

## University mergers key to language situation

【新聞來源：POST TAIWAN】 Hit by a sharp decline in the birthrate, Taiwanese colleges and universities have been forced to close one after another.

At a seminar discussing the issue, it was proposed that the Cabinet establish a special committee on closures of private universities, while other suggestions mostly revolved around how they could survive, or withdraw from the market smoothly and peacefully.

The government should play a more active role in this process.

For example, it could take the initiative to take over poorly operated private universities and make good use of their classrooms, dormitories and facilities.

The government should encourage cooperation between public and private institutions to help private ones with insufficient students overcome their difficulties.

Miaoli County's National United University, which was taken over by the Ministry of Education in 1995, was originally a private university that turned public.

It has performed outstandingly since then and it serves as a good example of how such a transformation can expand performance.

If a private university wants to successfully transform into a public entity, it should take into consideration current national development needs. For instance, there are eight foreign-language universities in Japan and seven in China, some of them world-renowned. In addition, there are two foreign-language universities in South Korea — Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul and Busan University of Foreign Studies.

In Taiwan, the private Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages, which was transformed from a private junior college in Kaohsiung, is the nation's only foreign-language university. This shows that the government is paying scant attention to foreign-language education as Taiwan fails to keep up with Japan, China and South Korea.