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**「ICT (Information and Communication Technology)  
and English Communication」**

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Information and Communication Technology includes the tools used to process, send, and receive information. Modern ICT encompasses radio, television, telephones, and digital devices, in particular the ones which communicate with each other or connect to the internet.

The pace of change in ICT has been remarkable. Let me use a couple of points in my lifetime by way of illustration.

First, it's 1996. I'm in my last year as an undergraduate. One telephone per household is the accepted norm. I still haven't seen a cellphone in real life. Though my home phone is now "wireless", habit keeps me sitting at the kitchen counter while I talk. HoTMaiL has just launched and tech-savvy people are starting to talk about email addresses, though the university's small monochrome Macintosh computers are for word processing not networked communication. I sometimes walk down to my local video rental store and come home with a VHS (DVDs are still unknown). On the computing front, there is widespread shock when a cabinet-sized specialized computer manages to sometimes beat a human champion at chess (Deep Blue versus Garry Kasparov).

Now, jump forward to 2016. Smartphones are so commonplace that some services, both public and commercial, are becoming difficult to access without one (the "digital divide" has become a very immediate social issue). My old primary school has smart boards for the teachers and tablets for the students, and communicates with parents only through social media apps. The UN General Assembly has passed a number of resolutions suggesting that internet access is a human right<sup>1</sup>. I exercise that right by using my payment and GPS-equipped phone to have Uber Eats deliver a picnic to me in the park. As I wait, I video chat with family half the globe away and browse

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<sup>1</sup> The UN Human Rights Council has now adopted five resolutions on "the promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet, starting in 2012 and with the latest in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic. See United Nations (2021) for the full text.

high-definition video skateboarding tutorials on YouTube, while my watch tracks my heart rate and walking speed. Phrases like “deep learning” and “big data” are regularly in the news and it is generally accepted that ICT systems can now outperform humans in many complex but constrained fields, including for example language processing, computer vision, and games; and even less constrained tasks (like driving a car on public roads or sustaining a conversation) seem tantalizingly close.

So, assuming my experience is broadly representative at least within the developed world, in about 20 years ICT developed from something used occasionally and consciously for very limited tasks, to something that enables and conditions nearly every aspect of our lives, and in some ways is starting to outrun us.

In this symposium, we examine some of these developments and consider their implications for communication in general and English communication in particular.

Our first panellist discusses a case study of using ICT to facilitate communication and solve an ongoing problem for local residents. The success could as well, I think, be presented as a case study of how important communication with stakeholders is in order to make sure that the ICT-mediated response does actually solve the problem. We need not so much the the application of ICT as the *appropriate* application of ICT.

Our second panellist address the questions of what jobs will remain going forward for English-language journalists and editors in Japan. Translation from English to Japanese and vice versa is one of those constrained tasks that ICT systems can perform ever more capably, so insofar as English-language journalists and editors in Japan were translators, they look apt to lose their jobs to automation.

Our third panellist discusses the technical advances in natural language processing and “big data” translation model training that underwrite these massive improvements in translation, grammar correction, and chatbots.

As our final panellist, I discuss ICT and language learning, including successes and failures, and how ICT is changing how we learn, what we ought to learn, and even whether we should bother learning languages at all.

(参考文献)

United Nations. (2021). *Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development*. Human Rights Documents.

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