

IRENE LUSTRISSIMI

Postdoc Fellow,
Università per Stranieri di Siena

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Dedicated scholar in Korean Studies with a strong background in Korean literature, Korean Media Studies and Society, specializing in the analysis of webnovels, webtoons, and contemporary digital storytelling. Proven expertise in conducting interdisciplinary research, publishing in peer-reviewed journals, and presenting at international academic conferences. Skilled educator with experience designing and teaching courses in Korean literature and media. Adept at securing research funding and fostering intellectual dialogue to advance innovative scholarship.

WORK HISTORY

University for
Foreigners of Siena
2025-ongoing

Research Contract (Postdoctoral Researcher)

The research project investigates the use of Korean web novels (web sosŏl) as innovative tools in teaching Korean as a foreign language. Despite their growing popularity, web sosŏl remain underexplored in educational contexts. Their accessible yet culturally rich content offers intermediate to advanced learners (B1/B2) an effective means to develop linguistic and intercultural competencies through exposure to authentic language use and pragmatic nuances.

Sapienza University
2021-2024

T.A. CIVIS-KF Korean Studies E-School Consortium

Provided administrative and academic support for the CIVIS-KF Korean Studies E-School Consortium, an initiative funded by the Korea Foundation and CIVIS European University Alliance. Responsibilities included coordinating online courses, managing exams, assisting with student mobility programs, and facilitating communication between students, faculty, and partner institutions. Ensured smooth course delivery by organizing schedules, providing technical support, and addressing student inquiries.

Sapienza University
2021

Contract Lecturer in Korean Literature (M.A. Course)

Taught modern Korean literature at Sapienza University of Rome, focusing on key authors, literary movements, and the socio-political contexts shaping 20th and 21st-century works. Developed syllabi, delivered lectures, and guided students in critical analysis of Korean literary traditions.

EDUCATION

Sapienza University
2021-2025

PhD in Korean Literature and Culture

Conducting advanced research on Korean literature, with a focus on contemporary narratives, webnovels, and their cultural and social impact. Engaged in interdisciplinary methodologies to analyze the evolution of Korean literary forms. Actively participating in academic conferences, publishing in peer-reviewed journals, and contributing to the advancement of Korean Studies through teaching and mentoring activities.

Thesis Title: *Digital Literature in South Korea. A new narrative paradigm.*

National Institute of
Korean Language
(국립국어원)
2022

2022 Training for Foreign Researchers of Korean Language (2022 국외 한국어 연구자 배움이음터)

An intensive professional development program organized by the National Institute of Korean Language and held at Busan University of Foreign Studies. Designed for foreign educators and researchers of Korean language and culture, the program aimed to strengthen participants' pedagogical and academic skills, promote collaboration among international scholars, and introduce official Korean language education policies and resources. During my participation, I conducted research on the use of webtoons as a pedagogical tool to introduce students to professional contexts. This led to my brief research paper, **웹툰을 활용한 한국 문화 교육 방안** (*Strategies for Teaching Korean Culture through Webtoons*), which examines how digital can support language learning and cultural engagement.

Niccolò Cusano
University
2020-2021

Master's Degree in Journalism and Digital Medias - Journalism 3.0

Digital journalism, multimedia storytelling, and online content creation. Developed expertise in journalistic ethics, digital platforms, and social media strategies.

Thesis Title: *Stampa, giornalismo, mass media: trasmissione di notizie in e dalla Corea del Nord.* (Press, Journalism, and Mass Media: The Transmission of News in and from North Korea.)

Sapienza University
2016-2020

Master's Degree in Asian Languages and Cultures

Focused on advanced Korean language proficiency, modern and classical literature, history, and sociocultural studies.

Thesis Title: *Lettura semiotica degli incontri geopolitici in Asia orientale?* (A Semiotic Reading of Geopolitical Encounters in East Asia?)

Sapienza University
2012-2016

Bachelor Degree in Asian Studies

Focused on Korean language, culture, and history, with an emphasis on modern and classical literature, society, and linguistic studies.

Thesis Title: *Principe Sado, cospiratore o squilibrato.* (Prince Sado: Conspirator or Madman?)

PUBLICATIONS

- Lustrissimi, Irene. 2023. “From Webnovel to K-Drama through the OSMU Strategy: The Case of Touch Your Heart.” In *K-Drama Impacts and Beyond in Italy*, edited by Valerio D’Angiolino, 63–80. Rome: Aracne Hangukhak Charyo.
- Lustrissimi, Irene. 2024. “The International Readers’ Reception of the Rop’an: The Villainess as the New Hero.” In *Passato, presente e digitale. Nuove prospettive e idee sugli studi coreani: storia, lingua e cultura*, edited by Imsuk Jung and Kukjin Kim, 147–164. Pisa: Pacini Editore.
- Lustrissimi, Irene. 2025. “La ricezione internazionale delle Web Sosöl.” In *Percorsi in Civiltà dell’Asia e dell’Africa IV. Quaderni di studi dottorali alla Sapienza*, edited by Mario Casari, 215–232. Rome: Sapienza Editore.
- Lustrissimi, Irene. [Forthcoming] 2026. *Title Pending*, edited by Antonetta L. Bruno, Somin Chung and Irene Lustrissimi. Rome: Asino d'Oro Edizioni.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Translation and Interpretation Experience

- Since 2024: Translator from Korean to Italian. Translated works include:
 - *Cosa c’è che non va con la segretaria Kim? Vol. 5, Renoir Comics, Gaijin, 2024.*
 - *Cosa c’è che non va con la segretaria Kim? Vol. 6, Renoir Comics, Gaijin, 2025.*
 - *Annarasumanara [ongoing], Renoir Comics, Gaijin, 2025.*
 - *A Good day to be a dog [ongoing], Renoir Comics, Gaijin, 2025.*
 - *The Great [ongoing], Renoir Comics, Gaijin, 2025.*
 - *Theater play 얼음 (Ice), producer Gianluca Ramazzotti, 2024.*
- 14 January 2025: Interpreter for La Repubblica’s interview with author Kim Ho-Yeon, organized by Salani Editore for the release of his new book *A Jeju Nasce il Vento*.
- 29 October-3 November 2024: Interpreter and translator for webtoon author Kim Myeong Mi at the Lucca Comics and Games Festival, Renoir Gaijin Publishing House, Milan, Italy.
- 6-19 October 2019: Interpreter and translator for Triangle Production during the production of an advertisement for Olitalia S.r.l., Paris, France.
- 14-16 March 2018: Interpreter and translator for Triangle Production during the production of an advertisement for FaceD products, Paris, France.
- 14-16 February 2018: Coordinator and translator for KBS (Korean Broadcasting System), assisting in the production of a documentary on the Chinese community in Prato, Italy.

Writing and Editorial Contributions

- 2018: Authored articles in Korean for the column ‘이탈리아인의 눈으로 본’ in the magazine of the Korean Cultural Institute of Rome.

Research Project

- 2024-ongoing: an interdisciplinary research project, funded under the “Progetti Medi Sapienza” scheme and set to run over a period of 36 months, investigates the emotional engagement of Italian audiences with K-dramas. The project explores how these narratives align with the psychosocial inclinations and emotional experiences of viewers in Italy. Combining methods from cultural sociology, semiotics, audience studies, and anthropology, the research team – composed of Prof. Isabella Pezzini, Prof. Francesco D’Amato, and researcher Bianca Terracciano – aims to contribute both to Hallyu studies and to the broader theorization of emotion in transnational media flows.

Conferences, Lectures, and Panels

- January 2021: Co-organizer and tutor for the internship *Percezione della Corea del Nord attraverso i media* (Perception of North Korea through the Media), Sapienza University of Rome.
Paper Title: *Lettura semiotica degli incontri geopolitici nei media* (A Semiotic Reading of Geopolitical Encounters in the Media).
- November–December 2021: Panelist in the seminar series *Ciclo di seminari di semiotica della cultura – Centenario della nascita di Jurij Lotman* (Cycle of Seminars on the Semiotics of Culture - The Centenary of the Birth of Jurij Lotman), Sapienza University of Rome.
Paper Title: *Il nuovo portale della K-digital Lit: il webtoon* (The New Portal of K-Digital Literature: The Webtoon).
- April 20–21, 2022: Co-organizer and speaker at the conference *Squid Game and the Key Factors of Hallyu: Dissecting the Socio-Cultural Impact of K-Dramas in Italy*, Sapienza University of Rome.
Paper Title: *From Webnovel to K-Drama: how the OSMU phenomena influence the storytelling*.
- November 28, 2022: Panelist at the 2nd Korean Studies Young Scholars Workshop, University of Naples.
Paper Title: *Korean New Digital Literature: the Web Sosöl*.
- March 9, 2023: Delivered a special lecture at Ca' Foscari University of Venice.
Lecture Title: *Le Web Sosöl: la nuova letteratura popolare sudcoreana* (The Web Sosöl: The New Popular Literature of South Korea).
- May 29– June 2, 2023: Panelist at the CIVIS-KF E-School Consortium Summer School for European Korean Studies, University of Bucharest, Romania.
Paper Title: *The 'rop'an': the evolution of romance in the Web Sosöl*.
- December 12, 2023: Panelist at the 3rd Korean Studies Young Scholars Workshop, University of Siena.
Paper Title: *Fantasy Web Sosöl: the Villainess is the new hero*.
- February 19–24, 2024: Member of the organizing committee for the Intensive Academic Seminar of Korean Young Scholars (IAS), sponsored by AKS.
Paper Title: *Web Sosöl, an International Reader's perspective*.
- June 26–28, 2024: Panelist at the 16th Annual Conference of the International Society of Korean Applied Linguistics (Madrid), organized by Complutense University of Madrid, Gachon University, and the International Society of Korean Applied Linguistics.
Paper Title: *이탈리아에서의 한국학 연구: 추세 및 기회* (Exploring Korean Studies in Italy: Trends and Opportunities)
- May 15–17, 2025 [forthcoming]: symposium on K-Soft Power, University of Siena.
Paper Title: *La globalizzazione di Web Novel e Webtoon: il caso 'Solo Leveling'* (The Globalization of Web Novels and Webtoons: The Case of Solo Leveling).
- June 8–11, 2025 [forthcoming]: Panelist at the international conference *K-popology: Music, Video, Choreo, Fandom*, held by the Uppsala University.
Paper Title: *Exploring K-Pop Representations in Contemporary Young Adult Fiction*.
- June 25–27, 2025 [forthcoming]: Panelist at the 17th Annual Conference of the International Society of Korean Applied Linguistics 2025 (Türkiye).
Paper Title: *이탈리아에서의 한국문학 연구 현황* (Current Research on Korean Literature in Italy).

Other Roles

- May 2021: Judge for the *Concorso di Recensioni sulla Letteratura Coreana* (Reviews on Korean Literature) organized by the Korean Cultural Institute of Rome.
- October 2021: Judge for the “Io e la Corea” (“Me and Korea”) competition organized by the Korean Cultural Institute of Rome.