第 6 回　2020 年度英語ライティングコンテスト

【2020 年度テーマ】

The Coronavirus has had a wide variety of effects on people and the communities and societies in which they live. Discuss one or more of the specific effects, considering its potential long-term implications.

【2020 年度入賞者】

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■講評

　第6回英語ライティングコンテストは、コロナ禍の中での開催となり、本テーマについて学生独自の視点からリサーチを重ね、自らの論点を述べたものが多くみられました。文献レビュー，引用スタイル（APAスタイル等）についてもほぼ定着してきた印象で、来年度以降のさらなる向上・発展が期待されます。

■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。

第 1 位　Tagawa Yuki　（田川　雄基）

Possible Use of Artificial Intelligence to Fight New Diseases

"Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today", said Benjamin Franklin. The pandemic of Covid-19 raised havoc all around the globe and we faced inexperienced challenges. Even now, imagining how our lives tomorrow will be is challenging and the crisis brought countless shifts in our daily lives including education, business, and use of technology. Among the scores of changes, one of the most momentous transformations was changing perceptions of viruses. Previously, a multitude of people did not have any experience of being attacked by diseases and were not even afraid of them. However, the mayhem gave us a chance to re-examine the perception of viruses and the way of fighting them. Besides, the outbreak revealed the necessity of utilizing more technologies. Specifically, artificial intelligence (AI) can be one of the imaginable methods to fight off an invisible enemy, namely viruses. There are three possible ingenious ways of utilizing artificial intelligence to combat diseases.

Firstly, artificial intelligence can be used in early detection and warning to prevent the spread of viruses. Early detection can help us to prepare for minimizing the dissemination of diseases. Allam, Dey, & Jones (2020) have insisted that BlueDot anticipated the effect and the spread of COVID-19 in China before becoming the worldwide pandemic. BlueDot consisted of artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies. Varied natural language processing algorithms enabled the company to gather data from many different sources including news media. The data was collected from more than 10,000 officials and over 60 languages. Based on the assembled data, the company filtered it and sent the alert such as the risk of the virus to the clients. The start-up predicted the 2009 H1N1 Influenza pandemic, the 2014 Ebola outbreak, and the Zika virus in 2016 by using the worldwide air travel data. Therefore, in the upcoming future, BlueDot and other related technologies possibly save us.

Secondly, artificial intelligence has the potential to save more lives with a fast and accurate diagnosis. Bullock et al. (2020) have stated that artificial intelligence could save radiologists' time and make the COVID-19 test cost cheaper by introducing AI applications. Moreover, artificial intelligence could be as accurate as humans in terms of diagnosis. Wang et al. (2020) have explained COVID-Net that a deep convolutional neural network design was fit for detecting COVID-19 cases from chest X-ray (CXR). COVID-Net was open source and everyone could access it. The study examined the efficacy of COVID-Net with COVIDx Dataset which holds 13,975 CXR images got from 13,870 patients in comparison with other deep neural network designs, VGG-19, and ResNet-50. In the case of COVID-19, COVID-Net got favorable accuracy (93.3%), good sensitivity (91.0%), and high Positive Predictive Value (PPV), 98.9%. The high rate of PPV implied that COVID-Net made very few mistakes for the positive detection of COVID-19. In the study conclusion, although COVID-Net was not ready to be used in practice, the result of COVID-Net was better than those of VGG-19 and ResNet-

50. These results mean that not only COVID-Net but other systems like VGG-19 and ResNet-50 would give contributions to the fight against diseases.

Thirdly, we can apply artificial intelligence to processing information. During the contagion, countless information including the authentic one and the fake one prevailed via the internet. Artificial intelligence can sort out the information and let people know the correct information such as how to react to the pandemic. Pandey et al. (2020) have mentioned WashKaro that could filter erroneous information by conversational AI, machine translation, and natural language processing by checking whether information matched WHO guidelines. The system was comprised of several processes, simplification, comparing and generating similarity scores, selecting matched articles, translation, and user feedback. Through a series of processes, WashKaro enabled users to get articles holding correct information and to find relevant articles based on user feedback. Moreover, the system had a function, chatbot that made it possible to answer user questions by natural language. Hence, WashKaro holds a possibility to mitigate the pandemic by inhibiting the dissemination of misleading information.

On balance, in many circumstances, artificial intelligence such as BlueDot, COVID-Net, and WashKaro are being developed to fight diseases. In fact, in the last decade, we were attacked by various viruses, H1N1 Influenza, and COVID-19. Considering the fact, we can expect that another new virus will emerge and attack us in the coming future. Unfortunately, we humans have not found a specific solution to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, and technology still has not been broadly used now. However, to put it the other way around, there is the remained room to be improved in technology. This implies that technology holds the possibility of saving people and giving better lives to people even if the virus challenges us. It is no exaggeration to say that whether our human survival depends on our actions toward viruses.

(799 words)

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第 2 位　Takahashi Kohei（高橋　浩平）

Implicit Effects and Resilience of the Coronavirus

The coronavirus disease has spread exponentially and resulted in depressing effects on many aspects. For example, the first quarter of GDPs shows that economies have plunged in most of the countries (Jones et al., 2020). This impact is explicit and can be seen in previous disasters and crises. On the other hand, the coronavirus has also revealed implicit effects which a lot of people had not imagined a lot. Furthermore, these effects have hinted resilience, meaning the flexibility in response to the changes in the environment like the epidemic in the long term (Matsuda, 2020). It is worth considering these effects and resilience. From this perspective, this paper describes three unprecedented effects on individuals, companies, and countries and their implications of resilience in each segment.

One of the side effects on an individual segment is the fatigue on mental health by quarantine and remote work. Many individuals indeed managed to keep working in their houses thanks to the progress of IT even when they were requested to refrain from going outside in response to the spread of COVID-19. However, the problem is that they have been more likely to suffer mental diseases aside

from the coronavirus. This is because quarantine and remote work has made it difficult to distinguish the boundary between the working time and the rest. In other words, a lot of workers have always felt strained even in their houses and thus they tend to get cabin fever. According to a study, approximately 40 % of the university students in the U.S. among 17 thousand reported the symptoms of depressions under the epidemic (Petersen, 2020). These evident effects on mental health stress the necessity of resilience, meaning the management styles of reducing stress on mental health (Barzilay et al., 2020).

The coronavirus has also had a significant impact on companies by revealing the fragility of their global supply chains. Global supply chain refers to the worldwide manufacturing and supply networks of their products or services in pursuit of cost-efficiency (Williams, 2019). Prior to the epidemic, a lot of multi-national corporations had successfully adopted global supply chains in pursuit of cheap labor costs and lowered taxes for their products or services. However, their supply-chain styles have suffered damage due to the boundary blockages and restriction of in-person commercial activities in response to the spread of the coronavirus. Ironically, they must prepare for urgent production of their products or services after the outbreak of the coronavirus at the expense of cost-efficiency. Under the circumstances, they cannot help but reconsider the global supply chain. From this revealed weakness of the global supply chain, companies are exploring various ways to build more resilience into their manufacturing and supply networks, even if this resilience may require extra costs (Aylor et al., 2020).

Moreover, the coronavirus has disclosed the negative effects of income and wealth inequalities between the poor and the rich in a lot of countries. According to a study, only 623 billionaires in the U.S. increased their assets by approximately 75 billion dollars while more and more poor people lost their jobs after the coronavirus (Coudriet, 2020). The gap between the rich and the poor has widened in many capitalist countries including the U.S. under the epidemic. Indeed, capitalism works well to enhance the economy in normal times as long as the balance between supply and demand is attained. However, a lot of the poor are mainly forced to bear the burden when capitalism fail to keep the balance in an emergency like this epidemic. Now lots of lower-income groups do not have any health insurance and cannot get enough social protections. This is one of the critical issues of capitalism. The coronavirus revealed the importance of protecting not only the small number of the rich but also majority of poor people. Some countries take action to provide a subsidization scheme for the poor. For example, Germany has started basic-income tests to practice in the future. This is an experiment of how the German government's repetitive payments affect the economy and the well-being of participants (Payne, 2020). The coronavirus has revealed the gap between the poor and the rich based on capitalism and the importance of social protection. Therefore, countries prepare for the measures to assure social supports for the poor in the long term.

To sum up, the coronavirus has revealed unprecedented effects in three segments. Individuals are likely to feel stress on their mental health. Companies have been damaged from their

global supply chains. Countries face a gap between the poor and the rich. These effects on each

segment are pressing issues under the current epidemic situations. Also, more importantly, both of

them should be resilient in the long term. In other words, they are required to reconsider from the

emerged effects and prepare for the future. (798 words)

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第 3 位 Law Melody Qiu Yi

Staying Home For The Homeless: Can They Stay Off the Streets Post-COVID?

As the American president-elect Joe Biden, vows to unite America on the 8th of November 2020 (The Wall Street Journal), the rest of the world is united in fighting against the global COVID pandemic. While a vaccine has not been fully developed yet (World Health Organization), various countries have taken to implementing curfews or even lockdowns to curb the spread of the infection. Countries like the US and the UK are providing emergency funding, unemployment assistance among other forms of aid to encourage citizens to stay home. (Forbes)

However, the homeless are not as fortunate. Many are ineligible to receive such assistance as they lack proper identification or are unable to produce the needed documents. (Burt M. et al.) Moreover, taking refuge in public spaces like libraries during the day or staying the night at 24-hour establishments (The Japan Times) are becoming less feasible due to the tightening restrictions on operating hours. To combat this problem, America (BBC) and England (The Guardian) are among the countries to establish temporary housing using vacant hotels or provide more shelters to prevent the spread of

COVID within the homeless populace. However, it is unknown how long exactly they intend to protect them. How willing are these governments to continue expanding resources to combat homelessness once the pandemic has passed? While COVID-19 can be viewed as an opportunity to take initiative and permanently rid of it in certain countries, solving it has never been a top priority in most countries thus, current programs can be expected to end once the pandemic is over.

As Dutch philosopher Desiderius Erasmusto once said, "prevention is better than cure", providing protection for the homeless costs less than providing medical treatment for them in the likelihood that they contract the coronavirus. In the US, the cost of treatment for COVID-19 runs up to 50k on average (Business Insider). A total of 4,000,000,000 USD has been allocated to assist the homeless in the CARES ACT S. 3548 116th Congress (2019-2020). This amount is considerably cheaper compared to treating ¼ of the 567,715 homeless persons in America. The same can be applied to Malaysia where RM1 million (242,000 USD) was provided by the government to support the homeless in the capital (Malay Mail) where around 2,000 homeless people reside (Wong K.L). For perspective, according to the Malaysian Health Ministry, RM18,000 (4300 USD) is spent on treating every critically-ill corona patient (Code Blue). Using this

example, we can make a general inference that the motives for countries to aid them are not out of sympathy but to reduce potential treatment cost.

Despite some countries stating their intention to expand their current efforts into an infrastructure for combating homelessness, in Malaysia, many of them have been returned to the streets once lockdown regulations have been eased without any further support. (ChannelNewsAsia) Those who were sheltered in hotels in England have also gone back to rough sleeping since July. (BBC). In addition to soaring unemployment rates, the working class in many countries are struggling to stay afloat themselves with many finding themselves close to being evicted. (BBC) Consequently, most governments will put the rebuilding of the economy as their first priority during the post-pandemic era (World Bank) According to UNCTAD, most government budgets are expected to focus on economic sectors that generate enough revenue to recover from COVID debt. Although, in the article it stresses on making an effort to reduce unemployment rates as a first step in implementing a sustainable fiscal policy. This particularly applies to developing countries or emerging economies who have been struck greatly by the pandemic and do not have the financial leeway to carry out non-profit generating activities such as welfare programs.

Current efforts are band-aid solutions due to how imprudent they are. Taking Phoenix, Arizona as an example, the homeless are sent to haphazardly-constructed roofless shelters which is no different to how they were living when they were on the streets. (USA Today) In Malaysia, after the movement control order only a fraction of those in shelters were given minimum-wage jobs before being evicted. (Free Malaysia Today). Furthermore, one-time financial aid like stimulus checks provided to citizens in America or Japan's social security payment of ￥100,000 is clearly short-sighted.

Even during the post-era, governments around the world will suffer financially due to the economic downturn brought upon by lockdowns and a crippled economy. Thus, it is no question that they will focus on rebuilding its economy through sectors like trade and tourism once restrictions are lifted. Developed countries like Japan are already focusing on boosting the tourism sector through subsidizing "Go-To" campaigns over providing welfare by funding NPOs or social organizations. (Mainichi Shimbun) It is evident that despite the current aid for the homeless will come to an end once the world is finally free from COVID-19.

(800 words)

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特別賞　Chung Sim Yee

The Effect of Coronavirus towards our workplace

Before the COVID-19 pandemic struck us, the most common workplace was people gathering together at the office, from morning until evening. But, ever since World Health Organization announced COVID-19 as a pandemic on this year March 11(WHO, Nov 2020), the world is currently having a whole new experience; especially the way people used to work. One of the effects caused by Coronavirus is the workplace culture.

It is clear that due to the happening of Coronavirus, in public, people must maintain a safe distance towards other people for their own, and for other's safety. With such a rule, workplaces such as offices, where a large number of workers gather in a small room, it is not advisable to remain the same way as it were. For this issue, workers have no other choice but to work at their own homes, which is called 'remote work'. Remote work is one of the working styles where employees does not have to be in a specific place, for example offices, to do their work (Remote Year, Apr 2020). Remote work has been carrying out for months, and currently there is no sign of returning back to the traditional environment.

Some may argue that once the vaccine for Coronavirus has been made, they will return the traditional style of workplace, therefore the change of workplace effect is short-term. In my opinion, the change of people's workplace is more of a long-term effect rather than a short-term effect, considering that the current way of working could remain for a long time. According to the Gertrude Chavez-Dreyfuss, "The number of employees permanently working remotely globally is set to double in 2021, according to a new survey by a U.S. technology research firm. (Gertrude Chavez-Dreyfuss, Oct 2020)". In details, "The percentage of workers around the world that is permanently working from home is expected to double in 2021 as productivity has increased during the coronavirus pandemic, according to a survey from U.S.-based Enterprise Technology Research (ETR). (Gertrude Chavez-Dreyfuss, Oct 2020)". Based on Gertrude Chavez-Dreyfuss's statement above, it would seem that remote work would be a long-term solution due to the increase of productivity.

Due to the happening of Coronavirus, workers around the world have the chance to experience remote work. The question is, do people prefer to work at home, or they wish to return the traditional way of working at the office? Slack team conducted a report on around 9000 employees across six countries; Slacks' 2020 report found the following:

The work-from-home experiment has given many former office workers the opportunity to try a new way of working, and the data shows they (mostly) like it. In fact, the vast majority of global knowledge workers (72%) prefer a hybrid arrangement that combines the home and the office. Workers are far less enthusiastic about going all in on one environment: Only 12% would prefer working from the office all the time, and 13% want to work from home full-time. (Slack Team, Oct 2020)

From the report that is given above, the evidence shows that working from home has given the employees a new experience of work. In fact, most of them prefer remote work that combines their office and their home, rather than going back the traditional way.

In conclusion, Coronavirus gave a huge impact on people's workplace. It changed the way how people work, and giving a whole new opportunity to challenge another working style for them. This new working style, remote work, could be the new settlement for us. In my opinion, even if the vaccine for Coronavirus is made, it is impossible for people to return the traditional work style immediately. We must adapt the environment where remote work is being recommended, for the sake of our own health and safety.

(627 words)

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