

第5回 2019年度英語ライティングコンテスト

【2019年度テーマ】

We all want to see a better world in the future. Are there ways in which businesses and the business community can help us work towards such a goal?

【2019年度入賞者】

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■講評

「日本語ライティングコンテスト」は、今年度で5回目となりますが、年々、学生の英文も洗練され、構成力も高まってきました。今年度は、特に、文献レビュー、引用スタイル（APAスタイル等）についても技能の向上が見られました。内容も興味深いものも多く見られました。

■入賞エッセイ

入賞者全4名のエッセイは、以下ページに公開しております。

Total Societal Impact: Doing Good is Good for Business

According to a study, of the world's top 100 economies, only 31 are states and the rest 69 are businesses (Inman, 2016). More and more people have been demanding appropriate responsibility for giant corporations. Some companies are failing to satisfy the stakeholders since they merely focusing on regulatory compliance or increasing shareholder value. In this atmosphere, the culture of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) continues to mature. However, some businesses might worry about the increased cost when they need to put extra resources into CSR programs. Indeed, many businesses consider cutting costs from CSR when there is a revenue decline or a necessity for finding new sources of growth. This is because of the limitation of CSR in its nature. From this perspective, businesses should consider Total Societal Impact (TSI) initiatives and should include the chasing of positive societal impacts in their operations and strategies. TSI is the total benefit from business to society, not only from its CSR program but its products, services, operations, and core capabilities. It covers entirely how a business impacts society and the environment (Beal et al., 2017).

The way how businesses to implement TSI initiatives into their strategies and operations can vary depending on the business and its size. But, notably, any type of business can have a positive impact on societies and the environment, no matter how large it may be. According to a report (Baker and Cruickshank, 2016), businesses can contribute to society mainly in the next three points.

First of all, by tax contributions and hiring, companies can have a significant impact on financial and social well-being. Their tax payment contributes to many aspects of society, from the governmental level to the individual level. Moreover, businesses and work play a vital role in individuals' lives. Over a third of the population is expected to spend their adult lives at work (World Health Organization, 1994). For these individuals to enjoy their lives better, it is extremely important that people feel satisfied and inspired in their workplace. This is one of the areas that businesses can contribute to the process of pursuing a better world.

They can also help solve many universal problems in the world, by introducing innovative products and services. The advancement in technology has been driven by businesses drastically increased productivity in the workplace, and make people less concern about their burden of housework. The advances in medical and pharmaceutical products and services have been alleviated the suffering of many people. Currently, many innovators are trying to solve the problems in developing countries, such as in Africa. To solve various problems in different parts of Africa, many experts from various fields have been proposing innovative solutions such as new medical devices or drugs, online education platforms, and new methods for infrastructures such as power supply and clean water (Shapshak, 2016).

Moreover, businesses have a huge impact on the environment in many different operational steps. From collecting or extracting raw materials for products to logistics and retailing, for each step, businesses have a varied impact on the environment. As awareness of environmental issues (e.g., climate change, resource depletion, etc.) expands among people, it is now becoming a critical issue for companies to find a way to reduce and suppress adverse environmental impacts. Managing and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in operations, developing sustainable sourcing by helping manufacturers, and producing packages recyclable are notable example methods that many businesses currently taking (George, 2019).

Contrary to the general expectation that these efforts for TSI will only result in an increase of cost, several studies claim that many companies that integrated TSI initiatives into their operations and strategies indeed outperformed their competitors. In other words, “doing good is good for business”. This is mainly because there is interdependency between commercial success and a dedication to sustainable development. Such strategies also have a profound link to building a better partnership between the company and employees, customers, investors, regulators, and communities (Baker and Cruickshank, 2016; Beal et al., 2017).

To sum up, businesses need to carefully examine their impacts on society and the environment, and after that, should include positive societal impacts in their operations and strategies. Every business can affect society and the environment differently, but most of the companies make financial, social contributions by paying taxes and hiring individuals, help solve universal problems by providing products and services, and have an impact on the environment during their operations. Many studies suggest that to reconsider how their operations can have a positive impact on society, and to implement better methods into their core strategies, is deeply related to businesses' future commercial success.

(765 words)

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第2位 Tagawa Yuki (田川 雄基)

Introducing Artificial Intelligence in Agriculture

In one study, Acemoglu & Restrepo (2017) states that “The number of jobs lost due to robots has been limited so far (ranging between 360,000 and 670,000 jobs, equivalent to a 0.18- 0.34 percentage point decline in the employment to population ratio).” (p. 36). With the advent of artificial intelligence, the time to reconsider what humans can uniquely do and think about how humans compete with artificial intelligence has come. Of course, most people know, artificial intelligence is discussed in many fields like the delivery system, auto-driving car and the like. Among them, agriculture is one of the biggest fields where artificial intelligence should be developed. More and more systems pertain to artificial intelligence in this field are created and developed even now. Some studies show how the ideas of using artificial intelligence in agriculture are and how in the field of agriculture, artificial intelligence will make the business the world better and more vitalized. There are several innovative means to utilize artificial intelligence.

The first way is monitoring the conditions of lands and soil and other related things. This is one of the most imaginative ideas. Farmers used to monitor their crops by only using their eyes, but artificial intelligence alleviates the strenuous work. Also, the idea can be a solution to prevent hunger and save un nourished people because of the huge increment of productivity and quality. According to the study conducted by Octavian Postolache, José Miguel Pereira, Pedro Silva Girão, and António Almeida Monteiro (2014, P81-P101), they suggested that monitoring air and water condition in a greenhouse. The greenhouse is one way to augment the production of food like fruits and vegetables because it is covered with transparent glass and plastic films which helps to maintain moderate temperature according to crop requirements and to increase the quality of foods and productivity. Also, it is innovative that they are using soilless cultivation unlike using nutrient soils. Although the idea of monitoring crops seems to be achievable, some challenges should be resolved. First, we have to consider many variables, light, humidity, carbon dioxide, acidity, nutrients and so forth. That takes tremendous work to comprehend them. Besides, we have to make both hardware and software taking care of

these variables. This is the hardest part because if there is only 1°C difference, crops are affected by the difference. The process of making this system is really sensitive. Thus, take into consideration, that kinds of tiny differences can be the obstacle of the quality and the stable productivity.

The second way is making it easier for humans to classify vegetables and fruits by using the identification method. The idea is that in the agriculture business, farmers have to classify the vegetables and fruits. According to the study implemented by Changqi Ouyang, Daoliang Li, Jianlun Wang, Shuting Wang, and Yu Han (2014, p. 69-p. 77), strawberry disease identification based on pattern recognition was proposed. Strawberry was used to prove the certainty of the disease identification because the color was apparent and easy to recognize. In the algorithm of the system, there are three steps to be done, image preprocessing, image segmentation and pattern recognition. Each process is complicated and, in each step, more than one processes are included. The first step they did was transforming the preprocessed image into a red and green area image. The reason why the process was done is to remove the ambiguity influenced by uneven illumination. In the second step, the image is segmented by the grey image and OTSU algorithm. According to Dong (2014), OTSU algorithm is "Otsu method is one of the most successful methods for image thresholding because of its simple calculation. Otsu is an automatic threshold selection region based segmentation method." (p. 387). That is a complicated concept, so no more detailed information is not be explained here. In the end, color features, texture features and shape features are considered and classified. From this study, it is expected that the field of applying the system to other vegetations and fruits, watermelons, apples and so forth, will expand.

On balance, not only the two means using artificial intelligence, air and water monitoring in a greenhouse and the strawberry disease identification but also other means are still being developed in the agriculture field. It should be kept in our minds that the agriculture business is much broader, including delivering, selling and managing warehouses and so forth. Needless to say, this implies that there are even more opportunities to expand in agriculture and artificial intelligence can give better lives to people. Also, there is still room to improve and correct defects and problems. Therefore, as the business competition caused by artificial intelligence becomes more intensified, how to get along with artificial intelligence is the key for us to success in the upcoming era.

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Adverse Effect of CSR Implementation

Imagine the world without grave problems, including gender discrimination, educational inequality, and environmental pollution. We would inherently crave such a beautiful world. Although individuals might have small effects to achieve a better world, firms can significantly contribute to it. Thus, the responsibilities of firms for society on which they depend are crucial. In fact, over 92% of the biggest firms in the world issue reports Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), according to a survey conducted by KPMG. The good news is that CSR is found to be beneficial to firms in that CSR implementation can motivate some employees, even lowering the demand for higher salaries (Burbano 2016; Tonin & Vlassopoulos). However, some studies indicate that CSR implementations are fraught with pitfalls, limiting effectiveness. That is, the application and promotion of CSR can be counter-productive in the way that CSR initiatives can increase the number of misbehaviors in a workplace, demotivate workers and affect companies' reputation of workers.

CSR initiatives can lead to a situation where the misbehavior of workers increases. In order to assess the backfire of CSR activities of companies, researchers conducted an experiment. They hired more than 3,000 workers through Amazon Mechanical Turk (M-Turk), a crowdsourcing marketplace, and asked them to finish transaction tasks (List & Momemi 2018). The researchers offered the message that the employers donate some of the profits to UNICEF. Consequently, the subjects were 20% more likely to shirk from their duties than those were not give the message, misreporting that some transactional messages were illegible. This misbehavior is considered to be an aspect of human nature called moral licensing, the researches argue (ibid.). In other words, a person who behaved morally tends to think they are subsequently licensed to do wrong deeds. Since the participants believed that their roles were a prosocial act and thus considered they were allowed to cheat some tasks. This experiment suggests that firms need to consider whether the CSR activities, even if they are societally beneficial, should be articulated given moral licensing or potential misbehavior in the workplace.

The essential considerations include not only whether firms announce CSR activities but also how they communicate them to employees. Meier and Cassar investigated the relationship between the effectiveness of CSR implementation on workers and how CSR activities are recognized by them. They conducted two experiments. They hired about 3,000 workers through M-Turk to create catchphrases for websites. These workers were incentivized differently to make new slogans—if they produced more, half of the sample would gain monetary bonuses, and the others were told that the employers would donate charity. Additionally, half of both groups were told to receive the incentive irrespective of their extra work, while the other half was given the incentive only if they made additional slogans. This

condition made the employees view the incentive as profit-maximizing for the firm, as the incentive amounted to only half of the costs of hiring new employees. In the second experiment, the intention of the firm more was made explicit. The researchers told subjects that the firm would contribute a part of profits to a well-known charity only after it carried out market research to confirm whether this activity can be advantageous to itself.

The results of the two types of research indicate four significant implications. First, the charitable incentives contingent upon the performance were discouraging workers from making additional slogans, meaning that when employees hold that companies intend to donate only when they can exploit the extra work, they are demotivated. Second, when the firm offered the conditional incentives which are both monetary and charitable, the workers rated the firm as less socially responsible. Third, prosocial incentives per se are generally counterproductive. When given the charitable incentives, the workers who created additional catchphrases dropped by 10%. Last, the takeaway from the second experiment was that employees pay attention to the intention that firms have. The participants rated the firm as less socially responsible and unattractive when they knew about market research. The researchers conclude that these findings were due to the fact that the firm was viewed as one that capitalizes on and exploits the CSR activities, and they implemented them strategically and instrumentally.

On balance, CSR activities are found to be beneficial to firms as well as society as a whole; however, they can backfire. CSR initiatives can negatively influence workers' behavior because of moral licensing. Likewise, if employees sensed ostensible firms' motives for societal benefits, CSR implementation can disincentivize them to put more effort, affecting the impressions on firms. Thus, it would not be sagacious to promote CSR activities blindly as one of the managerial strategies. Unethical motives and inattentions to adverse effects on workers are deteriorating. Managers must keep in mind that CSR should contribute to a better world, and it is not a mere strategic tool.

(798 words)

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The Priceless Act of Giving Work Over Giving Money

“Business” is a process we are all familiar with, what with the rampant commercialism of the modern times forcing us to play a role in every corporate’s grand scheme of buying and selling. However, what we do not realise is how business- a process that places the importance on the profits earned between two or more direct parties- intriguingly, can play a role in shaping society's future; our future. Certainly, it cannot be denied that the philanthropic actions of big name companies like Coca-Cola (total donation of \$117.3 million in 2015) and Microsoft (total donation of \$169 million in 2017) towards funding for womens' rights and accessible drinking water (Philliot), to name a few, is a commendable feat indeed, nonetheless there are other ways that businesses can more directly benefit the community.

To start with, Accenture, a consulting company, for example, has an active inclusion of LGBT+ individuals in the workforce. By pushing for an environment that allows people in the sexual or gender minority to be their true selves at the workplace, Accenture displayed its support for LGBT+ “Diversity and Inclusion (D&I)” in the workplace by treating workers that identify as such with the same respect and importance as those from majority groups. This is a form of “direct” involvement of companies into supporting the future of said community. On that note, other examples can be taken from big corporations like Disney, the happiest place on Earth but also one of the most diversified workplaces worldwide. Alongside placing importance of advancing women leaders in the organization through its Global Workplace and Women’s Initiative (GWWI) program, Disney also showed its emphasis on the inclusion of racial minorities by beating 75.6% of the companies in achieving more promotions for Latino workers (Booher); subsequently earning its place onto the DiversityInc Top 50 list which it retains till this day.

Similarly, the spotlight should also be shone on smaller standalone businesses that are taking brave leaps in making a difference in their own way. In this case, a small, and quite literally, quiet café run by Frenchwoman Martine Lejeau Perry is staffed mainly by the deaf. At Café Signes, customers refer to the sign language chart on their tables when they want to order something. This new system of communication between the patron and staff was well-received among Parisian café-goers. The café has changed people’s perception of the disabled by empowering the handicapped to do work that was once only able to be performed by the able-bodied. (Shaw)

On the other hand, even those who may seem able-bodied on the outside should not be turned a blind eye upon in inclusivity. Army veterans who return after deployment find it hard to re-adjust to normal civilian life, much less find work that does not fall into their field of expertise. This is due to military personnel having skillsets different from everyday people. What businesses can do is to repurpose their capabilities by finding the right position that makes use of their talents. All that is left is adequate training to allow them to ease into their new careers. The reason for this is to prevent the experience gained through years of their training not go waste. Among the jobs that share similarities with the military sector which are a suitable match include; security manager, systems analyst or program manager. (CNNMONEY.COM) While this may not involve the future of us everyday people, to army veterans, being able to assimilate into society once more is like a breath of fresh air as they take their first step into a new battlefield for themselves.

Through this, businesses are helping individuals in minority communities find work and support themselves financially. Not only that, when diversity is encouraged at the workplace, it balances the ratio of workers between the majority and minority groups and decreases the likelihood of discriminatory actions towards the latter. Special needs children also do not have to worry about their future when they leave school knowing that there are places which allow them to contribute their efforts. While the benefits of D&I are not as visible as compared to direct charity or monetary aid towards the suffering, by giving a person the confidence to use their talents towards supporting themselves, a business is shaping and supporting their entire lives; the opposite of the brief respite offered by cold hard cash from donations. In conclusion, rather than just focusing on pumping their extra money to the suffering, businesses should be working on incorporating changes to company missions to be more hands-on with lessening the burdens of the less fortunate. Akin to the proverb "Give a man a fish and he can eat for a day, but teach a man to fish and he can eat for a lifetime."

(797 words)

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