

5. The Formation of the European Languages Division in the DFLL at NTU and the Challenges for the Future

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A great deal of literature had been produced on the teaching methods of the second foreign languages (SFL), the European languages (EUL), the foreign languages and intercultural communicative competence (FL&IC), (Sercu, 2005), and about the syllabus related to these topics. But, as far as my observations are concerned, much less had been done about programs, general curriculums, organizational issues and the role they play in the interdisciplinary programs. Naturally, the kind of programs differs according to the nature and history of the institutions teaching foreign languages, every institution being a different case. To understand the case of the European Language (EUL) Division program of National Taiwan University (NTU) within the context of Taiwan, and by extension of other East Asia universities, I will start making first a short general presentation of the different conventional systems, and later I will introduce the long way in which the EUL program in NTU has evolved within these possible frameworks, portraying my own observations and reflections trying to reach a conclusion on which objectives must be achieved in the future.

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INSTITUTIONS TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES / EUL
IN TAIWAN

Going from general to particular, we can start mentioning as a frame of reference the comprehensive programs of the (1) universities of foreign languages in East Asia like those of Beijing Foreign Languages University, Shanghai International Studies University (SISU), Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, or Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. It seems that this formula was popular in the fifties and in the sixties of the last century, but hasn't been reproduced at present. Presumably, historical and political reasons might be behind the creation of these macro universities, with the idea for some countries to open a window to the world to facilitate the country reaching the status of an important player in world affairs. In Taiwan this formula never existed. To see something similar in the past and on a lower scale (i.e., a college teaching only languages) we have to take a look into Wenzao Ursuline School of Languages in Kaohsiung, but there is a big difference because it was organized as a vocational school, and when it was recently transformed into a university, it opened other departments besides languages.

Another more practical formula was the (2) colleges of foreign languages divided into departments of those languages usually considered mainstream, like Japanese, German, French and Spanish. At least in Taiwan this formula started during the sixties and the seventies, Tamkang University, Fujen University and later Providence University being the most representative. As far as European Languages is concerned, these colleges, when they have only a line for department, reach ideally a total of 2000 students with a different level of commitment. This pattern is shown in table 1:

Table 1: General model of student enrolment in a College of Foreign Languages in Taiwan

	German	French	Spanish	Others	TOTAL
Undergraduate students					
1st year	60	60	60	60	
2nd year	60	60	60	60	
3rd year	60	60	60	60	
4th year	60	60	60	60	
Total	240	240	240	240	960
Minor: (24 credits)					
1st year	60	60	60	60	
2nd year	30	30	30	30	
Total	90	90	90	90	360
Master students					
1st year	15	15	15	15	
2nd year	15	15	15	15	
Total	30	30	30	30	120
Courses for the entire university					
Level I (3/4 cred. / 2 sem.)	80	80	80	80	
Level II (3/4 cred. / 2 sem.)	60	60	60	60	
Total	140	140	140	140	560
Grand total of students					2000

Naturally, this distribution and figures vary in every case. For example, the “other” department of EUL in Fujen University is Italian, while in Tamkang University it is Russian. Providence University does not have a fourth department, but has two lines in some departments.

On the other hand it is worth mentioning that one university in Changhua (Central Taiwan) has created recently a (3) department of European languages, the only one that I

know in Taiwan, but at present, it works mainly like a Department of German with some French courses. The formula of integrating European Languages in a single department sounds attractive, but it is difficult to solve the problem on how to incorporate different languages in a particular student curriculum. In any case, as we will see later, that this type of department is supposedly the official formula in NTU for the development of its foreign languages courses. We must say that formulas like (4) schools of foreign languages, have also been mentioned. These schools will be a kind of institutions between a department and a college, but so far we don't know any of them in Taiwan. Institutions with the status of "school" in NTU, like the School of Dentistry, looks more like any other department, maybe bigger than the normal size.

The model that became more common in Taiwan during the last four or five decades especially in public universities had been the (5) SFL sections within departments of foreign languages and literatures (DFLL). These departments offer a conglomerate of languages which coexist under the hegemonic direction of English studies (especially English courses for Freshman students of the whole university, English and American Literature, Linguistics and Translation); and this is the present case of the DFLL of NTU. Since the fifties NTU has had a leading role in the definition of structure of these departments, as it was reproduced in other universities, public and private ones. The main reason for the existence of these EUL courses for the department that host them is to help English majors in language or literature to fulfil their SFL credits, 12 in the case of NTU, based on the understanding that they will enable them to open a window to other cultural or literary domains to complement their English studies. This supposedly beneficial role of a SFL for English/American literature students is so well accepted, that the rule is that if students come from another university to the graduate level of these departments without having fulfilled SFL credits, they will have to take it as early as possible. But in fact this is a

formality since almost all the master and PhD dissertations deal with English or American Literature. And if they deal with some non English writers that eventually attracted the attention in these programs, like—let’s say—García Márquez or Borges, they will be read through their English translations. In other words, the EUL courses have been administered as complementary ones to the mainstream ones. Recently this formula has been discontinued in some universities (like NCCU), and is challenged in other places, as is the case in NTU, after the recent growth of EUL students and teachers.

We must mention the formula of minors offered by different departments to students from other departments that fulfil a reasonable number credits, 20 to 30 (see the table below). The formula is also attractive because the student is allowed to stay one year more in the university without additional economic burden. Nevertheless, as far as the EUL is concerned, the formula only works in the abovementioned colleges of foreign languages not in the departments of foreign languages and literatures (DFLL), because the minor offered is English language and literature, and there is nothing specific for EUL.¹

Table 2. Number of required credits for the fulfilment of Language Minors

	Tamkang	Fujen	Ching Yi	Wenzao	Soochow	NTU
English Lang.	28	20	26		32	15
English Lit.		24				15
German	28	20		28	28	
French	32	24				
Spanish	32	20	24			
Japanese						20

Source: from the respective departments’ websites

¹ Another limitation of this formula is that one department is allowed to offer only one minor. In the case of NTU, as portrayed in the table, it seems there are two minors, one for English language and other for English literature, but in fact they are the same. The case is that the students are sorted out in these two categories when they register for the minor program, but the diploma itself doesn’t show later the difference.

In the extra-departmental levels of the university we can still find the so-called (6) extramural courses, offered in Taiwan by most of the universities with departments of languages. Even in NTU such a formula exists, but it has always had an erratic development. For example, in 1968 the MOE created the Center for European Languages, “to facilitate students going to study in Europe, since most of them had preference for the US ..., but it disappeared in 1976 or 1977 when NTU organized the Evening Division in the place of the European Languages Center” (Liu, 1993). Now, two units offer EUL courses in NTU, the Language Center and the LTTC. In 1985 the *Language Center* was established under the management of the College of Liberal Arts, initially to offer English courses to public servants aimed at developing their personal careers. Later a Division of Chinese and another of Foreign Languages (mainly Japanese) were created. The English courses were offered not only to public servants but to the general public in two separate groups. In 2006 both groups merged without distinction until the present. We have to mention that since September 2010 Courses of German, French and Korean were added within this Foreign Languages Division, and other languages are expected to join. The fact that these two EUL are taught by teachers of the DFLL of NTU open the possibility of cooperation, by allowing some NTU students to complete their curricular basic language credits through this alternative formula. On the other hand, next to the *Language Center* and also within the NTU campus, exists the *Language Training and Testing Center* (LTTC), a government sponsored foundation which besides its distinctive role in administering international exams (along with their own testing programs in different languages, also European ones), it offers also a variety of courses of different languages including French, German and Spanish.

Another formula that is quite popular is the (7) private language schools which have an important role and contribution. Besides those ones run as businesses (called in Taiwan *buxibans*) there are other semi-governmental ones with

a great power to attract students, like the *Alliance Française*, the *Goethe Institute*, or the *Instituto Cervantes* (which is represented in Taiwan through the private school *Eumeia*, after formal association with the *Instituto Cervantes*).

It is worth to consider these schools (also, those offering extramural courses) because it not easy to identify the difference between their courses and those taught in universities, particularly in the first levels. Are we talking about the same product? It seems obvious for many observers that, in the first levels of learning, *buxiban* teachers can do similar teaching job than overqualified ones in the universities. Even though, the learning in the universities in the beginning levels can fall behind those of the private institutions because these academies or *buxibans*, have good points that should be recognized:

- Less students per class: Usually they don't go beyond 13-14 students per class, with a minimum of 8-10 students, a number that can be reduced to half in higher levels.
- Motivation: In Taiwan there are many reasons why people go to these schools. A big number of students expect from these schools help in their regular classes of the university, either offering an initial breakthrough in the new language, easing the first week of classes or performing better in the university exams.
- Flexibility: The big majority are university students, the number of which increases during summer, and decreases during the period of exams.
- Consolidation of standards: They adjust their textbooks and their levels little by little to the CERF and can even provide their own certificates of language level.

We can conclude that in the basic levels their results do not differ very much from the university classes, the difference between both institutions being very weak, something that has benefited the university programs because many students can waive the first levels of a given language and go straight to the higher ones.

THE POSITION OF THE EUL COURSES IN NTU: THE SUCCESS OF THE BOTTOM-UP POLICIES

SFL courses started in NTU after the WWII as part of the English Languages and English and American Literature studies, which eventually became the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures (DFLL). Courses of Japanese, French, German, Russian, Spanish and Latin were offered to serve the required 12 credits of the so-called Second Foreign Languages (SFL) for students of the department. This system of DFLL might have initially served as a pattern for other universities, but in the sixties the situation changed. Most of the private universities started to create their own departments of European languages, and in the eighties, these departments became integrated within a College of Foreign Languages, and developed their own graduate programs, thus achieving further goals than the state universities, and offering qualified and specific formation to supply the needs of the government, for example for diplomats. Certainly, since the sixties NTU lost its leadership in the teaching of second foreign languages because no substantial development had occurred. The SFL (Japanese and EUL) continued subsisting marginalized, sometimes neglected, within those so-called departments of foreign languages, which in fact were departments of English and English and American Literature, in full control of the situation (hiring teachers, etc.).

*First bottom-up policy: the Module of Second Foreign Languages
(later European Languages)*

The SFL teachers of NTU interiorized and accepted their ancillary role in the department, and worked with little change, adapted to the situation. Although the system worked for many years, some motions were presented, under the scheme of bottom-up policies, bearing some fruits after big efforts. It was in 1998 when after two years of work and by initiative of

EUL teachers, a basic *Module of SFL* (for German, French and Spanish) was inaugurated rationalizing the existing courses, making a homogeneous plan for the different languages and getting approval. Then, the program was structured in three levels, with 6 yearly credits (4 h/wk) for the first one (for example, German I), 6 more (4 h/wk) for the second level (German II), and 20 for the specialized third level (6 yearly credits for the Advance German, 6 for German Literature and 8 for German Culture). We can see it in the next table with an approximate equivalence to the CEFR:

Until now the nucleus of the module remains the same, although it has been enriched in some languages by other complementary courses like conversation in Spanish, or Level IV in German, or Phonetics in French or division of the course of Culture (4 credits) in two courses of two credits each. Along the process of the creation of the module, the teachers pushed also for the creation of an (unofficial) *diploma* of German, French or Spanish Language. The authority who took responsibility for granting the diploma was the dean of the College of Liberal Arts. However, even if it gave more consistency to the module, the diploma never became popular among the students for the lack of time to go through all the courses (usually the students started studying a SFL in their sophomore year). In any case, quite a good number of students benefited from it:

Table 3: Module of the Second Foreign Languages (later EUL)

<i>Course</i>	<i>First semester</i>	<i>Second semester</i>	<i>CEFR approx. equivalence</i>
Culture	72 h / 4 credits	72 h / 4 credits	B2
Literature	54 h / 3 credits	54 h / 3 credits	
Level III	54 h / 3 credits	54 h / 3 credits	
Level II	72 h / 3 credits	72 h / 3 credits	close to B1
Level I	72 h / 3 credits	72 h / 3 credits	close to A2

Table 4: Students that have completed the Module of EUL

	Spanish	French	German	Total
1999-2000	2	7	3	12
2000-2001	5	4	7	16
2001-2002	4	2	3	9
2002-2003	6	2	0	8
2003-2004	4	3	8	15
2004-2005	1	1	0	2
2005-2006	2	6	6	14
2006-2007	5	6	6	17
2007-2008	6	4	1	11
2008-2009	3	1	3	7
Total	38	36	37	111

Source: DFLL and own records of the author

As a reference, we can say that in the case of the Spanish language 6 students of the 38 shown in the table are at the present diplomats in the Spanish divisions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (ROC), 5 more work also in the same ministry as diplomats although they did not finalize the whole program, and some others are preparing currently the exam for the same position. It is worth to mention that Spanish is very attractive for many students because some of the Taiwan diplomatic allies are Spanish speaking countries.

Second Bottom-up Policy: the Program of European Studies

The SFL (EUL) teachers gave a new impetus to their courses in 2005 when they created, in another bottom-up policy effort, the *Program of European Studies*. This formula is a “program of interdisciplinary studies” (called *xuezhang* in Mandarin) that

Chart 1: [Multidisciplinary] Program of European Studies (Ou Zhou Xuezhang)

Application Qualifications

<p>Qualification for Tracks A and B Students who have completed and passed two semesters of at least one advanced European language course or shall be currently studying one of the courses at the time of application.</p>	<p>Qualification for Track C Students who have at least passed one of the "introductory courses" (detailed in Course Proposal), or are currently studying one of the courses.</p>
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(1) Compulsory European languages courses

<p>A. European language proficiency scheme</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Culture Courses (8 credits)</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Language Courses (6 credits)</td> </tr> </table> <p>Note: Students who take Track A shall take the culture courses and language courses in the same language you used for application.</p>	Culture Courses (8 credits)	Language Courses (6 credits)	<p>B. Diversified European language scheme</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">European Lang. Level 1 (6 credits)</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">European Lang. Level 2 (6 credits)</td> </tr> </table> <p>Note: Students who take Track B shall study one EU language other than the one you used for application for two years.</p>	European Lang. Level 1 (6 credits)	European Lang. Level 2 (6 credits)	<p>C. EU studies scheme</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">European Language Any Levels (12 credits)</td> </tr> </table> <p>Note: Students who take Track C can take any EU languages in any levels.</p>	European Language Any Levels (12 credits)
Culture Courses (8 credits)	Language Courses (6 credits)						
European Lang. Level 1 (6 credits)	European Lang. Level 2 (6 credits)						
European Language Any Levels (12 credits)							



(2) Compulsory Professional courses

<p>A. European language proficiency scheme</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">European history & philosophy European Politics & Society European Literature & Arts (10 credits)</td> </tr> </table>	European history & philosophy European Politics & Society European Literature & Arts (10 credits)	<p>B. Diversified European language scheme</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">European history & philosophy European Politics & Society European Literature & Arts (12 credits)</td> </tr> </table>	European history & philosophy European Politics & Society European Literature & Arts (12 credits)	<p>C. EU studies scheme</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">EU related courses European history & philosophy European Politics & Society Compulsory courses: 8 credits Elective courses: 4 credits</td> </tr> </table>	EU related courses European history & philosophy European Politics & Society Compulsory courses: 8 credits Elective courses: 4 credits
European history & philosophy European Politics & Society European Literature & Arts (10 credits)					
European history & philosophy European Politics & Society European Literature & Arts (12 credits)					
EU related courses European history & philosophy European Politics & Society Compulsory courses: 8 credits Elective courses: 4 credits					

became fashionable everywhere after the regulation of the MOE in the late nineties and the *xuezhangs* spread in the Taiwan university campuses. The first “interdisciplinary program” in NTU was established in 1995, the EU Studies program did it in 2005 making the number 24 of the university and in 2010 there were a total of 41 *xuezhangs* in NTU. The EU Studies program consists on the 14 credits of language offered in the Literature and Culture courses (but in fact the 18 credits of levels I, II and Advanced are presupposed, but not counted) plus 12 more credits of “professional courses” (History of Europe, European Integration, etc.) taken from different departments. In other words, the program consists of the existing basic *module* of a language expanded with 12 credits of courses about Europe taught in Chinese or English. The following chart exemplifies the organization of the program:

This program is better known among the students, but although it is very demanding—only 6 to 7 students every year got the corresponding diploma—it is more respected because the diploma is an official one. The number of students graduated can be seen in the following table:

Table 5: Students who fulfilled the program (*xuezhang*) of European Studies

	German	French	Spanish	Russian	Total
2005-2006	2	0	1		3
2006-2007	2.5	2.5	3		8
2007-2008	1	5	3		9
2008-2009	2.5	0.5	2		5
2009-2010	4.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	6
Total	12.5	8.5	9.5	0.5	31

Source: NTU, DFLL records

0.5 points refers to those diplomas taken from “Track B” (by the cooperation of two languages, each one 0.5 points)

The number of students that register is higher than the one fulfilling the program because for registration only some qualifications are necessary. In the spring of 2010 the name of the *xuezhang* was changed into *European and EU Studies Program*, adding the track “C” in order to facilitate a bigger enrolment of students from the college of Social Sciences. This new track, along with the increase in EUL students, had created good expectations. The total number of students registered in February 2011 for the school-year 2010-2011 jumped to 63 (20 for track A, 5 for track B and 38 for track C). Even if only half of them finish the program, the growth is considerable and in need of being monitored closely to see if it needs some adjustments.

Third Bottom-up Policy: the European Language Division

In fact, a few years before the above-mentioned basic module was inaugurated there was an attempt in NTU to follow the model of the private universities of starting a NTU College of Foreign Languages led by the dean of the College of Liberal Arts and former chair of the DFLL, Prof. Lin Yaofu. The path leading to this new college was officially approved, and based on this the language with more teachers, Japanese, consolidated as an independent department (1994). Years later the Graduate School of Linguistics was also created. But no new department followed, probably for lack of means and interest and consciousness on the part of all those involved. Also, the MOE became reluctant to create new departments of languages in general. In any case, the remaining SFL in the DFLL, now without Japanese, gained identity as European Languages.

The possibility of development was very limited. It was impossible to create, for example, minors for the different EUL, because every department only can have one minor, and the DFLL already had it. But since year 2008 the number of students of elective courses of Foreign Languages grew dramatically in the university (see table 7), and languages like

French, Spanish or German had problems in accepting all the interested students, as shown in this table:

Table 6: Pressure of students attempting to enrol in EUL courses

Fall Semester 2011	French I	German I	Spanish I
Students who registered on the online course selection system	1,574	844	2,276
Number of students who enrolled successfully	391	412	490
Number of students who were not able to enrol	1,183	432	1,786
Course Selection Success Rate	25%	49%	22%
Comparison of Course Selection Success Rate	French I	German I	Spanish I
Fall Semester 2009	37%	50%	31%
Fall Semester 2010	31%	43%	30%
Fall Semester 2011	25%	49%	22%

Source: NTU & DFLL records

Besides, the head of the DFLL endorsed a lot of assignments and responsibilities to the coordinator of EUL, like decision making processes when recruiting new teachers, elaboration of budgets, etc., and it became obvious that the present vague organization of EUL within the DFLL did not fit the needs of the EUL. It was in December 2010 when this pressure of the increase of students and the positive atmosphere for the EUL in the DFLL and in the College of Liberal Arts led the EUL teachers to push for another step forward that galvanized the unofficial *European Language Division* within the Department of Foreign Languages. This formula does not add anything new, but gives more consistency and structure to the teachers and courses of EUL.

In any case, the results of the steps leading to this Division still might look insufficient compared with the language programs offered by departments in Colleges of Foreign Languages or by other state universities like the

National Chengchi University (NCCU), in which the College of Foreign Languages offers strategic language departments like Arabic, or its Foreign Language Centre which run some European Studies programs since 2006.² The question is if NTU can find or not their particular way in the teaching of EUL. Even if no major changes are done from above (*top-down policies*), on one hand our answer is affirmative, as we will present later, creating the model of a campus with a “friendly environment for learning second foreign languages” (Asian and European ones), in which the students could have clear accessibility and mobility; but on the other hand it seems difficult to continue giving steps forward.

A CHANGE OF PARADIGM IN NTU

Two decades ago, it was common for talented Taiwanese students to go to the US for graduate studies as the most important option. For this reason the figure of EUL students enrollment in NTU was quite stable at around 1,000 students, though experiencing a slow but steady growth. In order to continue attracting interest for the SFL classes, during some years the SFL teachers were fostering students’ motivation through activities like “European Day” (2002, 2004, 2006), the “European Student’s Conference” (2001, 2003, 2005, 2006) or the “European Film Festival” (2008, 2009). Certainly, thanks to these initiatives, the program of SFL was able to increase year by year the number of students, as we can see in table 7. This may lead us to think in a “change of paradigm” in the interest

² NCCU had been particularly active and successful in creating European programs by top-down policies, first the *European Studies Program* (2005); and, under the aegis of the Foreign Languages Center, NCCU set up in 2006 the *Undergraduate Program of European Languages*, the on-the-job *Graduate Program of European Languages*, and the *European Culture Research Center*, “to beef up European culture research in Taiwan, to promote international exchanges and cooperation with universities in Europe...”

<http://www.cecs.nccu.edu.tw/en/intro.php>.

of NTU students for foreign languages, which has remote external causes and recent internal ones.

Table 7: Increase of students of Foreign Languages in NTU

European Languages administered by the EUL Division of the DFLL:

	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011
German	643	678	613	660	725	713	643
French	527	485	445	438	565	626	757
Spanish	212	227	268	357	425	511	792
Russian	54	11		59	131	90	117
Latin	14	44	39	59	38	35	61
Ancient Greek	8	11	18	22	15	17	13
Italian				43	46	72	73
Portuguese				23	26	48	43
Dutch					14	16	19
Turkish					7	14	24
Arabic						29	42
Polish							29
Hebrew							13
Total	1458	1456	1383	1661	1992	2171	2626

East Asian Languages administered by the Department of Japanese:

	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011
Japanese	1846	2083	2228	2629	3116	2911	3221
Korean				154	166	162	160
Thai				38	63	49	75
Vietnamese				17	23	24	26
Malay				13	22	26	21
Filipino				3			
Total	1846	2083	2228	2854	3390	3172	3503

Chinese Domain Languages administered by the Department of Chinese:

	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011
Mongolian					36	27	43
Manchu						52	17
Tibetan						57	43
Total	0	0	0	0	36	136	103

a) External causes

External factors that should be taken into consideration to possibly explain the change of paradigm are the growing interest for Europe in Taiwan and the efforts of Europe for making herself more available in Asian societies, in terms of tourism, education and language. The chronology of these combined events in the last decade can be the following.

- There is a remote starting point, the Schengen Agreement, signed 25 years ago (14 June 1985), that made it easier to tour Europe, something that was especially difficult for Taiwanese citizens. But the real moment when Taiwanese students appeared more interested in Europe was, according to the perception of the author of this report, the aftermath of the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in New York (11 September 2001), which probably made the impact on Taiwanese minds that USA was no longer a safe place as traditionally considered.
- Two months later the European Union Council made a resolution (Nov. 2001) recommending the use of an instrument in setting up a system of comparison of language competence. This is the way the *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR) started and the exams based on those standards expanded everywhere existing testing centers for German, French, Spanish, Italian, etc. The system was also well received in Taiwan, probably due to the traditional Chinese system which reveres exams as a medium of social promotion. This policy was completed with the *European Language Portfolio* (ELP) in which learners can assess their own achievements when learning foreign languages. In 2004 there were 31 states engaged in monitoring the ELP (Kirsch: 164-165)
- It is also worth to consider the *Erasmus programs* as successful schemes that attracted the attention of Asian students looking for opportunities. First we have to consider the *Erasmus Mundus Program*, which is a Master's program organized by a pool of European universities. There are

many kinds of Master's programs like, for example, Euroculture.³ This program started independently in 1999 and later joined the Erasmus Mundus, financed by the EU since 2006. Among other formulas, we can also mention the *Lotus Erasmus*, which is also a recent program of mobility, for students registered in universities of Southeast Asia, and it works like an exchange scholarship for those joining the program.

- We should mention also the creation of the *European Centers* as promoters or transmitters of EU initiatives were first launched in the US and Canada in 1998, but in 2009 there were 27 European Union Centres existing in universities of USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Tokyo (2004), South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan (2008). At present, Australia and Japan have three centres each, two in Korea, and only one in New Zealand, Taiwan⁴ and Singapore. These centers have made different activities and send students to summer courses in Europe, as well as offer funding for the expansion of existing EUL courses, not only those in high demand but also the Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTL), i.e., those "considered important by the government, but unsustainable for the market" (Gor&Vatz, 2009).
- This growing interest in Europe had been enforced recently as a result of a EU statement (24 Nov 2010) saying that

³ <http://www.euroculturemaster.org/>

⁴ Here is a summary of the website of the EU Center in Taiwan. The Center began in early 2008 after the European Commission expressed its intention to create an office. The NTU took the leading part and the Dean of International Affairs managed to form a consortium of the following universities: NTU, National Chengchi University (NCCU), Tamkang University (TKU), Catholic Fu-Jen University (FJU), National Dong Hua University (NDHU), National Chung Hsing University (NCHU) and National Sun Yat Sen University (NSYSU). NTU, acting as the lead institution of the consortium, proposed a plan, which was signed with the European Commission on 31 December 2008. The first phase of the plan will run for four years, from 2009 to 2012, to be funded by a total budget of 1.55 million in Euros. The EU injected 1.1 million Euros, while the Consortium will provide the balance according to the agreed percentages. Under the terms of the agreement, the EUTW is located in NTU and an office for coordination and cooperation is situated at each consortium university.

Taiwan tourists travelling in Europe no longer will need a *visa*, as long as the trip is less than 90 days.

b) Recent inner causes

- Under the umbrella of the MOE, which funds projects helping some universities to reach high international status (something initiated in 2006), NTU started receiving extra funds for promoting research and to a lesser extent teaching projects. As far as the DFLL is concerned, EUL teaching was benefited in the granting of adjunct projects teachers, fostering the existing EUL and the creation of new EUL courses, namely Italian, Portuguese, Dutch, as well as Turkish and Arabic,⁵ doubling the number of students from 1,383 in the Fall of 2007 to 2,171 in the Fall of 2010 (see table 7). For the school-year 2011-2012 classes for Polish and Hebrew are also going to be implemented. Since the university has 17,529 undergraduate students in the Fall semester of 2011, we can say that 15% of the undergraduate student population of the university is enrolled in EUL courses, under the guidance of 40 teachers. These figures makes clear not only the interest of NTU students to engage in the study of a foreign language, but also the fact that the more courses the university offers, the more students enroll, a fact several times perceived by the author of this chapter.
- As natural consequence of the expansion of courses, since three years ago, the SFL teachers were assigned to have much more responsibility in the decision making process of hiring new teachers, especially selecting which languages should be assigned the new available teaching quotas. Making use of this, they formally changed the name of SFL courses to EUL courses (2010).
- Finally, the attempt of the NTU to attract international students by promoting international exchanges had developed among NTU students a fever for spending at least one semester of a whole year studying in other

⁵ At the same time Korean, Vietnamese, Filipino and Thai were introduced within the department of Japanese and Mongolian in the department of Chinese.

countries,⁶ and consequently the need of learning EUL for those aiming to go to Europe. Although it is clear that the language is not needed to face the teaching (usually in English), but as survival tool in the host country.

Summarizing, we can say that the new paradigm of the EUL courses in the DFLL consist in a different atmosphere towards EUL after perceiving that Europe is a more attractive place for tourism, studying and developing a career, than before. But this new atmosphere, characterized by a growth and diversity of languages, still needs to face some challenges if it seeks to develop the existing EUL Division.

CHALLENGES IN THE PRESENT SITUATION

In our opinion the problems encountered by the present EUL Division in consolidating a friendly atmosphere on campus for language learning is a typical problem of growth management, with eight challenges:

1. to offer enough groups for the increasing number of new students,
2. to identify the new languages to be taught,
3. to keep a proportionate pyramid along the progressive levels of teaching,
4. to diversify courses in the higher levels,
5. to help the students in the selection of a second foreign language,
6. to set up the difference with language cram schools or *buxibans*, etc.
7. to hire appropriate teachers

⁶ According to the NTU Office of International Affairs, currently NTU has regular exchange programs with 15 European countries and 64 universities: Belgium (2); Czech Republic (1), Denmark (2); Finland (1), France (15), Germany (16), Ireland (1); Netherlands (7), Norway (1), Poland (1), Portugal (1); Spain (4), Sweden (6), Switzerland (4); United Kingdom (5).

8. to improve communication with the higher administrative levels (college, etc.)

- (1) As we have said “the more courses we open the more students we get”, consequently the more students come the more courses should be opened. But is there any natural limit to growth? The answer should be yes, but difficult to calculate.
- (2) When this limit is reached, it is the moment to explore which new EUL should be added to the program, but it might be a difficult task for lack of qualified teachers, as it was experienced recently while trying to open a Swedish course.
- (3) In the NTU EUL Division, as it happens in any school of languages where students take voluntarily the courses, the base of the students’ enrolment pyramid is very wide, while the top is very thin. This is natural for many obvious reasons, but probably a permanent monitoring of the situation of every language in each semester can help to curve this ill proportion and to achieve *consolidated* programs. We can talk about *consolidation* of the programs when the higher levels are not only well visited by students, but also when there are several options for them. The ideal will be that one student that spends around 7 years in the university (combining undergraduate and graduate years) is able to join almost every year a different course of the same language.
- (4) To diversify courses in the higher levels is not totally impossible, but will imply opening courses and alternating them every year. For example, offering a program of culture in a given year (Culture I) and a complementary but different program the following one (Culture II). The same can be done with Literature, or with a fourth level of a language, etc. The main problem is that the teachers should adjust the programs and develop them, implying a lot of additional work.

- (5) Quite a few university students interested in learning a language are not totally sure of which language they want to study; consequently, they choose sometimes depending on the availability of a language within their schedule. In the opposite spectrum there are the ambitious and capable ones that study more than one language.
- (6) As we had said, the problem of offering too many proficiency levels and a few higher ones is a failure in the consolidation of the programs, and the risk of becoming a kind of *buxiban*. At present, roughly 80% of our students only take Levels I and II, offering little difference in knowledge and content compared to private institutions. As we have also mentioned, some of the students go to private schools just to perform better in the university and get higher grades. They can achieve this goal because they can spend more time and join classes of smaller sizes. How to set up the difference?
- (7) If the language should serve some academic purpose it should be very useful and attractive for students that the teacher does not teach only the language with some cultural flavour applied to culture or social relations, but he or she is a specialist in a particular field. At present, most of the departments of EUL in Taiwan teachers are recruited based on their teaching skills, linguistic knowledge or expertise in literature or translation; thus, creating the perception that to study a European language is mainly for humanities, travelling or socializing. Consequently most of the dissertations produced in the graduate departments of foreign languages are related to applied linguistics or Literature, and if the students go abroad to pursue a different career they start almost from zero background. It is true that sometimes the scope of recruiting teachers is widened when other fields like art history, film, genre studies, journalism, etc., are accepted as qualifying ones, but still are considered alien to the main core of the department interest. Are these the best formulas?

- (8) The communication of EUL teachers and coordinators with university authorities (department chair, college dean and dean for academic affairs) is also very important to clarify what is the present situation of the language teaching on campus, its aims and plans for the future. To justify the need for this communication we can say that in a recent publication of the university, "Book with the Projects for University Development" (July, 2010) the College of Liberal Arts is envisioned through a chart difficult to match with the existing units. To belong to one department is not necessarily harmful for the EUL, as long the autonomy is ensured by some formula (division, section, etc.). In fact, dividing the FLLD into three sections (as it happens in the department of Law and Political Science) is a formula that deserves to be explored. If positive, the result can be the creation of three divisions: Literature, English (TESOL, Translation, Composition, and Linguistics) and Foreign Languages, that not necessarily should have their own students, similar to the case of the Department or Division of Physical Education. But what is the ideal formula? The formulas of language centres, or department of foreign languages based on traditional division in departments of different languages, as necessary as they must be, at the present should not be regarded as the "ideal" model to follow. The existing ones in Taiwan can meet the existing needs and, at present, it will be better to favour other formulas which consider European languages as a whole. Or, as someone may say, "the national categories of thought make the cosmopolitan thought of Europe impossible" (Beck, 2009). Then, what could be the ideal institutional formula for development?

CONCLUSION: A CAMPUS WITH A "FRIENDLY FOREIGN LANGUAGES LEARNING ENVIRONMENT"

After the previous analysis we think that the following objectives should determine the way of facing the cited eight challenges.

Objectives for the consolidation of a friendly EUL environment

A prerequisite for further development is to increase the base of the pyramid of the students interested in EUL in order to reach the 20% enrolment of the undergraduate population in the next five years that is 3,500 students; the eight main formulas to face the eight challenges should be as follows:

- (1) To meet the first challenge we should not forget that we are within the "free market" formula of demand and supply, though fortunately figures start to stabilize and they are quite predictable. At the present we can consider that languages like French, German and Spanish had reached their ceiling of growth and now is the time of expanding other ones, like Italian. As for consolidating higher levels this is something that is never fully achieved in the programs. Nevertheless, Russian and Italian should be helped to reach this goal.
- (2) Obviously a different case is when dealing with those "less commonly taught languages" that will need special support. The failure in finding a suitable teacher for Swedish to join the EUL program should lead us in the near future to identify prospective new languages, probably Czech, Bulgarian, etc. The decision should be based on the list of partner universities with whom NTU has student exchange programs.
- (3) Even if the third challenge (the pyramid problem) is probably the most important one, there are still ways to enforce the existing strategies to face it. First, to cooperate with private institutions in teaching languages, like Alliance

Française, Goethe Institute, associated centres to the Instituto Cervantes, the NTU Language Center and even reliable *buxibans*, in order to facilitate the students to go straight to higher levels, after summer courses. Second, to foster more international language exchange programs because interested students will try to maximize their knowledge of the language before going to a foreign country. Third, to facilitate that students enrol in the EUL from the freshman year, something already possible for many students. In fact, this is going to happen in the DFLL in the school year 2010-2011 by abolishing Freshman English, opening the door for these students to start a SFL/EUL since the first year of studies.

- (4) As for diversifying courses in the higher levels, this is something that has started. While keeping the traditional structure of the basic module of SFL created in 1998, new courses were added, like a fourth level of the Language, or conversation classes, or teaching methodology courses; or others that were unfolded like Culture or Literature. But this formula should be continued, especially with coordination among the teachers of different languages teaching the same course. A big problem will be the teaching materials that are probably not found in the market and will need to be produced by. The ideal situation is to offer courses beyond the classical fields of humanities expanding to other ones of Social Sciences.
- (5) In this free system of choosing a language, in principle the students choose the available options that they see fits better in the development of their future career (if they have decided). Even if this system may have some problems the advantage is that—different from a conventional department—they can discontinue their path or switch to another language when they think it is no longer necessary or it does not match their talents. If this formula becomes competitive, it could reach as many students in classical departments as can be found. Of course, the level of

knowledge may differ in favour of the departments, as a general rule, but not necessarily case to case.

- (6) To make clear the specific role of the university in teaching SFL, teachers in NTU should bear in mind that there are two relevant differences between private schools and universities. First, the tertiary institutions can offer LCTL courses of relevant interest for culture (like Sanskrit, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Dutch, Arabic, etc.) that *bushibans* will not dare to offer. Secondly, and as distinguished feature of the university learning, the reason for studying a Foreign Language is to have a tool or engine for academic development. And this can be achieved clearly when it is complemented with European studies in a broad sense, which in the middle stage of learning can be approached by employing *text-based*⁷ or *content-based* syllabuses. In other words university language teaching accomplishes its mission when the students reach the higher levels, fulfil the programs and make use of that language for career development.
- (7) To hire new language teachers based more on their expertise in European understanding, like politics, economics, art, journalism, human rights, sociology, urbanism, etc., rather than to limit only to the experts in teaching methodology, linguistics, translation or literature should not be discarded, even more, it should be considered as relevant as the classical way of selection (of course, minimum skills of teaching should be proven by the applicants). Certainly, teachers with a specialty or strong background on Economy, Diplomacy, Politics, Sociology, International Business; and even Politics (integration process, human rights, autonomous governments, etc.), History, Philosophy, Family studies (demography, aging population, etc.), Tourism, Law, Medicine, Engineering, etc.,

⁷ The text-based syllabuses organize instruction around the genres that learners need and the social contexts in which they will operate (Hyland, 2009).

can be very valuable as language teachers, especially if they have the chance of teaching their specialty in their language to the students in an adapted level. Their contribution will cover these areas, usually ignored by the text books that had shaped or are shaping modern European Culture (Sassoon, 2006). Obviously, these *content-based* syllabuses should be taught—as we had said—in a simplified way and content, with specific materials. But this only will be possible as long as the organization of the programs is such that they presuppose a substantial knowledge of the language acquired before the third year in the university. The reason behind this is, although it may sound Eurocentric, that “to study European Languages and Cultures it is crucial to understand the world as it exists, ... because the world we live in today was shaped, for better or worse, by Europe” (Brockmann, 2009). Another important reason for this expertise is that it might facilitate—according to some authors—the desired and positive practice of “treating courses as separately owned property, independent of a larger curricular context” (Swaffar & Arens, 2005:12).

- (8) As for the future, it seems that the idea of creating conventional departments of particular languages (as they are understood in the colleges of foreign languages) is not a priority. It could be better to insist on the free environment of language learning that eventually may lead to some students to a sense of multilingual communication. But for the meantime important smaller things can be achieved in the management of teaching like to appoint formally the coordinator of the EUL as head of the division (and if this cannot be done due to administrative difficulties, this person can be one of the vice-chairs of the department), giving him/her more authority in his/her coordination tasks when immediate problems must be addressed. Some benefits and recognition should also be granted to that position, like an increase of salary, one hour deduction of his/her teaching load, and additional points in the regular

teachers' evaluations. It is the most convenient way of making this work attractive. Finally, if something must be created in order to meet the demands of higher studies it should be within the framework of a Master in European Studies, perhaps under the cooperative formula of *xuezhang*, where students should master at least two languages during their undergraduate years, different from English. But, ironic as it may be, the main language of communication, or in other words, the lingua franca of communication (not research) in this possible program or Graduate Institute should be English, since it is expected that English "is likely to become the primary language of the EU citizens in the future" (Simigne, 2003).

The Future Institution and the Limitation of the Bottom-up Policies

Will this "friendly environment", nowadays cultivated within a Department of Foreign Languages, be better achieved by an independent institution, like one department or in a school or college of languages, and, if yes, how to achieve it? We think that even if the answer is affirmative it is not necessarily easy to implement it, and the good formula will be the one that matches the possibilities of a given moment. Trying to answer the question, we have presented at the beginning of this paper how the developments in the structure of the EUL teaching was done through three *bottom-up* policies (the module, the *xuezhang* and the Division). NTU is now on the verge of unconsciously reaching the status of a campus with a "Friendly Foreign Languages Learning Environment"; but the question is if other steps forward can be done, or if the agents of the *bottom-up* policies should convince themselves that they have reached their own limitations. The latest developments in the EUL Division opening new courses and offering new languages was possible in the final analysis thanks to the new funds the MOE offered to raise the international status of NTU and other

universities. Reaching the status of EUL Division (third *bottom-up* policy) in fact was not difficult because it did not suppose a big administrative change, since it is something within the DFLL. On the other hand, different pre-attempts to develop this status had encountered with the opposition of English teachers and the school bureaucracy. Can the above-mentioned Master in European Studies be targeted as a kind of fourth *bottom-up* policy? We think it is not impossible in a theoretical way, but in a practical one such initiative is bordering the limit of the *bottom-up* policies, whose boundary is the departmental realm. Only *top-down* policies will be able to create new frames for the teaching of EUL or SFL in general.

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