

Yoko KAGAMI(Graduate School of Arts and Letters)

Not only was this the first time as a graduate student that I presented my work in front of other people, it was also my first presentation in English. When my turn came, I tensed up terribly and didn't know what to say, I couldn't catch the questions, and finally my mind went blank. I was overwhelmed by my lack of ability until a professor from the University of Venice told me, "No one can do things well at the beginning. It was a pleasure to see your first step." These words encouraged me greatly. Moreover, after the presentation I received relevant information and advice, and had the opportunity to interact with students from other universities. All of these were very important to me.

This is to say that I benefitted from a variety of valuable experiences. I would, however, hesitate to call them 'good', as this might appear to be some kind of effort to erase the shame and frustration that I feel towards the poorness of my presentation. At the very least, these experiences were deeply meaningful, because they allowed me to recognize the current level of my abilities and begin to move forward. I am grateful for this opportunity and I will never forget the humiliation and frustration I felt. I will use these feelings to drive me to further advance my research and polish my English skills, so that one day I will be able to participate in a meaningful discussion during a subsequent symposium.

Tomomi FUKUDA(Graduate School of Arts and Letters)

I learned a great deal thanks to this symposium. Presenting my research and answering questions in English was a challenge, but the preparation, the presentation itself, and the interaction afterwards – all of these have contributed to my studies and further research.

Travelling abroad was another significant experience. While going overseas alone can be difficult, participants of this program received a lot of help and support. Because of this, I got an opportunity to test my abilities in a foreign country. Overall, this profound experience will definitely provide lasting benefits to my future studies and other aspects of my life.

Yu YONEDA(Graduate School of Education)

I gained two things through my participation in the Venice Symposium. First, listening to the presentations from other fields and hearing feedback on my presentation allowed me a clearer understanding of the position of my own research not only in my field, but also within the broader framework of humanities and social sciences. The theme of this symposium was 'Urbanization', with contributions from different fields of research. Therefore, I was able to situate my research in relation to urbanization.

Second, the experience of presenting in English for people from other fields has improved my ability to describe and explain my research in a clear way. Because of the

constraints of using a non-native language and addressing people with different areas of expertise, I had to make my explanations more accessible than usual. I gained a more precise picture of what I was doing in the process of reconstructing my research with simple words. I would like to make full use of this experience in my future efforts.