

The Formation of the DFLL European Languages Division at NTU and the Challenges for the Future¹

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A great deal of literature had been produced about the teaching methods of the Second Foreign Languages (SFL), the European Languages (EUL), or about the syllabus related to them. 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 differ according to the nature and history of the institutions teaching foreign languages, been every institution a different case. To understand the case of the NTU EUL program within the context of Taiwan, and maybe the one of East Asia universities, I will start making first a general presentation of the different conventional systems, and later I will introduce the long way in which the NTU program of EUL has evolved within these possible frameworks, portraying my own observations and reflexions in an essay style.

Institutions teaching Foreign Languages / EUL

Going from general to particular, we can start mentioning the programs of the (1) comprehensive universities of foreign languages like those of Beijing Foreign Languages University, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, or Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. It seems that this formula was popular in the sixties and in the seventies 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, and to facilitate the country reaching the status of important player in world affairs. In Taiwan this formula never existed. To see something similar (i.e., a college teaching only languages) in the past 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 recently was transformed into university college had opened other departments different from languages.

Another similar formula, more practical and carried out in a minor scale, 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 seventies and the eighties, been the cases of Tamkang University, Fujen University and later Providence University being the most representative. As far as the European Languages is concerned, these colleges, when they have only a line of students, reach ideally a total of 2000 students with a different level of commitment, as shown in table 1:

¹ The present paper is still in a preliminary stage and some of the assumptions and assertions should be considered provisional.

Table 1: General model of students enrolment in a College of Foreign Languages in Taiwan
(Having a single line for every language)

	German	French	Spanish	Others Italian/Russian	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 (4 cred. / 2 sem.)	80	80	80	80	
Level II (4 cred. / 2 sem.)	60	60	60	60	
Total	140	140	140	140	560
Grand total of students					2000

Naturally, these distribution and figures varies in every particular 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 several lines in the languages.

On the other hand it is worth mentioning that one university in Changhua has created recently a (3) Department of European Languages, the only one that I know in Taiwan, but at the present stage works mainly like a Department of German with some French courses. The formula of integrating European Languages in a single department sounds attractive, but at the present it is difficult to solve the problem on how incorporate different languages in a particular student curriculum. In any case, as we will see later, this type of department it is 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 been also explored. These schools will be a kind of institutions in between a department and a college, but so far we don't know any of them in Taiwan. In fact, 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 during the last four of five decades had been the (5) SFL / EUL 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 the freshman students of the whole university, English and American Literature, Linguistics and Translation); and this is the case of the DFLL of NTU. Since the fifties NTU had had a leading role in the definition of structure of these

departments, and had been reproduced in other universities, public and private ones. The main reason of the existence of these EUL courses for the department that host them is to help English majors in language or literature to fulfill 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 beneficial role of a SFL/EUL for English/American literature students is so accepted, that the rule is that, if some student comes 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, for example, some authors that eventually attract the attention in these programs, like—let's us say—García Márquez, or Borges, they will be read through their English translations. In other words, the EUL have been administered as complementary ones to the mainstream courses. Recently this formula has been discontinued in some universities (like NCCU), and is challenged in other places, as is the case of NTU, after the recent growth of EUL students and teachers.

We must mention that the formula of the minors is quite attractive for students different from the department they issue that degree, because the number or required credits (20 to 30) is something reachable and the student usually is allowed to stay one year more in the university without additional economic burden. But the application of the formula is limited, since one department only is allowed to offer a minor. In the case of NTU where English Literature and English Language are in the same department, there are not two minors, as the table below may suggest, but only one with the same diploma. The particularity is that the students are divided in two groups when they join the program.

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

	Tamkang	Fujen	Ching Yi	Went-zao	Soochow	NTU
English Lang.	28	20	26		32	30
English Lit.		24				30
German	28	20		28	28	
French	32	24				
Spanish	32	20	24			
Japanese						20

In the marginal levels on the university still we can find the so-called (6) extramural courses, that most of the universities in Taiwan with languages departments have. Even in NTU such a formula exists, but always has 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 disappeared in 1976 or 1977 when NTU organized the Evening Division in the place of the European Languages Center” (Liu, 1993).

In fact, NTU focused more in English courses and in 1985 a Language Center was established, under the management of the College of Liberal Arts, to offer English courses to public servants that aimed to develop their personal career. Later were created a Division of Chinese and another of Foreign Languages, offering English courses not only to public servants but to a general public but keeping separated groups. In 2006 both groups merged without distinction until the present. At the same time courses in Japanese were very popular. And, relevant to our report, since September 2010 Courses of German, French and Korean were added within this Foreign Languages Division, where hopefully other languages will join. The fact that these two EUL are taught by teachers of the DFLL of NTU open the possibility of cooperation, 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 within the NTU campus, there exists the government supported foundation called Language Training and Testing Center (LTTC), which besides its distinctive role in administering international exams (even carrying out its own testing programs in different languages, also European ones), offers also a variety of courses of different languages including French, German and Spanish. Because of its location, we can consider it also in a practical way as extramural courses of NTU.

Another formula that is quite popular is the (7) private language schools, that sometimes have an important role and contribution. Besides those ones runned as business (called in Taiwan *buxibans*) there are other semi-governmental ones with a great power of attraction, like the Alliance Française, the Goethe Institute, or the Instituto Cervantes (which is present in Taiwan through the private school Eumeia, formally associated to the Instituto Cervantes). It is worth to consider these schools because it not easy to solve the question about the difference of their courses taught there and those taught in universities, particularly in the first levels. Are we talking about the same product? It is obvious that in the first levels of learning “unqualified” teachers can do the same or better job than “overqualified” ones. And in fact, the learning in the universities in the beginning levels can be far behind from those of the private institutions, something that explains why both institutions share students. Certainly, the private institutions, academies of *buxibans*, have good points that should be recognized:

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

We can conclude that their results do not differ very much from the university classes of basic levels, and the difference between both institutions is 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, helping in reducing the base of the typical pyramid. This opens also the possibility of formal cooperation between these two kinds of institutions.

The position of the EUL courses in NTU: the success of the down-top 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 and Spanish were offered to serve the required 12 credits of the so-called Second Foreign Languages (SFL) for students of the department. This system of FLLD might have initially served as a pattern for other universities, but on the sixties the private universities started to create their own departments of European languages. In the eighties, these departments became integrated within a College of Foreign Languages, and developed their own graduated programs, thus achieving further goals than the state universities, and offering qualified and specific formation to supply the needs of the government, like diplomats. Certainly, since the sixties NTU lost its leadership in the teaching of second foreign languages, since they continued subsisting marginalized, sometimes neglected, in departments of foreign languages, which in fact are department of English and English and American Literature, in full control of the situation (hiring teachers, etc.).

First down-top policy: the Module of Second Foreign Languages (later European Languages)

The SFL teachers 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, following down-top policies, and bearing some fruits after big efforts. It was only in 1998 when, by initiative of EUL teachers, a basic **Module of SFL** (for German, French and Spanish) was created, rationalizing the existing courses and making an homogeneous plan for the different languages. Then, the program was structured in three levels, with 6 yearly credits (4 h/wk) for the first one (for example, French I), 6 more (4 h/wk) for the second level (French II), and 20 for the specialized third level (6 yearly credits for the Advance French, 6 for French Literature and 8 for French Culture).

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	B1
Level I	72 h / 3 credits	72 h / 3 credits	A2

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. In 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 granting the diploma to the students fulfilling the program was the dean of the College of Liberal Arts. Thus, the diploma even it was more consistent, never became popular among the students for the lack of time to go through all the courses (usually the students started studying a SFL during their sophomore year). In any case, quite good number of students benefited from it:

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
2009-2010				
Total	38	36	37	111

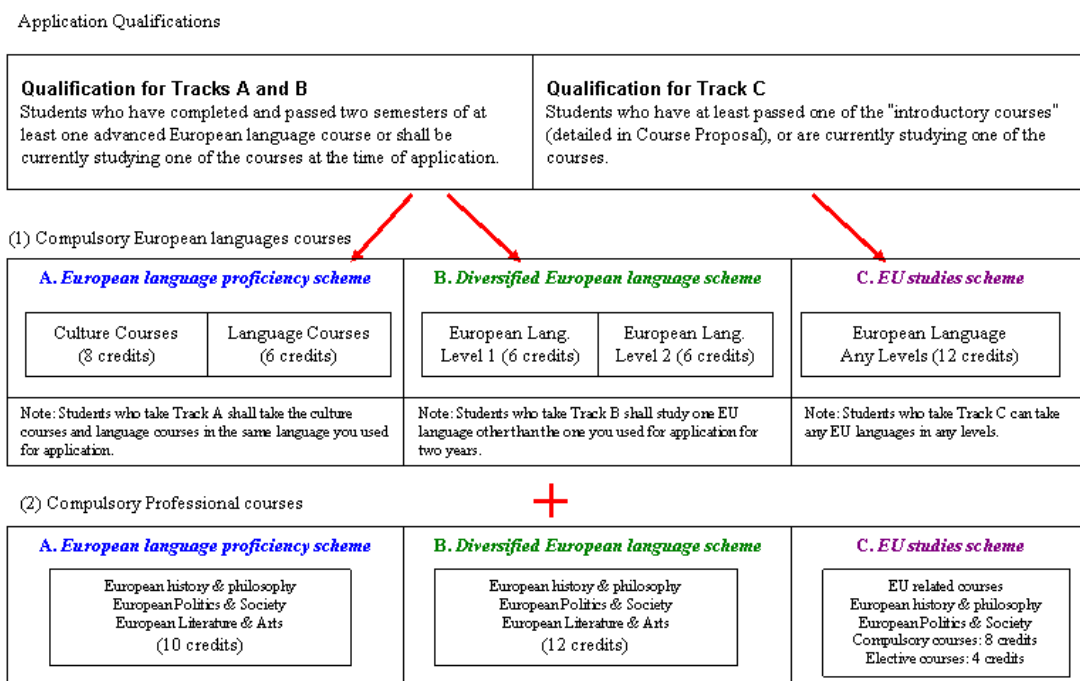
Source: DFLL and own records of the author

As a reference, we can say that in the case of the Spanish language 6 students of the 38 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 finalized 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 allies are Spanish speaking countries.

Second down-top policy: the Program of European Studies

The SFL/EUL teachers gave a new impetus to their courses in 2005 when they created, in another down-top policy effort, the **Program of European Studies**. This formula of “programs of interdisciplinary studies” (called *xuezhang* in Mandarin), became fashionable everywhere after the regulation of the MOE 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 and nowadays (in 2010) there are a total of 41 *xuezhangs*. The original EU Studies program consists in the 14 credits of Literature and Culture (thus presuming the students have been through the 18 credits of language: I, II and Advance) and 12 more of professional courses taking from different departments. In other words, the program consists in the previous basic module of a language plus 12 credits of courses about Europe taught in Chinese or English. The following chart exemplifies the organization of the program:

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



This program is better known among the students, but also—been very demanding—only 6 to 7 students every year got the corresponding diploma, as 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

0,5 points refers to those diplomas taken form “Track B” (by the cooperation of two languages, each one 0,5 points)

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.

Third down-top policy: the European Language Division

In fact, few years before the first basic module was created there was an attempt in NTU to follow the model of the private universities of starting a NTU College of Foreign Languages. The path leading to this new college was officially approved, and under these bases the language with more teachers, Japanese, consolidated as independent department (1994). Years later the Graduate School of Linguistics was also created. But no new department followed, probably for a lack of means and of interest and consciousness in all the parts involved. Also, the MOE became reluctant to the creation of new department of languages in general. In any case, the remaining SFL in the DFLL, now without the Japanese, gained identity as European Languages.

The possibility of development was very limited. There was impossible to create, for example, minors, because every department only can have one, 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, in the next page), 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 2010	French I	German I	Spanish I
Students who registered on the online course selection system	1149	867	1032
Number of students who enrolled successfully	354	372	307
Number of students who were not able to enroll	795	495	725
Course Selection Success Rate	31%	43%	30%
Comparison of Course Selection Success Rate	French I	German I	Spanish I
Fall Semester 2009	37%	50%	31%
Fall Semester 2010	31%	43%	30%

Besides, the head of the DFLL endorsed a lot of work and responsibility to the coordinators of EUL, like decision making process when recruiting new teachers, elaboration of budgets, etc., and became obvious that the present organization did not fit the needs of the EUL. It was in December 2010 when this pressure of students and the positive atmosphere for the EUL lead the EUL teachers to push for another step forward that galvanized in the unofficial European Language Division within the Department of Foreign Languages. This formula does not add anything new, but gives consistency and structure to the 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 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 Center which run some European Studies institutions since 2006.² The question is if NTU can find or not their particular way in the teaching of EUL. Our answer is yes, as we will present later, creating a model of a campus with a friendly environment for learning foreign languages (Asian and European ones), in which the students have clear accessibility and mobility.

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>.

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
French	527	485	445	438	565	626
German	643	678	613	660	725	713
Spanish	212	227	268	357	425	511
Russian	54	11		59	131	90
Latin	14	44	39	59	38	35
Ancient Greek	8	11	18	22	15	17
Italian				43	46	72
Portuguese				23	26	48
Dutch					14	16
Turkish					7	14
Arabic						29
Total	1458	1456	1383	1661	1992	2171

East Asian Languages administered by the Department of Japanese:

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

Chinese Domain Languages administered by the Department of Chinese:

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

A change of paradigm in NTU?

Two decades ago, it was common for Taiwanese students with good grades to consider as a most important option to go to the US for graduate studies. For this reason the figure of enrolled EUL students in NTU was quite stable, though experiencing a slow but steady growth. In order to maintain a good standard 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, and finally in the last three years the number of students had experienced a strong growth (see the table below) that may lead us to think in a "change of paradigm", which has remote external causes and recent internal ones.

a) External causes

External factors should be also taken into consideration like the growing interest for Europe in Taiwan, a society that only regarded the USA as country of reference, and the efforts of Europe for making herself more available in Asian societies, in terms of tourism and language. The chronology of these combined events in the last decade can be the following.

- There is a remote starting point when the Schengen Agreement made 25 years ago (14 June 1985) that made it easier to tour Europe, something specially difficult for Taiwanese citizens. But the real change that the author of this paper saw among his students was in the aftermath of the **terrorist attack of the Twin Towers** in New York (11 September 2001), which probably made an impact in Taiwanese minds that USA was not 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 systems of validation of language competences. This is the way the Common European Framework of Reference (**CEFR**) started and the exams based in those standards expanded everywhere existing testing centers for German, French, Spanish and Italian. The system was also well received in Taiwan, probably due to the traditional Chinese system which reveres exams as a medium of social promotion.
- The **Erasmus programs** are other successful activities that attracted the attention of Asian students. First we have to consider the Erasmus Mundus Program, which is a Master's program organized by a pool of European universities. There 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, the students should be registered in universities of Southeast Asia, and it works like an exchange scholarship for those join the program.
- The creation of the **European Centres** 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 already existing in universities in the US, 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, Taiwan and Singapore.⁴ These centers have made different activities and send students to summer courses in Europe, and the new funding they offer led to 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 probably will be developed as a result of the recent **EU statement** (24 Nov 2010) saying that Taiwan tourists travelling in Europe no longer will need a *visa*, as long as the trip is less than 90 days.

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.

b) Recent inner causes

- First, under the umbrella of the MOE funding for Top University Projects, NTU received extra funds to hire new teachers, allocating them in research and teaching projects. As far as the DFLL is concerned, teaching was benefited in the granting of adjuncts 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 4), majority of whom are undergraduate students. Since the university has almost 20,000 undergraduate students (17,852 in 2009), we can safely say that more than a 10% of the undergraduate student population of the university are enrolled in EUL courses, under the guidance of 31 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.
- Secondly, while keeping the traditional structure of the basic module of SFL created in 1995, new courses were added, like a fourth level of the Language, or conversation classes, or teaching methodology courses and other ones were duplicated like Culture of Literature, following alternative programs every year.
- Finally, and 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 of the process of hiring new teachers, specially selecting which languages should be assigned the new available teaching quotas. Making use of this new experienced fresh autonomy they formally changed the name of SFL courses in EUL courses (2010).

Summarizing, we can say that the new paradigm consist in

- An important increase of students in a short period of time choosing EUL, amounting to more than 10% of the whole undergraduate students population.
- An increase of students entering the programs waiving the firsts levels after studying in Taiwanese private institutions or in summer courses in Europe.
- All these elements, along with other ones had created a different atmosphere towards Europe making a more attractive place for tourism, studying and rewarding for the study of their languages.

Challenges in the present situation

The increase number of students and the diversification of courses, the interest of reaching students from the whole campus, and to consolidate more the programs, have created some challenges for the teachers. As we have said, sometimes they duplicate the courses in advanced levels (for example, Culture I and Culture II), for example in Spanish; other times they create a fourth level of the language (already in German, still a plan for Spanish).

The future looks bright in general and promising in the proficiency levels but the main problem is the risk of becoming another *bushiban*, in the elementary ones. Most of the university students interested in learning a language are not totally sure of which is the language they want to study; consequently, they choose sometimes depending on the availability of a language within their schedule. At present, some 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 spend more time and join classes of

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

smaller sizes. Teachers in NTU should not forget that there are two relevant differences between private schools and universities. First, the tertiary institutions can offer seemingly LCTL courses but of relevant interest for culture (like Sanskrit, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Dutch, Arabic, etc.) that some *bushiban* 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, which in the middle stage of learning can be approached by employing *text-based*⁶ or *content-based* syllabuses.

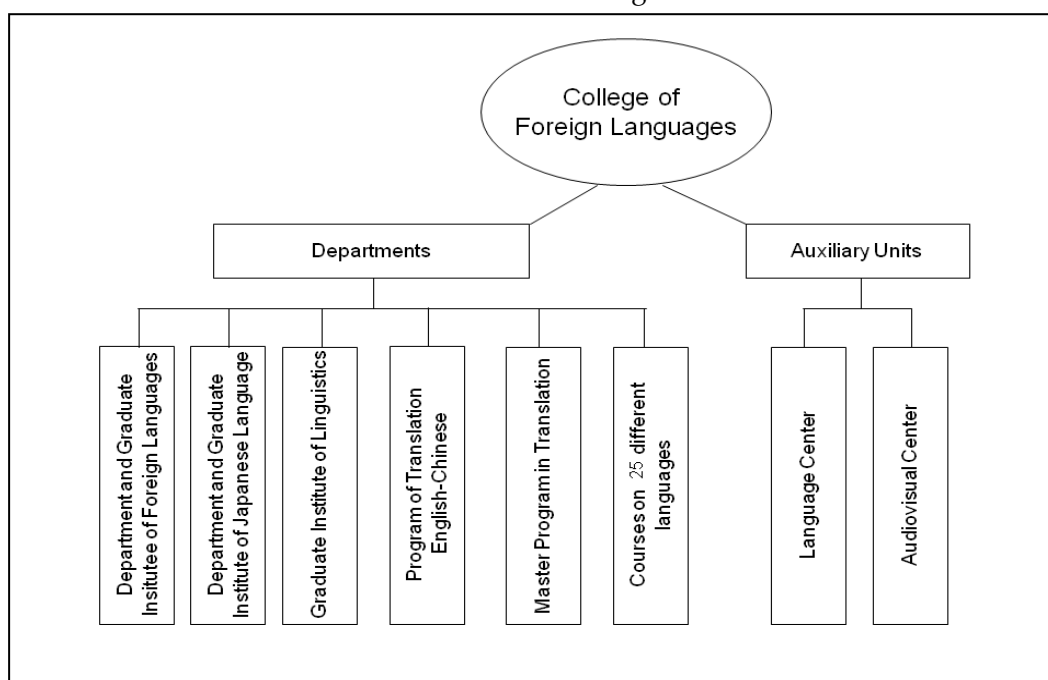
If the language should serve some academic purpose it should be very useful and attractive for students that the teacher does not teach only the language with some cultural flavour applied to social relations, but he or she is a specialist of a particular field. At present, most of the departments of EUL in Taiwan teachers are recruited based on their teaching skills, linguistic knowledge and expertise on literature; thus, creating the notion that to study a European language is mainly for humanities. 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 study a different career they start almost from zero background.

In fact, when recruiting teachers, other fields like art history, film, genre studies, journalism, etc., had been accepted as qualifying ones, but still considered alien to the main core of the department interest. In my opinion, 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 (aging population, etc.), Tourism, Law, Medicine, Engineering, etc., can be very interesting to teach their specialty in their language to the students, covering the areas that had shaped or are shaping modern European Culture (Sassoon, 2006). Obviously, these *content-based* syllabuses should be taught in a simplified way and content, with specific materials. But this will be only possible as long as the organization of the programs is such that a substantial knowledge of the language had been acquired before the third year in the university. This will imply two important changes.

- First, which the programs should be adjusted in order to start early the study of European languages and to foster international exchanges prior to that year, or at least before the fourth or last year of the university begins.
- Second, that the teacher should use some materials that are probably not found in the market and will need to produce by him/herself. In sum, I can say that the main aim of teaching an EUL that usually have been in the humanities, should change now for Social Sciences, and be ready to engage in technical issues in the near future, although this is not really that urgent because in this fields English is hegemonic.
- Even there is a certain element to consider not without irony, and that is that the main challenge in NTU probably is to help school and College of Liberal Arts authorities to clarify themselves what is the present situation and the plan for the future. To justify this strong statement I 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 this chart, which reveals many things:

⁶ The text-based syllabuses organize instruction around the genres that learners need and the social contexts in which they will operate (Hyland, 2009).

Chart 2: Official vision of the future college of Liberal Arts in NTU



Source: NTU, *Book with the Projects for University Development* (July 2010: 145)

One simple analysis of the table shows that the original plans of the middle nineties for the creation of a College of Foreign Languages with departments for the different languages is not reflected anymore, maybe it was self-abolished by lack of paying attention to it (something that in the end might be very providential). The chart has other deficiencies, but very eloquent ones, for example the above-mentioned Program of European Languages (recently converted in Program of EU and European Languages) had been ignored even if it has been in existence for five years and have received an important grant to organize an international symposium. On the other hand, there is an entry of “Courses on 25 Different Languages” that receive the same category of an “academic unit”, but in fact is a conglomerate of recently arrived minor languages administered by the DFLL without any special cohesion. And finally, the main languages like German, French, Spanish and Russian (with a total of 16 full-time teachers, excluding part-time ones) are envisioned as cooperative units of a “Department and Graduate Institute of Foreign Languages”, in the same level as those other minimal units. Certainly this chart inserted in an official publication of the school is very revealing of the way the authorities in the college perceive the teachers of the EUL.

Conclusion: A campus with a “Friendly Foreign Languages Learning Environment”

a) Objectives for 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 main formulas should be as follows:

- To facilitate the study of the EUL from the freshman year.
- To consolidate the existing programs of languages, going beyond the first levels of teaching, and reaching the fourth level in courses like French and Spanish (as already existing in German).
- To cooperate with private institutions in teaching languages, like Alliance Française, Goethe Institute, centres associated to the Instituto Cervantes, and even reliable *buxibans*, in order to

facilitate the students to skip to higher levels, after summer courses.

- To foster language exchange programs, in different countries, if possible.
- Not to create departments of national languages (as they are understood in the colleges of foreign languages), but a free environment of language learning that eventually may lead to some students to a sense of multilingual communication. If something must be created in order to meet the demands of higher studies, languages or cultures should be within a graduate school of European Studies in a very broad sense.
- In this system the students choose the available options that they see fits better in the development of their career and they engage in programs which can discontinue when they think is not longer necessary. When this formula works to be competitive, can reach as much as the number of students in classical departments, though the level of knowledge may differ in favour of the departments, as general ruling, but not necessarily comparing case to case. On the other hand, the advantage is that the students don't feel pressured with the courses because they are elective and they can drop if they are not talented in languages
- 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 their knowledge of teaching methodology, linguistics, translation or literature. (Of course, minimum skills of teaching should be proved by the applicants). The reason behind this is, although it may sound Eurocentric, because "to study European Languages and Cultures it is crucial to understand[ing] the world as it exists, ... because the world we live in today was shaped, for the better or the worse, by Europe" (Brockmann, 2009). Other 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).

b) Specific objectives for the EUL and EUS development

Will this friendly environment, nowadays cultivated within a Department of Foreign Languages, be better achieved by an independent institution, like department, school of college of languages, or not? We think that even if the answer is positive it is not necessarily easy to implement, and the good formula will be the one that matches with the possibilities of a given moment. Regarding the question, we can say:

- To belong to one department is not necessary 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 to the three following divisions: Literature, English (TESOL, Translation, Composition, Linguistics) and Foreign Languages, that not necessarily should have their own students, similar to the case of the Department or Division of Physical Education.
- If the EUL continue growing it will be important to appoint the coordinator of the EUL as head of the division, giving him/her more authority in his/her coordination tasks when immediate problems must be addressed. But some benefits and recognition should be granted to that position, like increase of salary, one hour deduction of the teaching load, and additional points in the regular teachers' evaluations. It is the most convenient way of making this work attractive.
- The formulas of language centers, 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 "ideal" model to follow, and consequently to create new ones if

possible. The existing ones in Taiwan can meet the existing needs and, at the present, it will better to favour other formulas that 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).

- Consequently, it will be better in places like NTU to keep the “free market” formula of supply and demand for languages taught in the undergraduate levels, as it is now (with the proper changes, adaptations and reformations, always necessary) and to reserve the more profound knowledge of a language or its culture in a Graduate Institute of European Studies, where students who come should have mastered at least two languages during their undergraduate years.
- 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 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).

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