEDApple Romania – altogether 20 such clubs, see more at <http://www.kpopeurope.eu/kpop-fanclubs-in-europe/?lang=en>), while some also make use of Twitter (Lunafly and BigBang fans).

The love of some K-POP fans for their idols is so great, that when they post messages, comments or photos on the social networks, they employ the surname of their idol (e.g. Kim Gabriela) or spell their name in Hangeul, also using a Korean surname (e.g. 김 소리 나, i.e. Kim Sorina). Some others keep the photo of their idol on their telephone and use one of his/her songs as ringtone. (<https://www.youtube.com -Tipuri de fane k-pop, ep.4>)

One other aspect worth considering is Romania's participation in the K-POP World Festival, an event that was launched in 2011 and that is organized by the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, the Korean Broadcasting System, as well as with the support of overseas embassies of South Korea. While in its first edition, the preliminary competition was hosted in 16 countries, in "the 2015 festival the number of participating foreign countries having increased to 69; among them 23 are European countries, including Romania" (Speech of the Korean ambassador in Romania, Mr. Hyo-Sung Park given at the opening of the 2105 Romanian K-POP World Festival [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pd2Dn\\_8L65](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pd2Dn_8L65), min. 3:07-3:12). In the preliminary contests, enthusiastic young people perform dances and K-POP songs. The winners of

each country participate in the K-POP World Festival final, which takes place in Changwon, South Korea. The winner of the latest preliminary contest in Romania that was hosted by Palatul Național al Copiilor in Bucharest on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2015 was the Seoul Beat group. Its members were among the 14 finalists of the K-POP World Festival in South Korea, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2015. Unfortunately, they have not come out winners, but the fact that they were among the finalists in such an important event is praiseworthy.

KOMPAS EVENTS, the company in charge of the preliminary contests for K-POP World Festival in Romania also organizes various parties where Romanians get the chance to listen to their favorite K-POP music together with other persons who share the same passion. At the same time, the company also helped in the organization of the concerts given by three Korean K-POP groups in Romania: LEDApple (at TurboHalle, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2014, Lunafly at Teatrul de Vară Herăstrău on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July 2015, and NU'EST, at Arenele Romane, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November, the same year) (see the website of the company <http://www.infomusic.ro/organizator/kompas-events/>).

Two important events that are disseminated via social networks are the Korean Day and the Korean Camp, both organized in Bucharest by the International Youth Fellowship (IYF). The latest edition of the Korean Day took place on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April, 2015 (<https://kpopro.wordpress.com/2015/04/03/korean-day-4-aprilie-2015/>). The event brought together Romanians willing to get a taste of Korean food, but also to learn how to prepare it and to participate in different games.

Between the 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of July, 2015, at Gheorghe Lazar National College in Bucharest the Korean Camp took place. The aim of this event was to give the Romanian people the opportunity to study in detail Korean traditions, to get to learn Korean through K-POP music and K-drama (<https://www.facebook.com/iyf.romania/posts/1143699295655901>).

All these are indicative of the ever-growing number of Romanians who become interested not only in the K-POP music and dramas, but in the Korean culture, in general.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

As the analysis of the questionnaires revealed, it would be an exaggeration to say that K-POP has attained general appeal in Romania, but if we consider the forum data, they are indicative of a growing awareness and interest of especially the young Romanians in this genre of music and in

Korean culture, in general. Though the questionnaire analysis showed a rather low level of enthusiasm of the respondents for K-POP, the survey of the online data revealed that an increasing number of Romanian contestants displayed their interest in being part of the K-POP industry by participating in the domestic K-POP World Festival, in spite of language and socio-cultural differences. At the same time, the numerous online fan clubs and petitions demanding longer hours of K-POP music on radio and television programs and more posters with K-POP idols in specialized magazines are proof that Romanians have come to love this musical genre (this providing the answer to the second research question).

As far as the ways in which *hallyu* and K-POP affected the life of the Romanian people are concerned (research question 3), the data showed that the activities organized by various institutions in Romania (The Embassy of South Korea, the International Youth Fellowship) brought together large numbers of Romanians interested in Korean food, dances, painting, pottery or K-POP. The same impact emerges from the questionnaires: many of the respondents mentioned their desire to learn Korean, to travel to South Korea or to watch K-dramas on Romanian television. Opinions are shared with respect to the last research question related to the staying power of K-POP: some respondents think (and wish) that it would grow in power and spread even more, while others consider that little by little it will fade away, just like many other music genres. All in all, to quote Zsaklowska, 2008 (in Kida, 2014:66), what we can state is that at the moment, “there is not a Korean wave but only a breeze blowing” through Romania, expecting that this will turn into a wave in the foreseeable future.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Cross, I. (2010). Whatever music is, is a basic part of being human. In *ScienceNews*, Vol. 174, No. 4, p. 36 [online]. Available: <https://www.sciencenews.org/article/whatever-music-it%E2%80%99s-basic-part-being-human>. [Accessed March, 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016].

2. Hong, E. (2014). *The Birth of Korean Cool. How One Nation is Conquering the World Through Pop-Culture*. New York: Picador.
3. Hongbowon, H. (20xx). *Passport to Korean Culture*.
4. Kim, J. and Lee, J. (2014). Korean pop culture: A decade of ups and downs. In *International Journal of Multimedia and Ubiquitous Engineering*, Vol. 9, No. 3. 129-134.
5. Lie, J. (2012). What is the K in K-Pop? South Korean popular music, the culture music, and national identity. In *Korea Observer*, vol. 43, No. 3, Autumn 2012. 339-363.
6. Kida, P. (2014). Wind of change. Poland is just one step away from the wind of change. In V. Marinescu (ed.), *The Global Impact of South Korean Popular Culture. Hallyu Unbound*. New York, Londong: Lexington Books.
7. Ju, H. (2014). Transformations of the Korean Media Industry by the Korean Wave: The Perspective of Glocalisation. In Y. Kuwahara (ed.) *The Korean Wave: Korean Popular Culture in Global Context*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 33-51.
8. Marinescu, V. (ed.) (2014). *The Global Impact of South Korean Popular Culture. Hallyu Unbound*. New York, London: Lexington Books.
9. Nam, J. (2014). *This is Real Korea*. Seoul: NSK.
10. Oh, I. (2013). The Globalisation of K-POP: Korea’s Place in the Global Music Industry. In *Korea Observer* 44, No. 3. 389-409.
11. \*\*\*. (2015). *Facts About Korea*. Seoul: Korean Culture and Information Service/ Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism.

## WEBSITES

12. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pd2Dn\\_8L650](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pd2Dn_8L650).
13. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkOaw3R10Mw>
14. <http://www.kpopeurope.eu/kpop-fanclubs-in-europe/?lang=en>
15. <https://www.youtube.com>
16. <http://www.infomusic.ro/organizator/kompas-events/>
17. <https://www.facebook.com/iyf.romania/posts/143699295655901>