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Facts About Radio Korea

By

Han Hee-Joo
Good morning, ladies and gentlemen! My name is HAN HEE-JOO and I am from Radio Korea, KBS in Seoul, Korea. It is my great pleasure to be here with you today. What makes me even more delighted is that I am now able to renew the acquaintances with a number of conference participants whom I know through previous contacts. And, of course, I greatly anticipate forming new friendships and acquaintances with people from various radio stations and scholars. Let me now also express my thanks to Ms. Bitterman and AMIC staffs for arranging this opportunity for us to exchange such a wide range of useful information related to our radio profession. Indeed, this conference falls at a time when my organization, Radio Korea very much hopes to gather broadcasting information for its future development plans. We are especially interested in information regarding technical improvement and listeners' audience research, areas which will be of particular importance when Radio Korea begins updating its present system and operations in the near future.

Now, in my presentation, I will try to elaborate on facts about Radio Korea, according to the list of the questions provided to all of us beforehand.
PART I: BASIC INFORMATION (FACTS AND FIGURES)

1. Our history and how it has changed.

The age of broadcasting dawned in Korea on October 30th, 1926 when KBS aired the country's first radio transmission. KBS began operations as a state-run enterprise on August 15th, 1948. With the promulgation of the Korean Broadcasting System Law on March 1st, 1973, KBS became a public corporation. Presently, there are 24 local stations across the country hooked to the key station in Seoul. KBS broadcast services reach all parts of the country via 647 transmitting and relay stations, thus forming Korea's largest media network.

And under this big umbrella of the Korean Broadcasting System, Radio Korea exists as its International Service, broadcasting in 12 languages including Korean.

As a matter of fact, it was on August 15th, 1953 when KBS began its first foreign language service in English. At that time, the target audience was the foreign community in Korea. Named the Voice of Free Korea, the English Service was broadcast only on medium wave for 15 minutes daily. The station name Voice of Free Korea was changed to its present one, Radio Korea, when KBS was converted into a corporation in the Spring of 1973. I am happy to say that Radio Korea marked the 33rd anniversary of its inauguration last August 15th...just two weeks ago!
The Japanese Service began operations on December 1st, 1955 becoming the second language broadcast of our station. The Korean Service was added on September 2nd, 1957 for the benefit of Korean residents living abroad. French Service began on April 10th, 1958. The Russian Service was later inaugurated on February 13th, 1961. On August 10th of the same year, the Chinese Service was added to the list of language broadcasts, thus enabling the Voice of Free Korea to operate in a full-fledged manner. On August 19th, 1962, the Spanish Service began broadcasts to the Spanish-speaking countries in Europe and Central & South America. With the changing of its name in 1973, Radio Korea also committed itself to further growth in many ways. Also, by that time, the number of listeners increased notably around the world in line with our increase in language services. And yet, more language services were added to the list. On June 2nd, 1975, broadcasts in Indonesian began. The Arabic Service was started on September 10th of the same year. On May 1st, 1981, programs in German were first transmitted. The service in Portuguese went on the air for the first time on June 1st, 1983. On the very same day, a 30-minute News Service, consisting of 15 minutes of news both in Korean and English, was first broadcast on different frequencies. On June 1st, 1985, the Italian Service became Radio Korea's 12th and the latest language broadcast service. That's a very cursive rundown of the changes and growth that have occurred at Radio Korea in the last 33 years.
2. The mission, purpose or aim of our broadcasting.

First of all, Radio Korea strives to promote goodwill and understanding of Korea and things Korean among world listeners through its varied programs. Indeed, familiarizing our listeners with Korea and things Korean is an imperative of our broadcasts, as Radio Korea serves as an official mouthpiece of the nation. Along with such a committed goal, we have striven to provide accurate and impartial news of the events and happenings taking place in Korea and elsewhere involving Korean matters and other important international issues. Further, Radio Korea tries to introduce to the world Korea's creative development efforts in the fields of culture, science, sports, tourism and much more. A wide range of programs covering various aspects of Korea's economic, social and political affairs are also broadcast on Radio Korea.

3. In what languages we are currently broadcasting, to what countries do we target our broadcasts and how are these decisions made and for what reasons?

Earlier I mentioned the 12 language broadcasts presently transmitted by Radio Korea. They are: Korean, English, Japanese, French, Russian, Chinese, Spanish, Indonesian, Arabic, German, Portuguese and Italian. Each of these language services are targeted to the pertinent countries and regions. Radio Korea is now reaching the world at large including the Middleeast, Africa, North & South America, Southeast Asia, the Far East and Europe. However, reception conditions of our broadcasts vary from excellent to poor depending on world region.
Now, how have we decided on certain language services and why so?

Radio Korea's selection of a language service involves many considerations. a. The size of the population speaking the language. b. The acceptance of the language as an established international language. c. The potential for sufficient listeners' feedback from the pertinent areas, in connection with the radio listening habits of the people. d. The potential for significant contribution to the promotion of understanding and international goodwill between peoples of Korea and a particular country or region. e. And finally, we must consider the availability of competent personal, both Korean and native speakers, in the particular language.

In fact, it is Radio Korea's policy to employ Koreans who speak the language as permanent regular staffers and then, employ a native speaker through other channels. For example, several of our foreign colleagues serving various language services have been recruited from international radio stations in China, Indonesia, Spain, the United States, West Germany, Egypt and etc.

4. How many total hours do we broadcast and how many hours do we transmit to each target country or region?

Operating on some 20 frequencies, Radio Korea transmits 125 hours and 45 minutes of broadcasts daily in all 12 languages.
The length of language transmission varies: The Korean Service broadcasts two hours daily, the Japanese Service, two and a half hours, the English Service, one hour, the Italian Service 30 minutes and the other language services for 45 minutes each. Each language transmission runs a number of times a day according to the time schedule targeted for different beaming areas. For example, my own English Service is repeated nine times a day (GMT: 0200 hrs, 0400 hrs, 0600 hrs, 1100 hrs, 1400 hrs, 1600 hrs, 1800 hrs, 2030 hrs and 2400 hrs).

English broadcasts are beamed to Europe, North America, the Middle east & Africa and Southeast Asia. And also, there are non-directional transmissions called "General Service" broadcasts. (Europe: 0400 hrs 13.670 mHZ and 15.575 mHZ, 1600 hrs 9.870 mHZ, 1800 hrs 15.575 mHZ, 2030 hrs 15.575 mHZ)

(America: 0600 hrs 9.570 mHZ, 15.395 mHZ, 1400 hrs 9.750 mHZ, 15.575 mHZ, 2400 hrs 15.575 mHZ)

(Middle East 1100 hrs 15.575 mHZ, & 2030 hrs 6.480 mHZ, 7.550 mHZ)

Africa

(Southeast Asia 1400 hrs 9.570 mHZ)

(General Service 0200 hrs 7.275 mHZ 0600 hrs 7.275 mHZ 1600 hrs 5.975 mHZ 1800 hrs 5.975 mHZ 2400 hrs 104.5 (Domestic F.M.)

A total of 13 different frequencies are used to broadcast our one-hour English program, with a full 19 hours of broadcasting a day.
In the case of our Spanish Service, it is repeated three times a day. The transmissions are targeted to Latin America, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. For more information, I suggest you refer to the program & frequency schedule of each language service attached.

5. What are the policies which guide our program content and development? How and by whom are the policies formulated?

Program production crew of our 12 language services try to incorporate the following guidelines in their work.

. Radio Korea strives to contribute to the promotion of freedom and peace everywhere and the enhancement of human being's integrity, values and welfare.

. Radio Korea provides an accurate and impartial news service, reporting for overseas audiences on the major policies of the Korean government and the official and unofficial reactions of Korea to international events.

. Radio Korea provides Koreans living overseas with such information and entertainment as are conducive to cultivating patriotic sentiment and a sense of national identity.

. Radio Korea notes that foreign media tend occasionally to be superficial in their coverage of news related to Korea. So the station Radio Korea strives to report facts as they really are, so that any misunderstanding which may arise as a result may be eliminated.
Radio Korea introduces to the world a wide-ranging aspects of Korean culture and customs both traditional and modern. And Radio Korea undertakes an effective and flexible broadcast service which is in line with international developments and national policies.

Now, then, there are basically two types of program production: 1. The fixed regular format 2. The special format. The special format programming is designed to cover exclusively certain events or issues carrying significant weight. One good example of special format broadcasting is our planned special programs during the 10th Asian Games which is scheduled from September 20th to October 5th in Seoul, the Capital of the Republic of Korea.

Decisions regarding the program format setting, both regular and special, are formulated in meetings of coordinators and section chiefs of each language service. Schedules and content of these programs are only determined following an extensive analysis of a subject or event. Then, the reporter or reporters in charge gather and assemble all relevant program material including the sound effect and etc. In many cases, such programs are prepared first in Korean, and then in English. After that, an English version of the script, along with sound material is provided to other language services as a mother script. Program suggestions are sometimes initiated by the management of Radio Korea including the Director and Manager.
But, generally speaking, program suggestions are determined only after first establishing a broad consensus among program producers in charge.

6. How we can categorize our programming.

As the length of transmission varies according to language, I would like to concentrate on the English language programs. The one hour daily broadcast begins with 15 minutes of news. The news is followed by 5 minutes of news commentary, our daily analysis of current affairs. This first 20 minutes of production is the job of our colleagues in the News Division. The remaining 40 minutes is consisted of a variety of feature programs according to the day of the week. Topics include a Korean language lesson which runs five days a week from Monday through Friday, and a number of different cultural, entertainment, music and education-oriented programs.

Now, seven hours of weekly air-time is apportioned to particular program categories by percentage.

Out of this 420 minutes, news takes up 105 minutes constituting 25 per cent. There are 30 minutes devoted to current affairs or 7.1 per cent and another 30 minutes or 7.1 per cent of total air-time is set aside for the educational program, "Let's Learn Korean". Music takes up some 45 minutes or 10.7 per cent of air-time including our 20-minute music exclusive program, plus at least 5 minutes of music portion daily interspersed on our five-edition-a-week "Seoul Calling" program.
Our entertainment program "Seoul Calling" is broadcast
15 minutes a day, five days a week for a week's total of 75
minutes or 17.8 per cent of total air-time. The remaining
135 minutes or 32.1 per cent of air-time is taken up by
cultural programs, broadly speaking. Programs falling under
this category of "cultural programs" include; "Sites & Sounds",
a sort of travelogue to the Republic's tourist attractions,
"Korean Cultural Variety" which touches on various aspects of
Korean culture and "Koreans Today", a bi-weekly feature high­
lighting the stories of Koreans in various walks of life and
their contributions to Korean society. This is indeed a pre­
sentation aimed at giving the listener a true picture of the
Korean spirit.

Next, the basic format of other language services is generally
similar to that of English. However, if and when deemed
necessary, the contents of the programs in any of the 12
language services can be altered reflecting the target audience's
interests and knowledge and with complete consideration of a
particular region's social and political backgrounds. For
instance, for those events taking place in Seoul participated
in by many foreign nationalities worthy of media coverage, it is
far more logical to cover such gatherings than to abide by
the fixed format routine. In this way, audiences in the different
target areas can be better catered, as Radio Korea meets the
different tastes and interests of the listeners in the world.
Sometimes, however, a particular language service simply
can not carry a certain program as it may be entirely opposed
to culture and morale in the target region.
For many years, we used to produce specials in line with
the festivities during the yuletide season. Our Arabic
Service colleagues always said that it is not proper for them
to make such programs as the people in the Islamic cultures
do not observe such occasion at all.

7. Regarding the language instruction program.

   Each of Radio Korea's language Services provides language
instruction as a regular program feature. There are usually
five minutes of such programming a day Monday through Friday.
As to whether we accompany our audio instruction with text
materials, this varies according to the language service.
The Japanese Service provides a written text to accompany
the program on the air. In the case of our English program,
the answer is no. Not yet. But, there have been constant
requests from listeners for such a text. So, beginning next
year, we will provide a written text for the listeners of our
Korean language lesson. Though the text is not yet available,
we in fact feel satisfied that our program has provided useful
instruction in the Korean language for interested listeners.
Here I have brought a letter from one of our American listeners
who also requests in his letter that we prepare written material
to accompany the program. I am sure once our team prepares this
text for our listeners, the program will be even more successful than it is now.

8. How is our organization structured?

Radio Korea itself is an International Department of KBS. Under our Director, we have two managers. The News Division Manager and the Feature Broadcasting Division Manager. Basically, there is a section chief in each of the services. And, among them, 5 people hold coordinator or assistant manager's positions, including myself. As a coordinator-assistant manager, I have not only managerial responsibilities but also must fulfill my basic role as a program producer. At present, a total of some 80 people are employed in Radio Korea's 12 different services. However, we have a number of part-time freelancers who assist in program production. In my English Service alone, we have 5 part-time staffers who work once or twice a week preparing programs.

Regarding overseas branches, as of today, Radio Korea does not have any office, branch or relay stations outside the country. And, I am afraid our future plan don't envisage such set-ups.

9. How is our broadcast organization financed?

As we are a part of the huge Korean Broadcasting System, our budget is allotted by the mother organization. KBS revenue sources are two-fold.
Annually, some 305 million U.S. dollars are received through the corporation's major revenue sources. They include the collection of color television license fees, generating some 127 million U.S. dollars per year, while advertising brings in 158 million dollars yearly.

Radio Korea, the International Department of KBS is allotted some 500,000 dollars a year for its operation. (This doesn't include the payments to all the regular Broadcast staffs and technicians)

10. Where are our transmitting facilities located?

As compared with other international stations of bigger size operation, Radio Korea does not have transmitters or relay stations built or leased overseas. Our transmitting stations are located only within the territory of the country. At present, we are using a total of 10 transmitters for our 12 language services. Power output ranges from 10 kw at Suwon station to 250 kw at Kimje station which is located some 275 km south of Seoul. In fact, we are heavily relying on the transmitters installed at the Kimje station for our international shortwave service. We are certainly well aware that we need to strengthen our power output, increase the number of transmitters and utilize appropriately the antenna angles as well. Based on the technical reports received from listeners, the reception of Radio Korea suffers a weak signal in many areas of the world. However, considering the rather
backward status of our technical facilities, this comes as no real surprise. Although we do not have any immediate plans to build relay stations overseas, Radio Korea is very much interested in learning more about the results of the agreements reached among a number of radio stations to lease or rent technical facilities with the purpose of improving reception conditions of their shortwave programs. I am sure the information will be extremely useful for our future reference.

11. Are we involved in any formal or informal collaborations or cooperative efforts with other nations? (in the areas of programming, audience research or technical development)

Perhaps surprisingly, there had been no collaboration whatsoever with foreign radio stations in the area of program production. Interestingly, earlier this year, we received requests from Deutsche Welle to join in a production with them. Since the realization of this suggestion involves a number of factors, primarily the appropriate manpower, we could not readily meet such a request at first. But, we have now decided to accept the offer. In the last part of October, Dr. Wolfgang Weise of D.W. will visit Seoul to produce the program with us on the subject of Korea's afforestation.

Meanwhile, in the areas of audience research and technical development, again, we have not experienced any contacts with stations overseas.
Therefore, I am eager to discuss the experiences of other radio stations in the area of cross national cooperation particularly as regards to programming and technical development.

By the way, I do think it is appropriate to mention that we maintain interesting links or cooperation with some stations including VOA, D.W., Spanish External Radio, Radio Japan, Radio Indonesia and Radio Liberty in Europe. I refer specifically to an internship program whereby our staff in each of the different language services spends three months at one of the previously mentioned stations. Over the past several years, Radio Korea has allocated enough of its budget to send at least one staff member of five of its language services to these stations, so as to help them be more acquainted with the work and atmosphere of the stations. When I left Seoul on Saturday, my colleagues who stayed at D.W. for three months for this purpose had just returned home. I am sure that such a policy serves as a broadening experience for my colleagues in the area of radio journalism. I, myself, also benefitted from this arrangement in the autumn of 1981 attached to the English Service of the Radio Nederland in Hilversum.
PART II: AUDIENCE RESEARCH

1. Do we have an audience research division in our organization? If so, what are its functions?

It is, in fact, somewhat awkward to give a precise answer to this question. Yes, certainly, we do conduct audience research work, but, we have no separate fully-established division. We have one person who holds the coordinator's position in our office. His responsibility is to coordinate and supervise most of the audience research-oriented activities being performed by each of the 12 language services. He is responsible for a wide variety of promotional materials such as QSL cards, stickers and pennants as well as the gathering of all statistics on listener reports on a monthly and annual basis. Then, with the exception of the Japanese Service (they receive 1300-1500 letters a month on the average), it is our basic principle that letters and listeners' feedback should be processed and handled properly by the staff member of each relevant language service. For example, our English Service receives some 350-400 letters a month. The work of necessary QSLing and other requested materials is done by ourselves, including those full-time staffers and free-lancers.

Now, let me explain how we process the letters. When letters arrive at our desk, the staffer in charge of
compiling monthly statistics (the total number of the letters and cases of reception by country, by frequency and by time of transmission) makes the appropriate registration of the letters on a chart. Then, the letters are passed to another staffer who issues a QSL card. Of course, the contents of the technical reports must well coincide with the presently operating time/frequency schedule. Otherwise, the person's report can not be verified with a confirmation card (QSL).

We produce two weekly listener-contact oriented programs: 25 minutes each: "From Us to You" on Saturdays and "Shortwave Feedback" on Sundays. I cohost the Sunday show with a British part-time staffer.

2. Do we conduct audience research? How frequently?
Do we maintain data on audience demographics?

Yes, we do conduct audience research. But, I am afraid that what we do in this context is quite limited to those listeners who serve as our official monitors. This year, we have 305 people in 66 countries as our official monitors. Our monitors send us regular reports and program comments expressing much enthusiasm regarding our station, Radio Korea. So, the staff of each section know well some vital statistics of these listeners including age, occupation, favorite programs and so on. Thanks to the long-running contacts between the listeners and the producers, we indeed maintain meaningful links with at least some of our audience. But, unfortunately,
full-fledged audience demographics have not been efficiently compiled by Radio Korea. Certainly, up-dating our methods of documentation is a big priority of Radio Korea's future expansion program.

3. Do we have information regarding audience listening patterns? (frequency, duration, most popular program, etc.)

First, regarding frequency, information is gathered from statistics and recorded every month by each of the language services. But, as regards to duration and popular programs, I don't have the scientific data to support me. At the risk of error, my impression gleaned from listeners' letters is that they tune to Radio Korea for news fresh from Korea. Their interest seems not in international news already heard on other international stations and their respective domestic networks. In addition, expressions of enthusiasm are particularly directed toward our music programs, cultural shows and mailbag programs.

4. What methods do we use to collect audience data?

We rely solely on spontaneous or solicited audience mail. As of yet, we don't have any experience in conducting field research in the target countries or as regards collaboration with other foreign broadcasters.
5. How are letters and telephone calls from listeners handled? Is such interaction encouraged on the air?

   Yes, very much so. We always encourage listeners to write to us. I have already explained the typical processing of the listeners' letters. Now, about the telephone calls. We don't have an around-the-clock phone-in machine for listeners. But, for anyone who gives us advance notice, the lines are open. And when a discussion is of particular interest or relevance, we utilize the recorded conversation for our programs.

6. Do we request information from listeners related to the quality of our broadcast signal?

   Yes, we certainly do. We are keen on acquiring as much information as possible about this matter. And fortunately, many listeners express a technical interest in Radio Korea transmissions. This interest is especially pronounced among our official monitors. It is a pity, however, that our Radio Korea technical facilities are not sufficient to accommodate all the necessary changes suggested by listeners. Certainly, we need more transmitters, more antennas, and most of all, the budgetary support to turn this wishful thinking into reality.

7. Are there organized "fan clubs" or listeners groups among our target audiences? Do we actively communicate with these groups?
Yes, there are. Many of our different language services have come to maintain links with a large number of self-created or self-organized listeners' groups. It seems that Italians, people in Spanish speaking countries and Germans tend to organize such groups as an expression of their support and interest in our station. Japanese listeners are also very active. Our Japanese language service has 5 clubs organized by enthusiastic listeners. In fact, many are eager to make personal contacts with the people working at Radio Korea and make personal visits to our station. We are always happy to communicate with these groups. When we are informed of the organization of a club or particular listeners' group, we respond with a letter or certificate acknowledging the organization. We also send a large sum of requested promotional materials. It's satisfying to know that our listenership is growing gradually.

8. What percentage of our budget is allocated for audience research-related activities?

Based on total KBS annual revenue of 305 million dollars, Radio Korea can expect an allotment of some 500,000 dollars a year. This sum excludes the payments being given to all the regular full-time staffers of language sections. Our salaries are coming from the different account of KBS.

Now, we Radio Korea, in turn, allocate some 61,460,000 Won which is equivalent to 70,000 U.S. dollars a year for audience research related activities. This includes the printing of QSL cards every month, brochures, station pennants, stickers.
and the purchase of many of the souvenirs or gifts sent to winners of a variety of Radio Korea activities such as monthly quiz, essay contest, Korean language contest and even singing competitions. Also included in that sum of 70,000 U.S. dollars is the telecommunication fees buying postage stamps and so on. So, all this constitutes some 14 per cent of our budget on an annual basis.

PART III: FUTURE PLANS

1. Are we planning expansion or reduction in the number of broadcast language, broadcast hours or transmitting facilities?

We don't have a plan to reduce the number of our broadcasts. Included in our long-term expansion plan is an increase in language services. Presently we have 12. They include the major European languages, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Russian, not to mention my English Service. So, it is necessary that we develop one or two Asian language services, according to the plan.

We give first priority to Hindu at the moment. Considering the size of the population speaking the language, it is important. Diplomatically speaking also, India is the leader of the non-aligned nations of the world and we surely hope to contribute to the promotion of goodwill and understanding with the people of India by serving the listeners there in sub-continent.
Presenting programs in Hindu for Indian listeners would be in line with our basic goal and objective: "To let our overseas listeners be better informed of Korea through Radio Korea broadcasts". As a matter of fact, the English Service receives many letters from India and we can deduce from this fact that a Hindu Service would enjoy active feedback from Indian listeners. Now, as regards the feasibility and practicality of organizing such a service in terms of recruitment of Hindu speaking Korean staff, I anticipate that when we carry out this plan sometime next year, we will have not much problem in employing 3-4 Korean Hindu speakers. In addition, Radio Korea hopes to recruit a capable announcer/producer directly from an Indian broadcasting organization. Probably, All India Radio could possibly extend appropriate assistance in this matter.

2. What is our long-range financial forecast?

As Radio Korea serves as a part of the big umbrella organization KBS, the long-range financial forecast is quite a stable one. We don't expect a sudden budget cut, though there is also no prospect of a drastic increase in our budget. I think we will be able to continue conducting broadcasting activities in a way that we have been used to. But, if we endeavour to strengthen our technical facilities for the purpose of reception condition improvement, the management of Radio
Korea should be prepared well to exert all its persuasive powers to secure the necessary budget from the Technical Planning Department of KBS. Frankly, I admit that compared with the role of domestic radio and TV, the role that we, in the International Radio Department or Radio Korea play has not been fully recognized within the nation as a whole. This has proved a stumbling block in our growth plans.

3. What do we see as the future role of shortwave broadcasting, given the increased use and availability of satellites and the growth of television as an international medium?

We are not exactly sure, in fact.

Personally, I believe due to the increased availability of satellites in many parts of the world, that there is going to be a shift from using shortwave to broadcast information to these other mediums. However, shortwave is obviously going to remain one of the first ways for any country to get its messages out. Obviously, the facilities that we are talking about for shortwave, though expensive in themselves, are nevertheless much more available to any country that is interested in putting its messages out to the world, relative to such extremely expensive technology as international earth satellites. When it comes to the present situation of Radio Korea, this notion of mine becomes even more true as we don't see the probability of using satellites for our shortwave programs in the foreseeable future. I only hope.. with improved equipment, reception will improve and then, there will be even greater interest in shortwave.

*** THE END ***
Radio Korea, the Overseas Service of KBS, is the voice of the Republic of Korea serving the vast world listening audience through its widely varied daily programmes in 12 different languages. Following is the time/frequency schedule of Radio Korea.

![Schedule Table]

**Effective May 19, 1986**

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