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Excitement and Surprise: My First Experience at the LD30 Conference

Joining the LD30 Conference was my first experience of being in an English speaking environment outside the classroom. Also, it was my first time attending a conference. First of all, when I first heard the slide show presentation, it was refreshing to see the presenters and all the listeners speaking English, and I was overwhelmed by the sight of them communicating in English as if it were normal. However, I was disappointed by my lack of English skills compared to the environment around me, and I once again felt the difference between me and the people around me.

Next, we participated in a student poster session. It was exciting to see people close to my age interacting with foreign teachers fluently in English. Listening to each session and coming up with questions about it was more difficult than I expected, and at first I was doing my best just listening and understanding what was written on the posters. However, I thought that I needed to communicate in some way, so I started by asking them in Japanese, “What is the content of this part of the poster?” After that, I was able to listen to it in English and ask various questions, such as why they decided to think about this topic. Although it was still difficult to communicate in English, it was a good experience for me to be able to discuss the English poster with students from other universities. Also, the posters were designed in various ways, such as using graphs and tables and making the text easier to read, and I felt that there were many things to learn other than English. I enjoyed Miki’s poster presentation, “Young people with no place to stay” the most. I was impressed that she presented social issues concerning young people in Japan. I would like to try the poster session next year, so I felt that I would like to use this poster session as a reference.

Finally, we participated in a story circle. I was trying my best to understand the contents of the slides written in English about “linguistic identity,” and when I was exchanging opinions, I was frustrated that I could only speak in Japanese while everyone else was speaking in English. However, I felt very happy that we were able to exchange and share opinions.

The reason why I joined LD30 was that I’m not good at English so I wanted to be in an English environment. This time I took action for change by joining LD30. I felt that the opportunity to exchange opinions with students other than myself was very important, and it was a valuable experience. Also, I am now able to talk more actively than before in English. Next, I would like to give my own presentation, which is my next step next year.