



Title	Preface / Proceedings of 5th International Seminar for the Promotion of International Exchange
Author(s)	Moinuddin, Mohammad
Citation	Proceedings of 5th International Seminar for the Promotion of International Exchange : Exploring After Corona Influx of International Students at Higher Education Institutions. 2024, p. 5-7
Version Type	VoR
URL	https://hdl.handle.net/11094/95390
rights	
Note	

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Osaka University

Preface

After the relaxation of COVID-19-related border restrictions, different universities saw a jump in applications from international students willing to visit Japan. Osaka University's exchange programs, such as iExPO (Immersion Exchange Program Osaka), OUSEEP (Osaka University Short-term Student Exchange Program) among other exchange programs, got three times more applications than that of pre-COVID-19 times. These programs are developed for international students from institutions that have a student exchange agreement with Osaka University. Such a sudden jump posed several challenges to the departments. The members of International office had views that if the trend continues we need to increase the number of academic and clerical staffs. It was important to know the response of other higher education institutions (HEIs) around the world. Hence, the theme of the fifth International seminar that was held on October 25, 2023 was decided as, "Exploring After Corona Influx of International Students at Higher Education Institutions". It was an attempt to explore preparedness and response by different HEIs to the challenges expected to be posed in the post-corona world.

The origin of this International seminar whose main purpose is to promote International Exchange and nurture the next generation of researchers, is centered in the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. After a surge in COVID-19 cases, border restrictions and lockdowns were imposed around the world severely affecting the Study Abroad Programs. In order to search for some ways to maintain our students' interaction with overseas learners and to provide overseas exposure the International Affairs Office at the School of Letters/Graduate School of Humanities (then Graduate School of Letters) started a project that includes semi-academic seminar (hybrid) and subsequent publication of proceedings.

Until 2023 five such international seminars could be organized followed by proceedings publication. The success of this project could be surmised by observing that the department chose this project as one of the projects for Osaka University's Master Plan 2027. The selection process of the papers from the fourth international seminar was changed. To maintain the quality of the papers presented in the international seminar all the papers must go through the double-blind peer-review process. Furthermore, the revised version of the papers presented in the seminar once again has to pass the peer-review selection process.

This proceedings is an attempt to record the papers presented at the fifth International Seminar for the Promotion of International Exchange. The international seminar was divided into two sessions: a special lecture followed by open discussion, and students' presentation with comments by experts, completely in English without any translation.

In the opening remarks, the Head of the Division of Humanities, Graduate School of Humanities & Dean of the School of Letters, Osaka University, Professor Asako KURIHARA, stressed the significance of engaging in

conversation with different HEIs to be better prepared to handle different challenges in post-pandemic landscape.

The special lecture was delivered by Professor Kristina IWATA-WEICKGENANT of Nagoya University. Professor Iwata shared her experience of working with the “Japan-in-Asia Cultural Studies Program” of Nagoya University. She has been involved for many years in supervising international students. Her talk reflected upon her experience with international students during the Corona pandemic. Professor Iwata has contributed a very good study in the form of an essay to this proceedings. The title of her paper is “The Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Nagoya University’s International Programs”. This paper provides a brief overview of Nagoya University’s Japan-in-Asia Cultural Studies Program (JACS). Professor Iwata has discussed the pandemic's impact on international admissions at Nagoya University and, within the context of the international program JACS, explored the immense challenges the Japanese government’s restrictions on international travel posed for both students and faculty members.

The paper presentations focused on different fields of specialization. Almost all the papers included in this proceedings are revised versions of the papers presented in the International seminar. However, the paper titled, “A Comparative Study of EMI and Cross-cultural Communication”, co-presented by Edith Su (Associate professor, Department of Law, National Chung Hsing University, Taichung, Taiwan), Alexander Socop (Research Assistant, Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling, National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan), and Yuan-Yu Liao (Research Assistant, Department of International and Competitive Education, National Chi Nan University, Taiwan) could not be included due to unavoidable reasons. In order to inform the readers about the contents of the paper, it is decided to include the abstract submitted by the presenters, as given below.

“The 2030 bilingual national policy promotes the bilingual activation of higher education to enhance the overall competitiveness of Taiwan. Taiwanese legal education is affected by the national examination, and the proportion of legal English scores is low, resulting in insufficient ability to connect with international standards, as well as a lack of communication skills and teamwork experience. In the emerging economic development model and international competition, and as an export-oriented country within an island economy, cultivating business and legal talents with cross-cultural communication and international mobility is the key to enhancing national development and global competitiveness and cooperation.

In order to improve students’ confidence in legal English and learning motivation, as well as cross-cultural communication and international mobile competitiveness, the program used in this study utilizes English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in business law, and technological vehicles to provide online and physical blended learning (Blended/Hybrid Learning), synchronous distance learning and cooperation with teachers and students from the world’s top 100 universities in the New Southbound countries. Taking students with

diverse backgrounds as the core batch, using actual, commercial, and legal cases to train English critical thinking ability, so that students can have the professional skills required by the industry before graduation, and become international financial and legal talents with cross-cultural communication skills.

This project is a comparative study of all English courses over three years, observing the composition, learning motivation, and feedback of the students taking the course, interviewing and tracking the development of the students taking the course after graduation, and exploring the role of cross-cultural and cross-field learning in international business law. Applied problem-solving methodology is used as a reference for teaching practice.”

We highly appreciate the speakers and all the participants for their support and encouraging comments. Our special thanks with appreciation to Professor Kristina IWATA-WEICKGENANT for her valuable time and great contribution to the seminar. We also thank our foreign participants and everyone for their direct and indirect support. We express our special gratitude to Professor Asako KURIHARA, Head of the Division of Humanities, Graduate School of Humanities & Dean of the School of Letters, Osaka University, and Professor Eijirō DŌYAMA, Director, International Affairs Office, School of Letters/Graduate School of Humanities, Osaka University. We also thank Professor Michitaka MORIMOTO, Professor Youji ASAMI, Professor Akemi BANSE and Professor Gyoukou RIN for their great cooperation and reviewing the papers despite their busy schedule. We cannot forget to thank Mr. Yutaka MINEKURA (Special Appointed Researcher, Graduate School of Humanities, Osaka University) for designing a nice poster and Ms. Saki HIROSAWA (Office staff of the International Affairs Office) for extending logistic support. It is our pleasant duty to acknowledge the financial support from the International Affairs Office, School of Letters/Graduate School of Humanities, Osaka University.

Lastly, we would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Natsumi YOKOCHI (4th year, Department of Humanities, School of Letters) one of the presenters at the Third International Seminar held on February 18, 2022, for winning the “3 Minutes of Inspiration for Sustainable Development” video contest. She was awarded the “Grand Prize” for her video entitled “OKULU ~ Providing bicycles to children in Cambodia”, which covered issues facing SDGs. There were 95 video entries from 32 universities from around the world in this contest. The details of this video contest can be accessed at https://www.osaka-u.ac.jp/en/international/news/upcoming/ouintlstdgs/votgap/video_contest .

Mohammad MOINUDDIN, Ph.D.
March, 2024

