

An Analytical Survey of Korean Literary Works Translated into Turkish and Their Reception in Turkish Media

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ABSTRACT

Following the signing of a cultural agreement between South Korea and Türkiye in 1972, bilateral cultural exchanges have steadily expanded across various domains, including international film festivals, art exhibitions, and musical performances. However, the introduction of Korean literature into Turkish literary landscape began comparatively late, with the first notable translations appearing in 1993. In recent years—especially after Han Kang’s *The Vegetarian* was awarded the Man Booker International Prize in 2016—the volume and visibility of Korean literary works translated into Turkish have significantly increased. This study offers a comprehensive review of Korean literary translations published in Türkiye between 2010 and 2025, with particular attention to their reception within Turkish media. It also examines the reception of these works through reviews written by Turkish reviewers. Employing a qualitative research methodology grounded in document analysis and media content analysis, the paper critically investigates reviews published in national newspapers and digital platforms authored by Turkish literary reviewers.

KEYWORDS: Korean Literature in Türkiye, Korea-Türkiye cultural relations, literary translation into Turkish, Turkish media reception, transnational literary exchange

1. Introduction

In 2009, Nan A Lee published “Korean Literature of the Turkish Literary World and its Media,” a pioneering study that presented a bibliographic table of Korean literary works translated into Turkish between 1993 and 2008. Through a detailed analysis of news articles and author interviews, Lee’s research offered the first scholarly attempt to trace the reception and presence of Korean literature in Türkiye. Although limited in quantitative scope due to the relatively small number of translations and media sources, the study marked a significant milestone in documenting the historical trajectory of Korean literary dissemination in the Turkish context.

Subsequent to Lee’s foundational work, scholars such as Hatice Köroğlu Türközü (2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2019) and S. Göksel Türközü (2015) have contributed further scholarship addressing the reception and status of Korean literature in Türkiye. Despite longstanding diplomatic and cultural ties between South Korea and Türkiye, their studies reveal that literary exchange has remained minimal. A consistent conclusion across these works attributes this limited engagement to two primary factors: the scarcity of professional translators capable of Korean–Turkish literary translation, and the persistent lack of interest among Turkish publishers in East Asian literature. Between 1993 and 2019, only 25 Korean literary works were translated into Turkish (Köroğlu Türközü and Türközü, 2019). Even when including anonymous works, essays, academic articles, and educational texts written in Turkish on Korean literature, overall interest has remained modest. However, a noticeable shift occurred following Han Kang’s receipt of the Man Booker International Prize for *The Vegetarian* in 2016. Since that milestone, the number of Korean literary works translated into Turkish has risen sharply—from fewer than 14 prior to 2016 to a total of 52 by 2025.

This study, co-authored by Prof. Lee and myself, aims to achieve two primary objectives. First, we seek to update the bibliography of Korean literary works translated into Turkish, covering the period from 2010 to 2025. Compiling this updated bibliography allows us to observe recent trends in author selection, genre preferences, and thematic orientations within Korean literature as received in Türkiye. Second, we aim to assess whether there has been a discernible shift in the critical reception of Korean literature in Turkish literary and media discourse since the publication of Lee’s 2009 study. In particular, we explore how perceptions have evolved, as reflected in reviews, articles, and other forms of media commentary.

This updated bibliography is not only a valuable resource for scholars of Korean and Turkish literary interaction but also a foundation for understanding broader cultural exchanges between the two nations. Furthermore, by including critical commentary published in Turkish, this study offers, for the first time, an English-language resource accessible to scholars beyond Korean and Turkish language communities. While this project does not engage in close textual analysis of individual literary works, it is designed to serve as a foundational reference for future research into the evolving landscape of Korean–Turkish literary and cultural exchange.

2. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The reception theory developed by Hans Robert Jauss (1982) places an intense focus on the reader's role in creating the meaning of literary works. He stated that a reader's perception of a text is shaped by their historical and cultural environment. When it comes to understanding and deriving meaning from literary works, he claims that readers play an active role in the process. Reading is not merely the passive reception of information; rather, it is an active process of creating meaning that develops as the reader progresses through the text (21–34).

According to Jauss (1982), the meaning of a text is not predetermined or inherent; rather, it is generated by the interaction between the text and the reader interacting with the text.

Likewise, Stuart Hall (1980), a cultural theorist, states that readers have varied ways of interpreting texts, and that these interpretations are not always the same as the author intended. Furthermore, this means that the personal, historical, and cultural setting of the readers has an effect on the reading experience they have. These perspectives provide the theoretical foundation for our research on how Turkish reviewers read translated Korean literary works.

This study uses document analysis, particularly focusing on media content analysis, to analyze the reception of Korean literary works in Türkiye. Corbin and Strauss (2008) describe document analysis as a systematic method applied to examine and classify different document types. These documents may exist as physical copies or in digital versions, including computer-based and internet-transmitted items. The aim of document analysis is to explore the meaning, and cultivate practical insight into documents. Document analysis is a methodical process used to examine and assess various types of documents, including both

physical copies and digital formats such as computer-based and internet-transmitted materials, to derive meaning, attain comprehension, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin and Strauss 2008). Categories of documents vary and often include books, letters, magazines, diaries, maps, charts, statistics, constitutions and regulations, legal texts, newspapers, photographs, memoirs, interviews, school records, health and public records, images, videos, and messages, among others.

In this study, we engage with the principles underpinning document analysis to examine national daily newspapers and influential online media platforms that featured content between the years 2010 and 2025. Media content analysis is our main method for reviewing how Korean literature has been represented in Turkish media reports. The evaluation of Turkish literary circles and media on Korean works published between 2001 to 2008 was covered in a previous study (Lee 2009: 144). However, there is no specific publications in 2009 itself. To advance this study, we turn to Turkish media's reviews of Korean literary works published after 2010.

Newspapers, as a form of mass media, have played an important role in informing the public and shaping cultural discourse. Readers engage with them not just for current events, but also for amusement, opinion, and perspectives on culture (Girgin 2005: 265). Newspapers are valuable sources for analyzing the public reception of literature because of their wide reach, their historical significance in shaping cultural discourse, and their ability to reflect both professional criticism and popular opinion. In Türkiye, literature has long found a platform in newspapers, dating back to the Ottoman Empire, when literary content attracted readers. At the time, newspapers were considered one of the most effective forms of media, capable of reaching a wide readership (Çıkla 2009: 37). This tradition continues in the modern era, with national newspapers such as *Hürriyet* [Freedom], *Cumhuriyet* [Republic], and *Milliyet* [Nationality] regularly featuring book advertisements, reviews, and author interviews.

The rise of the internet has profoundly changed the way people access news and literary content. The early 1990s marked the beginning of the digital news era in Türkiye, coinciding with the introduction of the internet into everyday life (Çelik 2024: 178). Since then, most newspapers have developed online platforms and expanded the reach of their content. In this study, we collected data from national daily newspapers such as *Milliyet*, *Hürriyet*,

Cumhuriyet and *Posta* between 2010 and 2025.¹ These Turkish news websites all provide daily coverage of both national and international news, including political, cultural, and literary content. Although privately owned, they operate under Turkish media laws, including the Press Law (No. 5187), and are supervised by the RTÜK (Supreme Council of Radio and Television). While the press is free, it is limited by laws that prohibit the publication of content deemed to insult state institutions, promote terrorism, or threaten public morality or national unity. Content violating these restrictions may be subject to censorship and prosecution (Horozgil 2012: 150).

Cumhuriyet is owned by the non-profit Cumhuriyet Foundation, historically affiliated with the Kemalist Republican People's Party (CHP), while *Milliyet*, *Hürriyet*, and *Posta* are owned by the Demirören Group, a large Turkish media conglomerate affiliated with the ruling AKP (Justice and Development Party). These organizations are financed through advertising and subscriptions, and in the case of *Cumhuriyet*, also through donations.

We collected data from online platforms such as *Artful Living*, which focuses on arts and literature; *Edebiyat Haber*, Türkiye's most prominent literary news portal; and *Kayıp Rıhtım*, an online platform dedicated to the exploration and appreciation of culture, art, and literature. In addition, we sourced data from *Gazete Duvar* a widely read online news platform. These sources provided a diverse range of materials, including book reviews and author interviews relevant to the reception of Korean literature in Türkiye. Our methodology combined purposive sampling and manual content extraction. We began by identifying media platforms with a consistent record of publishing literary content by using simple search functions and keyword-based navigation (e.g., "Korean literature [Kore edebiyatı]," "Korean novel [Kore romanı]," author and title names). In this way we initially collected articles, reviews, and commentaries related to Korean literary works published between 2010 and 2025 using manual methods. To ensure accuracy and relevance, each entry was reviewed and verified by both researchers.

In conducting this study, we collaborated to facilitate the selection and analysis of the most relevant content. We divided up the initial tasks: one person was responsible for updating the bibliography and conducting the statistical analysis, while the other concentrated on gathering

¹ Online links to all of these daily newspapers are listed in Appendix A of this paper.

media sources and creating a representative dataset. Upon concluding the dataset gathering, we collaboratively structured the content based on the subjects and viewpoints addressed. For analysis, we employed qualitative content analysis as our primary methodological approach. This involved coding and categorizing the textual data to identify recurring themes, attitudes, and discursive frameworks related to Korean literature. Our aim was not to produce an exhaustive archive but to construct a structured and meaningful overview of the presence and perception of Korean literature in the Turkish literary field. Before presenting our findings, we begin by outlining the historical and cultural framework of South Korea–Türkiye relations to better contextualize the literary and artistic exchanges that followed.

3. The Relationship between South Korea and Türkiye in Culture and Art

An examination of the cultural relationship between South Korea and Türkiye reveals four distinct phases that have significantly shaped bilateral interactions. Each period reflects a unique dimension of the evolving diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties between the two countries. The 1950s marked the formal establishment of diplomatic relations, laying the groundwork for future cooperation. In the 1960s, bilateral engagement deepened, culminating in the expansion of trade during the early 1970s. A pivotal development occurred in 1972 with the signing of the Cultural Cooperation Agreement, which served as a catalyst for academic exchanges and enabled the initial introduction of Korean literary works into the Turkish cultural sphere (Köroğlu Türközü 2011). Subsequently, literary translations gained visibility through publications in Turkish literary magazines such as *Gündoğan Edebiyat* and *Tömer* during the 1990s, although the overall volume of such exchanges remained relatively modest. Notably, Turkish literary works have also been translated into Korean, albeit to a limited extent, indicating an asymmetrical cultural exchange (Lee, 2009: 140).

In contrast to the relatively limited literary interactions, the adaptation and popularity of Korean dramas and films have surged globally, including in Türkiye (Isar 2013). Hallyu, or the Korean Wave, refers to the socio-cultural phenomenon in which Korean popular culture has spread internationally, influencing audiences across various countries. Initially associated with the popularity of K-pop and TV dramas, the term has come to signify the broader dissemination of Korean culture abroad. The Korean Wave—including music, drama, and

film—has had a profound cultural impact in Türkiye.² Korean-language dramas such as *The Great Jang-Geum* (*Saraydaki Mücevher* 2008), *Boys Over Flowers* (*Yaban Çiçeği* 2009), and *The Flower in Prison* (*Hapishanedeki Çiçek* 2019) have enjoyed sustained popularity on Turkish television channels from 2005 to the present. These dramas span a wide range of historical and contemporary themes, including narratives set in the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1897) and the Silla Kingdom (57 BCE–935 CE). The effect of Korean dramas is also seen in successful Turkish adaptations like *Bahar* (inspired by *Doctor Cha*) and *Taş Kağıt Makas* (adapted from *Remember: War of the Son*), showing the localized popularity of Korean narratives.

South Korean cinema significantly impacted on Turkish media, as well as on Turkish cinema. *A Moment to Remember* (2004) was remade as *Evim Sensin* and released in 2012; *Always* (2011) was adapted into *Sadece Sen* in 2014; and *Miracle in Cell No. 7* (2012) inspired the widely acclaimed Turkish version *7. Koğuştaki Mucize*, released in 2019. Furthermore, *Ayla* (2017), a co-produced film commemorating the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between South Korea and Türkiye, received international recognition, winning the Best Editing Award at the 2017 Cape Town International Film Festival and the Best Foreign Film Award at the 2018 Sedona International Film Festival (Song 2018). The global influence of South Korean cinema was further demonstrated by the success of *Parasite* (2019), the first South Korean film to win the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. Following its release in Türkiye, the film attracted an audience of 225,692 by February 19, 2020, making it the most-watched Oscar-winning film in the country over the past 12 years (*Gazete Duvar* 2020). These examples underscore the increasing cultural resonance and mutual interest in cinematic narratives between South Korea and Türkiye. This historical overview provides a vital contextual foundation for understanding the literary exchanges that constitute the central focus of this study.

4. Overview of the Translation of Korean Literature into Turkish

4.1 Analysis of Publication Data

² For studies on "Korean Wave (Hallyu)" see Nevfel Boz (2020); Özlem Bozyer (2023), Research on the sociocultural Chong-Jin OH and Young-Gil CHAE (2013) and Jung Suk Yoo (2017) on Turkish media coverage.

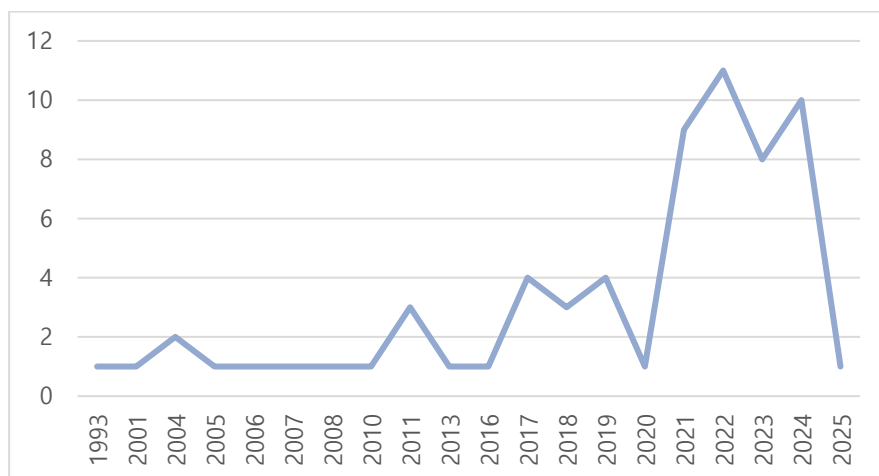
Despite the global expansion of Korean popular culture—particularly through the success of K-pop and K-dramas—Korean literature remains significantly underrepresented within the Turkish literary landscape. This imbalance between the international acclaim of Korean visual media and the limited presence of Korean literary works in the Turkish market is both telling and consequential. Currently, approximately 45–55% of novels available in Türkiye are translations, and this proportion has been gradually increasing (Nawotka, 2015). Most of these translated works originate from English, German, and French. In stark contrast, Korean literature accounts for only a negligible fraction. Between 1993 and 2025, a total of just 66 Korean literary works were published in Turkish. This figure represents a mere 0.01% of all translated literature published in Türkiye over the past 32 years. This striking underrepresentation reveals a paradox: while Korean culture is widely consumed in Türkiye, its literary corpus remains on the margins.

Table 1: Variety and Quantity of Korean Literary Works Translated into Turkish (2010-2025)

Type of literature	Number of books	%
Novel	55	94.83
Poetry	3	5.17
TOTAL	58	100

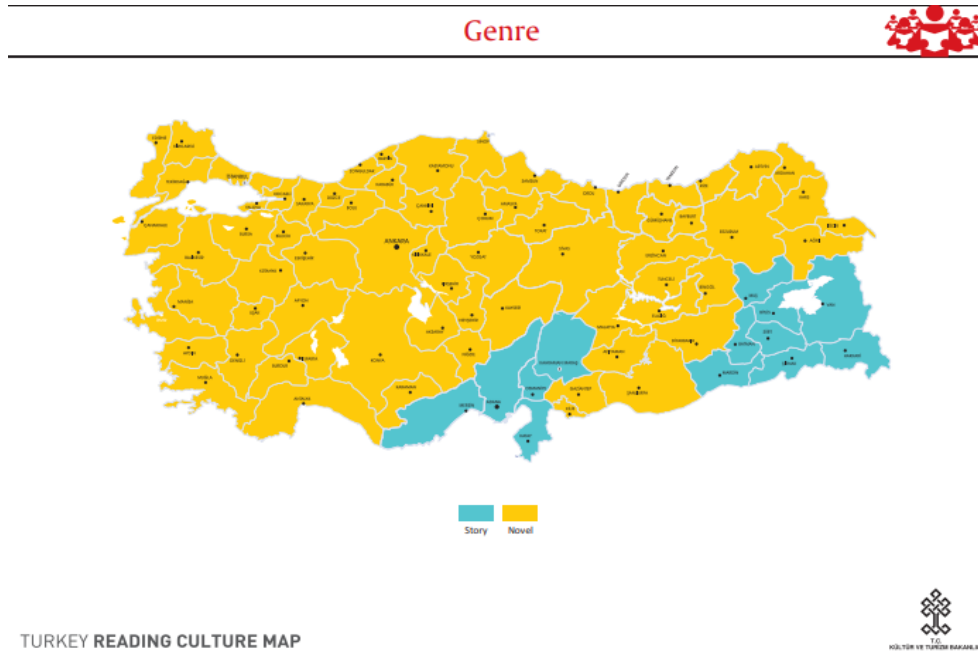
As Table 1 shows, a total of 58 Korean literary works has been translated and published in Turkish between 2010 and 2025. Of these, 55 were novels (94.83%) and three were poetry collections (5.17%). In addition, more than 10 Korean children's books were published during the same period, including *The Flow of Water* (*Suyun Döngüsü*, Da-jeong Yu 2018), *A Building Where Trees Grow* (*Ağaçların Yetiştği Bina*, Kang Mi-yoon 2020) *The Dog Who Dared to Dream* (*Hayal Kurmaya Cesaret Eden Köpek*, Hwang Sun-mi 2021), *Miracle on the Cherry Hill* (*Kiraz Tepesindeki Mucize*, Hwang Sun-mi 2022), and *The Hen Who Dreamed She Could Fly* (*Uçabileceğini Hayal Eden Tavuk*, Hwang Sun-mi 2022). However, these titles were excluded from the current analysis due to the study's specific focus on adult literature.

Graph 1: Publication Trends (2010-2025)



Based on the data provided in the Appendix, it has been confirmed that two works were translated from English, while the remaining 56 works were translated directly from Korean into Turkish since 2010. Notable literary works such as Shin Kyung-sook's *Please Look After Mom* (*Lütfen Anneme İyi Bak*, 2011) and Gong Ji-young's *Our Happy Time* (*Mutlu Günlerimiz*, 2018) were rendered into Turkish via English rather than the original Korean. The fact that these works were published by leading publishing houses in Türkiye, without support from the Literature Translation Institute of Korea (LTI Korea), indicates a growing independent interest in Korean literature within the Turkish literary market.

Picture 1: Türkiye Reading Culture Map Indicating Turkish Readers' Predilection for Novels³



The dominance of novels among Korean literary works translated into Turkish aligns with broader national reading trends. According to the findings of the *Türkiye Reading Culture Map*, compiled by the General Directorate of Libraries and Publications under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Turkish readers overwhelmingly prefer novels over other literary forms such as poetry and short stories. This trend is reflected in the translation corpus as well: the predominance of novels among translated Korean works appears closely linked to Turkish readers' strong preference for this genre.

However, an examination of the translated works reveals a notable lack of representation of Korea's classical and historical literature. Despite Korea's rich literary history, many canonical works remain untranslated. This leaves Turkish readers with a fragmented understanding of Korea's literary heritage. Globally, this reflects a publishing industry preference for prose—especially novels and short stories—due to their higher marketability and broader reader appeal. In contrast, poetry is often perceived as niche, complex, and

³ <https://kygm.ktb.gov.tr/Eklenti/56,yonetici-ozeti-engpdf.pdf?0>, (accessed 16th October 2025).

financially unviable.

In Türkiye, the scarcity of translated poetry illustrates this trend. Aydın (2021), in her article questioning the reasons for the paucity of published poetry books in translation, notes that publishers are reluctant to take financial risks on poetry due to low sales potential and rising production costs. Translators, too, express dissatisfaction with inadequate compensation and the lack of appreciation for the artistic labor involved in poetry translation. Compounding this is the general disinterest in poetry among Turkish readers, which further limits the genre's visibility and distribution. Among Korean authors, Han Kang has received the most attention, with five of her novels translated into Turkish. A review of the available titles indicates that public awareness of an author plays a crucial role in the selection of works for translation.

Since 2010, 22 translators have contributed to the corpus of Korean-to-Turkish literary translation. Notably, translators such as Göksel Türközü (16 novels, 28.07%) and Tayfun Kartav (11 novels, 19.30%) have made substantial contributions. While most translators are either Turkish scholars of Korean studies or Koreans specializing in Turkish studies, a few, such as Belgin Selan, Haktanır Us, and Mahinur Zehra Karahan, worked from English due to limited Korean proficiency. This reliance on English as a relay language is common, given its accessibility and the availability of critical apparatus. Overall, the selection of works is often influenced by Turkish publishers' commercial priorities, translators' language abilities, and the curated recommendations on platforms such as LTI Korea.

4.2 Media Reception of Translated Korean Literature in Türkiye

The award of the Man Booker International Prize to Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* in 2016 marked a turning point in the reception of Korean literature in Türkiye. Since then, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of works translated and published, accompanied by growing media interest. This media attention has not only amplified the visibility of Korean literature but has also functioned as a catalyst for public engagement and cultural exchange.

Turkish media began regularly covering translated Korean literary works post-2016. News articles, interviews, and literary reviews have significantly shaped public perception and helped integrate Korean literature into the broader cultural discourse. As Santos and Miranda (2022: 37–56) observe, media can serve as both a mirror and motor of cultural transmission,

fostering literary interest and acting as a bridge between publishers, translators, and readers.

Table 2: Media Coverage of Korean Literary Works in Türkiye (2010-2025)

Data Sources	Number of news	%
www.kayiprihtim.com	14	21.21%
www.edebiyathaber.net	13	19.70%
www.artfulliving.com.tr	12	18.18%
www.hürriyet.com.tr	9	13.64%
www.milliyet.com.tr	6	9.09%
www.gazeteduvar.com.tr	6	9.09%
www.posta.com.tr	4	6.06%
www.cumhuriyet.com.tr	2	3.03%
TOTAL	66	100%

As shown in Table 2 above, among the media sources examined, *KayıpRıhtım* published the highest number of articles (21.21%) related to Korean literary works. In total, 66 relevant news articles were identified. Content analysis reveals that 62.1% of these were press releases, 30.3% were reader reviews, and 7.5% were interviews with authors or translators. Notably, readers' reviews provide valuable insights into how Korean literature is evaluated and received by Turkish audiences.

Our study identified 23 readers' reviews authored by 16 different reviewers. These reviews reflect the increasing presence of Korean literature in the Turkish media, particularly works that have already achieved international recognition and have been translated into multiple languages, including Turkish. According to many Turkish reviewers, while the readership for Korean literature in Türkiye is still in its nascent stages, the literary quality of the available translated works is considered remarkably high.

Table 3: Readers' Reviews of Translated Korean Literary Works

Book Title		Writer	The year of reviews	Number of reviews	%
English	Turkish				
A Familiar Life	Tanıdık Şeyler	Hwang Sok-yong	2018/2019	2	9.5
The Plotters	Komplocular	Kim Un-su	2019	1	4.7
Human Acts	Çocuk Geliyor	Han Kang	2019	4	19
City of Ash and Red	Küller ve Kızıl	Pyun Hye-young	2019	1	4.7
Good Son	İyi Evlat	Jeong Yu-jeong	2021	1	4.7
The White Book	Beyaz Kitap	Han Kang	2021	3	14.2
The Boy Who Escaped Paradise	Cennetten Kaçan Çocuk	Lee Jung-myung	2022	1	4.7
The Vegetarian	Vejetaryen	Han Kang	2017/2022/2025	3	14.2
Cursed Bunny	Lanetli Tavşan	Bora Chung	2022/2023	2	9.5
The Private Life of Plants	Bitkilerin Özel Hayatı	Lee Seong-u	2023	1	4.7
Farewell	Veda	Kim Young-ha	2024	1	4.7
I Do Not Bid Farewell	Veda Etmiyorum	Han Kang	2024	2	9.5
Your Cold Hands	Sevgilinin Soğuk Elleri	Han Kang	2025	1	4.7
TOTAL				23	100

According to the data in Table 3 above, *Human Acts* and *The White Book* garnered the highest number of readers' reviews. Among Korean authors, Han Kang has had the most significant

influence on the dissemination of Korean literature in Türkiye, with a substantial portion of her oeuvre already translated. When Han Kang and Turkish Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk were both shortlisted for the Man Booker International Prize in 2016, the event generated considerable media attention in Türkiye. In 2016, 14 articles were published on the subject—a notable increase from 2015, when five such articles were found. Since 2016, the Man Booker International Prize has been awarded to writers of works either originally written in or translated into English. In that year, Pamuk was selected among 155 authors from 12 countries. International literary awards, such as the Man Booker, serve as a crucial mechanism for conferring global visibility and prestige not upon individual authors but also their national cultures shown by the strong media response in Türkiye to Pamuk’s nomination. Han Kang’s victory over Orhan Pamuk only intensified interest in her literary work. Since then, Turkish media coverage of Han Kang has steadily increased. Nearly thirty news articles from the sources reviewed explicitly reference Han Kang, underscoring her continued relevance and visibility in the Turkish literary landscape. Furthermore, this increased visibility has evidently contributed to a growing interest in Korean literature among Turkish readers. Our analysis of readers’ reviews reveals that translated Korean works are frequently met with positive evaluations. Notably, three of the reviews highlighted the high quality of the translations, as demonstrated in the following excerpts:

1. “...It is a pleasure to read something so nuanced. I would also like to express my admiration for the translator, Göksel Türközü, who never loses the meaning of these lace-like sentences in translation. Each chapter of the book, consisting of short paragraphs, adds another layer of whiteness to the reader’s experience.” (Dönmez, 2021: *Beyazın Kırılğanlığı: Han Kang*, Posta)
2. “Told from the perspective of 13-year-old Pörtlek, Sok-yong effectively highlights the growing interest in Far Eastern literature. The talented translator, S. Göksel Türközü, once again succeeds in bringing this work to Turkish readers. In 170 pages, the novel presents a compelling narrative that prompts readers to reflect on both personal and societal issues.” (Pekdoğan, 2019: *Çöplükte Kaybolan*, Artful Living)
3. “The work was translated from the original Korean by Sevda Kul. Although I do not

know Korean, comparing some parts with the English version allowed me to appreciate the elegance of her translation. There was one passage I struggled to understand in Turkish, and upon comparing it to the English translation, I noticed that a sentence was missing—this omission slightly disrupted the flow.” (Özgün, 2023: *Bora Chung’in Tuhaf Öyküleri*, Kayıp Rıhtım)

The evaluations of the translators’ quality and efficiency in comments (1), (2), and (3) are perceptive and constructive. It is essential to examine the significance of these reviews, which move beyond superficial recognition and offer insights into the reception of translated literature. This involves analyzing the forms and degrees of recognition granted to the translator’s role. Lawrence Venuti’s concept of the “illusion of transparency” posits that a translation is deemed successful when it reads fluently in the target language. Each review reflects features of the translation aligned with this notion. However, Venuti argues that such fluency often conceals the translator’s labor and minimizes the cultural and linguistic distinctiveness of the source text, ultimately rendering the translation overly familiar and domesticated. This approach, he claims, prioritizes readability over fidelity to the original (Venuti 1995: 1–98).

In review (1), the reviewer commends Göksel Türközü for preserving the delicacy and nuance of the original text, metaphorically describing the sentences as “lace-like.” The reviewer affirms that the meaning remains intact and that the translation is executed flawlessly. In review (2), the translator is praised for once again producing a smooth and engaging work for Turkish readers, revealing an expectation of consistent domestication when adapting foreign literature. In review (3), although the reviewer identifies a discrepancy between the Turkish and English versions—specifically the omission of a sentence—they ultimately praise the Turkish translation for its aesthetic quality, particularly its fluency and clarity.

All three reviews reflect the near invisibility of the translator, whose presence is recognized only through the maintenance of narrative flow and the preservation of what is perceived as the original author’s voice. Venuti asserts that this dominant inclination toward transparency obscures the ideological choices underlying translation practices, which often favor assimilation rather than differentiation (Venuti 1995: 5). These reviews are therefore important as they reveal how Turkish readers evaluate Korean literary translations not through direct comparison with the original—largely inaccessible to them—but through a culturally

conditioned framework of what constitutes a “good” translation.

While most reviewers emphasize fluency, translator Sevda Kul sheds light on the translator’s often-invisible labor. In an interview, she discusses the challenges of conveying culturally specific references and the interpretive strategies used to integrate them seamlessly into the target text (Bibliyoraf 2023). Göksel Türközü has similarly noted that he endeavors to empathize with both the author and the characters during the translation process. While his approach varies by text, he consistently seeks deep narrative engagement. He emphasized that although his methodology changes depending on the work, he generally aims to understand the text from an inner perspective. Türközü’s practice aligns closely with Venuti’s concept of the “invisible translator,” as he strives to transmit the original voice faithfully while minimizing his overt presence in the translation (*Gazetesanat* 2021).

In review (4), the reviewer comments on the unusual narrative style employed by Pyun Hye-young in *City of Ash and Red*. The reviewer highlights the novel’s unsettling tone: “The dystopian novel, *City of Ash and Red*, contains sequences that are capable of disturbing the reader. The absence of city names and the anonymization of the protagonist as merely ‘the man’ intensify his sense of dislocation and induce unease in the reader” (Çavdar 2019: *Fareler, çöpler, Hürriyet*). Although the reviewer acknowledges the discomfort evoked by the novel, she considers it a remarkable work of Korean literature.

Another reviewer praises the translator’s deliberate omission of footnotes, as seen in example (5): “Another interesting and appetizing element is the mention of Korean food throughout the novel. Our translator explained that he chose not to use footnotes, instead embedding brief contextual explanations within the text before describing the dishes. He has done an excellent job. It makes the reader want to visit a Korean restaurant and try every dish available” (Yelkenbiçer 2022: “*Vejetaryen: Bir dönüşüm*,” *Edebiyathaber*). This reception suggests that readers appreciated the translator’s integrated approach to cultural references—especially culinary ones, which are deeply tied to national identity. The translator’s strategy of contextual embedding rather than external annotation was praised for enhancing immersion and stimulating interest in Korean culture (Venuti 1995: 203).

Conversely, twelve reviewers did not mention the translation or the translator at all. The majority instead focused on perceived similarities between Turkish and Korean cultures, as illustrated in comments (6) to (9):

6. “When reading *Neighbors in Wonmi-dong*, one is surprised by the similarities between Korean and Turkish societies. Human relationships, daily events, problems, and emotional responses are remarkably familiar. Eventually, it feels as though one is reading about a neighborhood like Beylikdüzü in Istanbul rather than Wonmi-dong, making the stories personally relatable. What initially seemed uniquely Korean becomes universally accessible. This is a successful literary work because it effectively moves from the local to the universal” (Celal 2010: “*Uzak ve Güzel Mahalle,*” *Okuduğum Kitaplar*).
7. “Han Kang speaks on behalf of all of us—for what we have lost, for what has been taken from us, and for the silent moments we are forced to endure. Regardless of time, place, or political power, shared pain persists. As we witnessed in September 1980,⁴ similar sorrows affect different nations. Death, torture, repression, disappearance—these traumas resonate globally. Han Kang underscores this struggle for voice and dignity in her work with bold strokes” (Çıkılıoğlu 2019: *Yakılan Ağıt Hepimiz İçin, Artful Living*).
8. “It is striking to see events unfolding in a faraway country that mirror our own experiences—feelings of helplessness, sorrow, and anger. That this historical episode can be read with such empathy, as though written by a local author, amplifies its impact” (Sert 2019: *Sene 1980..., Gazeteduvar*).
9. “While reading this book, I often had the same thoughts I have when watching Korean films. Despite the geographic distance, the similarities between Korean and Turkish societies are striking. Social pressure, for instance, is equally pervasive. The so-called ‘invisible hand of society’ manifests through superiors, colleagues, and neighbors. Families, too, can become oppressive and patriarchal structures—just like in our society” (Yelkenbiçer 2022: “*Vejetaryen: Bir dönüşüm,*” *Edebiyathaber*).

These remarks demonstrate that reception theory offers a powerful lens for literary analysis.

⁴ A reference to the military coup in Türkiye 12 Sept. 1980, resulting in extensive arrests, torture, and attacks on politicians.

The reviewers' collective memory of political oppression significantly influences the reception of Korean literature in Türkiye. Readers recognize familiar themes—such as authoritarianism and collective trauma—that mirror their own socio-political history. This convergence supports Hans Robert Jauss's concept of the "horizon of expectations," wherein the audience interprets new texts based on culturally and historically shaped anticipations. South Korea experienced a period of military dictatorship rooted in ideological conflict, social polarization, weak civilian governance, economic instability, and the military's aspiration to assert control over national politics and security. In 1961, Park Chung-hee orchestrated a military coup, initiating an era of authoritarian rule that continued until his assassination in 1979 (Kim 1993: 33–95). South Korean literature frequently addresses the traumas of this period, engaging with themes of resistance, political oppression, and the struggle for personal and collective freedom.

In 1980, Türkiye likewise underwent a military dictatorship, triggered by domestic political unrest, the breakdown of the party system, escalating violence, a collapse of political authority, and hyperinflation (Özçelik 2011: 73–93). During this time, thousands were arrested, tortured, or executed, the profound repercussions of which are powerfully reflected in Turkish literature. The parallels identified in the literary output of both nations are significant, as they illuminate shared human experiences that transcend national and cultural boundaries. As discussed earlier, Hans Robert Jauss's theory of reception emphasizes the role of the 'horizon of expectations'—the culturally and historically shaped framework through which readers engage with texts. When readers from diverse backgrounds recognize common motifs—such as trauma, resistance, and social injustice—in literature, it not only fosters intercultural empathy but also underscores the universal dimensions of human experience. In this way, reception becomes a bridge that enables meaningful cross-cultural dialogue and understanding.

5. Conclusion

Over the past century, Korean literature has steadily expanded its global presence through concerted translation efforts. Early milestones include the French translation of *Chunhyangjeon* (춘향전) by Hong Tjyong-ou and J. H. Rosny in 1892, and the English translation of *The Cloud Dream of the Nine* (구운몽) by James S. Gale in 1922. In more recent decades, institutional initiatives - particularly the establishment of the Literature

Translation Institute of Korea (LTI Korea) in 2001 - have played a pivotal role in accelerating the internationalization of Korean literary production (Park, Choi, and Jeong 2006: 3). These strategic mechanisms, aligned with increasing global interest, have significantly enhanced the visibility and marketability of Korean authors worldwide. In the Turkish context, this global momentum has indirectly encouraged local publishers to engage with Korean literary texts. This study pursues two primary objectives: first, to present a comprehensive and updated bibliography of Korean literary works translated into Turkish between 2010 and 2025; and second, to conduct a critical media analysis of the evolving reception of these works within Turkish literary discourse.

Our findings suggest that Turkish reviewers frequently interpret Korean narratives through the lens of their own socio-political realities, identifying resonances in themes such as authoritarianism, family dynamics, and collective resilience. Furthermore, there is growing recognition of the translators' contributions, particularly in their ability to preserve narrative coherence and convey cultural nuance. Despite these advances, notable challenges remain—especially the limited translation of classical Korean literature and the underrepresentation of diverse literary genres. Addressing these gaps will require sustained institutional investment, strategic translation initiatives, and robust academic exchange to deepen literary interactions between Korea and Türkiye. The global acclaim of contemporary authors such as Han Kang—whose receipt of the Man Booker International Prize marked a watershed moment for Korean literature—has established a critical precedent for international recognition. Continued accolades and attention from prestigious literary institutions, including the Nobel Prize, have reinforced Korean literature's stature within global circuits. As Korean literary works gain greater circulation and readership in Türkiye, the potential for cross-cultural dialogue and mutual literary enrichment remains both significant and promising.

Funding

This work was supported by Hankuk University of Foreign Studies Research Fund (2025).

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Appendix 1

List of Turkish Newspapers and Publishers with online links

<i>Artfulliving</i> ,	[www.artfulliving.com.tr]
<i>Cumhuriyet [The Republic]</i>	[www.cumhuriyet.com.tr].
<i>Edebiyat Haber [Literary News]</i>	[www.edebiyathaber.net].
<i>Gazete Duvar, [The Wall Newspaper]</i>	[www.gazeteduvar.com.tr].
<i>Hürriyet [Freedom]</i>	[www.hurriyet.com.tr].
<i>KayıpRıhtım, [The Lost Dock]</i>	[www.kayiprihtim.com].
<i>Milliyet [The Nation],</i>	[www.milliyet.com.tr].
<i>Posta [The Mail]</i>	[www.posta.com

Appendix 2

Authors and Books of Korean Literature published in Türkiye since 1993.

	English	Title		Genre	Writer	Year	Publisher	Translator
		Korean	Turkish					
1	The Prophet (French to Turkish)	예언자 (1977)	Kahin	Novel	Yi Chong-jun	1993	İletişim	Sevgi Tamgüç
2	Korean Short Stories	한국 대표 단편선	Kore Öyküleri	Novel	Park Bum-shin	2001	İletişim	Nan A Lee
3	Io Island	이어도 (1976)	İo Adası	Novel	Yi Chong-jun	2004	Everest	Nan A Lee
4	Mujong (The Heartless)	무정 (1917)	Merhametsiz Yaşam	Novel	Yi Kwang-su	2004	Agora	Yeşim Ferendeci, Soung Ju Kim
5	Azaleas: A Book of Poems	진달래꽃 (1925)	Açelya Çiçeği	Poetry	Kim Sowol	2005	Agora	Hatice Koroğlu
6	Our Twisted Hero	우리들의 일그러진	Değişen Kahramanımız	Novel	Yi Mun-yol	2006	İmge	Göksel Türközü, Yeşim

		영웅 (1987)						Ferendeci
7	I Have the Right to Destroy Myself	나는 나를 파괴할 권리가 있다 (1996)	Kendimi Yıkma Hakkım Var	Novel	Kim Young-ha	2007	Agora	Nan A Lee
8	Return to Heaven	귀천 (2001)	Göğe Dönüş	Poetry	Cheon Sang- byeong	2008	Özgür	Nan A Lee Fahrettin Arslan
9	Neighbors in Wonmi-dong	원미동 사람들 (1987)	Uzak ve Güzel Mahalle	Novel	Yang Gui- ja	2010	Delta	Göksel Türközü
10	Maninbo	만인보 (1986)	On Bin Can	Poetry	Ko Un	2011	Ürün	Eun Kyung Oh
11	The Poet	시인 (1991)	Şair	Novel	Yi Mun- yol	2011	Delta	Nan A Lee
12	Please Look After Mom (English to Turkish)	엄마를 부탁해 (2008)	Lütfen Anneme İyi Bak	Novel	Shin Kyung- sook	2011	Doğan	Belgin Selan, Haktanır Us
13	The Muslim Butcher	이슬람 정육점 (2010)	Başka Topraklarda Rüzgar Sert Eser	Novel	Son Hong- kyu	2013	Martı	Göksel Türközü
14	The Story of a Salmon	연어 (1996)	Gümüş Somon'un Büyük Yolculuğu	Novel	Ahn Do- hyun	2016	Doğan Egmont	Göksel Türközü
15	The Vegetarian	채식주의자 (2007)	Vejetaryen	Novel	Han Kang	2017	April Yayıncılık	Göksel Türközü
16	Korean Stories	한국문 학단 편집	Kore Öyküleri	Novel	Hyun Jin- geon	2017	Yitik Ülke	Hatice Koroğlu Türközü
17	With a Burning Thirst	타는 목마름으로 (1982)	Yakıcı Susuzlukla	Poetry	Kim Chi- ha	2017	Ürün	Eun Kyung Oh
18	Princess Bari	바리 데기 (2007)	Prinses Bari	Novel	Hwang Sok-yong	2017	Doğan Kitap	Göksel Türközü
19	A Familiar Life	낯익은 세상 (2017)	Tanıdık Şeyler	Novel	Hwang Sok-yong	2018	Doğan Kitap	Göksel Türközü

20	Our Happy Time (English to Turkish)	우리들의 행복한 시간 (2005)	Mutlu Günlerimiz	Novel	Gong Ji- young	2018	Mona Kitap	Mahinur Zehra Karahan
21	Sky, Wind, Star, and Poem	하늘과 바람과 별과 시 (1948)	Gökyüzü, Rüzgar, Yıldızlar ve Şiir	Poetry	Yun Dong- ju	2018	Dedalus Kitap	Mehmet Sait Şener
22	City of Ash and Red	재와 빨강 (2010)	Küller ve Kızıl	Novel	Pyun Hye- young	2019	Doğan Kitap	Tayfun Kartav
23	The Plotters	설계자들 (2010)	Komplocular	Novel	Kim Un-su	2019	Doğan Kitap	Göksel Türközü
24	Mannequin	마네킹 (2003)	Manken	Novel	Ch'oe Yun	2019	Çınar Yayınları	Burcu Uluçay
25	Human Acts	소년이 온다 (2014)	Çocuk Geliyor	Novel	Han Kang	2019	April Yayıncılık	Göksel Türközü
26	Wonder Boy	원더보이 (2012)	Mucize Çocuk	Novel	Kim Yeon- su	2020	Doğan Kitap	Göksel Türközü
27	Almond	아몬드 (2017)	Badem	Novel	Sohn Won- pyung	2021	Peta Kitap	Tayfun Kartav
28	The White Book	흰 (2016)	Beyaz Kitap	Novel	Han Kang	2021	April Yayıncılık	Göksel Türközü
29	Good Son	종의 기원 (2016)	İyi Evlat	Novel	Jeong Yu- jeong	2021	Doğan Kitap	Göksel Türközü
30	A Murderer's Guide to Memorization	살인자의 기억법 (2013)	Bir Katilin Güncesi	Novel	Kim Young-ha	2021	Timaş	Açelya Yavuz, Özlem Gökçe
31	Peace Under Heaven	천하태평춘 (1940)	Gökyüzü Altındaki Huzur	Novel	Chae Man- sik	2021	Sms Yayınları	Ezgi Cengizer
32	Kim Ji-young, Born 1982	82 년생 김지영 (2016)	Kim Jiyeong, Doğum: 1982	Novel	Cho Nam- ju	2021	A7 Kitap	Betül Tınkılıç
33	The hole	홀 (2014)	Çukur	Novel	Pyun Hye- young	2021	Doğan Kitap	Tayfun Kartav
34	Wizard Bakery	위저드 베이커리 (2011)	Büyülü Fırın	Novel	Gu Byeong- mo	2021	Lotus Yayınları	Tayfun Kartav

35	Whale	고래 (2004)	Balina	Novel	Cheon Myeong-kwan	2021	Lotus Yayınevi	Tayfun Kartav
36	Who Ate Up All the Shinga?	그 많던 싱아는 누가 다 먹었을까? (1992)	Bunca Şingayı Kim Yedi	Novel	Park Wansuh	2022	Fihrist Kitap	N. Sezen Güler
37	The Boy Who Escaped Paradise	천국의 소년 (2013)	Cennetten Kaçan Çocuk	Novel	Lee Jung-myung	2022	Doğan Kitap	Göksel Türközü
38	At Least We Can Apologize	사과는 잘해요 (2009)	Özür Dileriz	Novel	Lee Ki-ho	2022	Othello Kitap	Mehmet Ölçer
39	DollarGut Dream Store 1	달러구트 꿈 백화점 (2020)	Rüya Dükkânı 1	Novel	Lee Mi-ye	2022	Peta Kitap	Tayfun Kartav
40	Landscape of Women		Kadın Manzaraları	Novel	Kang Kyung-ae	2022	Fihrist Kitap	N. Sezen Güler
41	Seven Years of Darkness	7 년의 밤 (2011)	Yedi Yıllık Karanlık	Novel	Jeong Yu-jeong	2022	Doğan Kitap	Derya Çelik
42	The Joys and Sorrows of Work	일의 기쁨과 슬픔 (2019)	Çalışmanın Hüznü ve Neşesi	Novel	Jang Ryu-jin	2022	Lotus Yayınevi	Sevda Kul
43	DollarGut Dream Store 2	달러구트 꿈 백화점 2 (2021)	Rüya Dükkânı 2	Novel	Lee Mi-ye	2022	Peta Kitap	Tayfun Kartav
44	Potatoes	감자 외 (1925)	Patates ve Diğer Öyküler	Novel	Kim Dong-in	2022	Fihrist Kitap	Şahika Uçurum
45	Evergreen	상록수 (1936)	Her Dem Yeşil	Novel	Sim Hun	2022	Fihrist Kitap	Bahar Özkaya
46	The Tale of Shim Chung	심청전	Hayırlı Evlat - Şimçong Efsanesi	Novel	Jia Jeong	2022	Lotus Yayınevi	Nihan Karakuş armancı
47	Cursed Bunny	저주 토끼 (2017)	Lanetli Tavşan	Novel	Bora Chung	2023	İthaki Yayınları	Sevda Kul
48	My Innocent Uncle	치숙 (1938)	Benim Saf Amcam	Novel	Chae Man-sik	2023	Fihrist Kitap	Şahika Uçurum

49	The Story of Hong Gildong	홍길동 전	Hong Gildong'un Hikayesi	Novel	Heo Gyun	2023	April Yayıncılık	Hatice Koroğlu, Türközü, Mehmet Ölçer
50	Concerning My Daughter	딸에 대하여 (2017)	Kızım Hakkında Her Şey	Novel	Kim Hye-jin	2023	İthaki Yayınları	Sevda Kul
51	The Private life of Plants	식물들의 사생활 (2000)	Bitkilerin Özel Hayatı	Novel	Lee Seoung-u	2023	Doğan Kitap	Tayfun Kartav
52	Farewell	작별인사 (2022)	Veda	Novel	Kim Young-ha	2023	Timaş Yayınları	Betül Tinkılıç
53	A Human Court	인간의 법정 (2021)	İnsan Mahkemesi	Novel	Cho Kwang-Hee	2023	Saltokur	Betül Tinkılıç
54	Seven Cat Eyes	일곱 개의 고양이 눈 (2011)	7 Kedi Gözü	Novel	Choi Jae-hoon	2023	Lotus Yayınevi	Tayfun Kartav
55	Welcome to the Hyunam-Dong Bookshop	어서 오세요, 휴남동 서점입니다 (2022)	Hyunam-Dong Kitabevi	Novel	Hwang Bo-reum	2024	Athica Yayınları	Nilay Özser
56	Silver Stallion	은마는 오지 않는다 (1989)	Gümüş Aygır Kore'nin Hikayesi	Novel	Ahn Jung-hyo	2024	Yordam Kitap	Tayfun Kartav
57	The Investigation	별을 스치는 바람 (2012)	Yıldızlara Değen Rüzgar	Novel	Lee Jung-myung	2024	Doğan Kitap	Göksel Türközü
58	Korean Teachers	코리안 티처 (2020)	Korece Öğretmeni	Novel	Seo Su-Jin	2024	Lotus Yayınevi	Eda Ulu
59	Marigold Mind Laundry	메리골드 마음 세탁소 (2023)	Marigold Kalp Çamaşırhanesi	Novel	Yun Jungeun	2024	Olimpos Yayınları	Sevda Kul
60	I Do Not Bid Farewell	작별하지 않는다 (2021)	Veda Etmiyorum	Novel	Han Kang	2024	April Yayıncılık	Göksel Türközü

61	The Cloud Dream of the Nine	구운몽 (1687)	Dokuz Bulut Rüyası	Novel	Kim Man-jung	2024	Olvida Kitap	Mehmet Ölçer
62	Uncanny Convenience Store	불편한 편의점 (2021)	Rahatsız Market	Novel	Kim Ho-yeon	2024	Saltokur	Betül Tinkılıç
63	Marigold Mind Photo Studio	메리골드 마음 사진관 (2024)	Marigold Kalp Fotoğrafçısı	Novel	Yun Jung-eun	2024	Olimpos Yayınları	Nilay Özser
64	At Dusk	해질무렵 (2015)	Günbatımında	Novel	Hwang Sok-yong	2024	Doğan Kitap	Göksel Türközü
65	Walking Practice	보행 연습 (2022)	Yürüyüş Pratiği	Novel	Dolki Min	2024	Ayrıntı Yayınları	Tayfun Kartav
66	Your Cold Hands	그대의 차가운 손 (2002)	Sevgilinin Soğuk Elleri	Novel	Han Kang	2025	April Yayıncılık	Göksel Türközü