

STUDENTS FIGHT OVER LERANING JAPANESE AND FRENCH

TKU does not only emphasize on its English education, but also believe in the advantages of promoting a second foreign language acquisition. The open selective subjects in foreign languages offered by the University include Spanish, Korean, Japanese, German, French, Russian, Czechs and Malay. Such a variety reflects TKU' s aim in expanding students' repertoire in languages. However, the current zeitgeist on campus and in Taiwan indicates that students favor certain languages over others; for example, Japanese and French have attracted more students than these departments concerned are able to handle.

Most students have heard of bonjour ("Good morning" in French) or merci ("Thank you" in French) due to plenty of exposure to various cultures on campus—something TKU has endeavored to cultivate all these years. Nonetheless, the biggest motivation may have come from some famous and popular French films that have been shown in Taiwan recently (e.g Amelie and Brotherhood of the Wolf). The power of media can be seen from the packed classroom of the only open French class on campus. All 180 seats are filled every week!

The teacher of this class, Professor Chen Ching-ju, is well liked and respected by the students as she uses lively and interactive way of teaching French by deploying French music and, what else, French movies. Wang Yeh-wen, for example, a senior from the Mass Communication Department chose this class exactly for the rich contents the teacher provides. French also enhances the joy of speaking for some students of foreign languages who even take French as their 'third' foreign language. Chen Zun-wen, a senior of the English Department, puts it this way: "French is a more romantic language so speaking it makes life appear to be very elegant."

Japanese is the other language that is extremely popular among students and it fares better than French as there are three classes for all students to choose from. Interestingly, the main trigger factor is not movies as in French, but computer games (perhaps comics in other cases) for a lot of students. Lee Ying-yi, a junior from the Mass Communication Department, is one, who confessed that he had had an interest in Japanese at a very young age and playing Japanese computer games when he was older prompted him to learn the language. However, interest alone sometimes does not sustain the efforts and work needed to invest in mastering the language. Chiu Yu-lun, a junior from the Chinese Department, who learned Japanese before, confirmed that the drop-out rates of Japanese classes tend to be high despite over-subscribed enrollment at the beginning of the semester as some students can not handle the challenges involved in learning.

2010/09/27