

The 2021 Aichi University English Speech Contest was held on December 2nd and saw 7 competitors assembled online through Zoom with over 40 audience members in attendance. We were joined by special guest judges Laura Kusaka of Aichi University and Dr. Simon Wilkins of Tokai University.

We were also pleased to have two guest MCs, Kaede Sasaki and Miku Kato of Aichi University who commented on the speakers, asked questions, and made the entire contest much livelier.

Everyone who gave a speech was excellent in their own way. That being said, there are two aspects of remarkable people they all shared:

Knowledge: They exhibited knowledge of their chosen subject, speech formatting, and speech delivery. Each in their own right, a teacher of the subject of their choosing. The judges and audience all learned from the information and opinions the speakers shared.

Bravery: All the contestants proved their mettle by standing up in front of their peers, strangers, and teachers to give their opinion on a topic. All contestants should be recommended for stepping up to the podium.

While we could only choose 3 winners, all the speeches were excellent and choosing the top three was difficult for the judges. The winners this year:

1st place: Momoka Nomoto and her speech entitled, “The option to adopt rescue animals”

2nd place: Roto Ozeki and his speech entitled, “It’s okay to be vulnerable.”

3rd place: Ryoto Noguchi and his speech entitled, “Mackerel cans are an ally for making lunch”

The characteristics of a winning speech can feel elusive, but these three winners all showed the following winning qualities:

- They showed mastery of the subject: The speeches were detailed, with clear examples of their thoughts, so the audience could easily understand what they conveyed.
- They gave convincing arguments: Each speaker gave the audience something to think about in a way that nudged their thinking in the direction of the speaker’s opinion.
- They formatted their speech well: An excellent speech must have recognizable sections which helps the audience follow along and end in the place the speaker.

Be it the case to adopt rescue animals, allowing oneself to be vulnerable, or choosing canned fish to simplify and enhance one’s life, all of these speakers were able to clearly communicate their opinions, why they held them, and reasons why the audience should think that way too.

To all of the participants, we say, “Thank you for sharing your views and knowledge with us.” While there could only be three at the top of the competition, all of you are “winners” in our eyes.

James D. Dunn