

# Representations of ‘Internationalization’ on University Websites with Specific Reference to Seikei University

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years there has been a series of publications on globalization and/or internationalization in higher education (e.g., Maringe and Foskett 2010, 2013, King, Marginson, and Naidoo 2013, Killic 2014, Mock, Kawamura and Naganuma 2016, de Wit, Gacel-Avia, Jones and Jooste 2017, Westover 2017). In particular, Mock, Kawamura and Naganuma (2016) deal with various issues and examples of how Japanese universities are (not) answering to the call of internationalization.

Before moving on to the main part of the study, it would make sense to define the terms ‘globalization’ and ‘internationalization’. They are often used interchangeably, but in this paper I would like to follow the definition provided by Maringe and Foskett (2010). They state that the most widely accepted understanding of the term ‘globalization’ is “the creation of world relations based on the operation of free markets” whereas internationalization is a strategy used by universities in their response to the influence of globalization. Internationalization by universities is explained as their attempt to integrate “an international or intercultural dimension into the tripartite mission of teaching, research and service functions of Higher Education” (Maringe and Foskett 2010: 1). In this study, therefore, the term ‘internationalization’ is used to refer to both the concept and the measures taken by universities in their attempt to catch up with wider, economy-oriented globalization around the world.

Internationalization in universities is motivated, in part, by economic rewards as a result of international student recruitment rather than the promotion of an international culture (Jenkins 2014) and some universities exhibit a gap between their “strategic aspiration and strategic reality” (Foskett

2010: 45). Ferguson (2007) argues that, in most cases European universities have introduced English medium courses because they want to attract international students who are required to pay often higher tuition fees. This agenda can obscure the reality and practice of internationalization that universities claim they are engaged in. As Jenkins (2014) states, “when any university around the world advertises itself as ‘international’ or ‘global’, as increasing numbers do, we cannot be at all sure what this entails in practice” (3).

This study takes a university website as an example of such advertizing and aims to explore what the text reveals about what internationalization is supposed to mean for the institution. Specifically it takes a close look at the home page designed for international students and another that is designed for domestic students and examines any major differences between them.

## **2. Analyzing university websites**

One way of looking at a given university's ideas and integration of internationalization is to examine its webpages, as demonstrated by Hewings (2012) and Jenkins (2014). Hewing (2012) used the homepages of the University of Cape Town and the University of València to show that universities in non-English speaking countries often use English homepages in order “to *attract* would-be students, donors or sponsors” in addition to supplying information about the university (110, italics original). Jenkins (2014) chose to take a closer look at a total of 60 universities' websites (including six universities in Japan), focusing on their EMI degree courses to identify possible conceptual links between ‘international’ and ‘English language’.

While a university's webpages are, in practical terms, designed by marketing professionals and webmasters, most of the content can be assumed to reflect the policies and thinking about English language issues upheld by its senior faculty and management (Jenkins 2014). This study applies Jenkins' methodology to studying Seikei University's website and aims to explore how the idea of internationalization and/or globalization is represented and how

English language is conceptually related to internationalization/globalization on its web pages.

### **3. Methodology**

Jenkins (2014) took a social constructionist approach to her data, which included perspectives from critical discourse analysis as well as discursive or sociopsychological focus on how reality is constructed (84). She found the six-phased framework proposed by Pauwels (2012) useful for analyzing websites. This paper also attempts to explore Seikei University's websites referring to his phase 2: looking at salient features and topics – what is present and what is absent, phase 3: analyzing meanings in verbal and typographic messages as well as the layout and designs – and also absence in those features called 'negative' analysis, and phase 4: goals and purposes embedded and implied (Pauwels 2012: 252).

The multilayer and multimodality of information characteristic of webpages, however, require more extensive analysis that is beyond the scope of this present study. Again, this study follows the example of Jenkins' study (2014), which borrowed proposal by Knox (2007) and focuses, first of all, on the top-left corner of the screen just below the browser window; secondly, on what is at the top of the screen as opposed to what is at the bottom (where you have to scroll down); and thirdly, what information is presented in the central column. Such distinctions (i.e., top-bottom, central-periphery) are helpful in sorting out what is regarded important and what is not, because they are understood to represent "the hierarchy of information" (Johnson et al. 2010: 231).

### **4. Seikei University home page – English version**

In line with Jenkins' study with university websites (Jenkins 2014), the following analysis focuses specifically on the features below:

- how easy the access to the English home page is for prospective international students;
- how visual materials are positioned on the English home page and what

types of content are portrayed;

- how much the international nature of Seikei University is emphasized;
- how much focus is there on internationalization and globalization, and what they seem to mean to Seikei University;
- what “overt and covert links between international(ization) and the English language in reference to English language tests and English language proficiency in general” (Jenkins 2014: 91) are found; and
- what “meaningful absences” (ibid.) are identified in reference to desirable English language for Seikei University’s students.

Type ‘Seikei University’ into a search engine, and you are directed to its English home page. From Seikei University’s Japanese home page, the link to its English home page is found at the top of the home page screen, on the far right hand side, albeit written in a rather small font. It is therefore fairly easy for prospective international students to access the home page.

Once you are presented with the Seikei University home page (English version), the first thing that you see will be a picture of its main building. The red brick building, which has been standing for more than 90 years, is a symbol of the university and seems to represent the university’s wish to be seen as a place with history because red brick buildings are of rarity these days. This picture of the main building alternates, every four seconds or so, with another picture (Figure 1), which shows a group of five students, of which three are Caucasians and two are Asians (presumably Japanese). This picture contains a link for prospective exchange students who want to learn more about Seikei University on the right hand side, bottom corner, and on the left hand, side top corner are the words, ‘Seikei Institute for International Studies’.

When you click the link to ‘learn more’, you are directed to another page with a picture of the university’s modern-looking library and a message which reads ‘Welcome to Seikei University’ (Figure 2). Of the five sentences in the ‘Welcome’ message, four sentences start with ‘we’, while one is an imperative sentence with a conditional clause that has ‘you’ as its subject. Overall it seems to be designed to present a friendly and welcoming tone.

In order to find out what follows the 'Welcome' message, you have to keep scrolling down. The first thing you see just below the message is 'About Seikei University', which provides an explanation of where the campus is located as well as its philosophy, together with a flow chart, illustrating Seikei Gauken's organization (Seikei Gakuen refers to the entire institution which is comprised of an elementary school, a junior high school, a senior high school, and the university). You can only find out what kind of program is offered to international students below this.

The program designed for international students at Seikei University is only available for those whose home university has an exchange agreement with Seikei University. The first item displayed as part of the program is 'Japanese Courses', which seems to suggest an emphasis on international students learning Japanese language. The second item is 'Scholarship'. The third item is 'Life and Seikei University', which mentions accommodation at the 'International House', which serves as their dormitory. This section also mentions Seikei University students called 'buddies' who are available to help international students move in and accompany them to organized events. It continues to explain the role of the International Office of Seikei Institute for International Studies in helping international students with the application process.

Scrolling further down, you will find two people giving 'Messages', one from chief Japanese language lecturer, the other from a German exchange student. The messages are followed by many colorful pictures under the title 'Campus Life': pictures of the interior and exterior of the International House, students attending various social events such as a welcoming (or graduation) ceremony, a Halloween party, a *Tanabata* party (the Star Festival), and an excursion. This rather long page ends with various links within Seikei University's web site and the sitemap of its web pages.

The above descriptions of Seikei University's home page for international students are analyzed as below.

Firstly, the access to the English home page is easy for prospective international students. It should be noted, however, that Seikei University is

currently accepting only students of universities which have exchange agreements with Seikei University. The link available for exchanges students, however, only appears after an initial four seconds or so, replacing the main building picture. Some may consider this not very user friendly. The fact that Seikei University is only accepting students from universities with exchange agreements suggests that the institution's internationalization is *not* motivated by economic rewards, as is often the case with many universities which 'advertize' themselves to a wider audience (cf., Ferguson 2007 and Jenkins 2014).

Secondly, there is an extensive use of pictures, in line with Jenkins' findings with East Asian universities (Jenkins 2014). The first thing that is featured is the main building, but then the visitor to the home page is shown a picture of five students – three Caucasians and two (supposedly) Japanese. This seems to suggest that the student exchange is one between Western students and domestic or Japanese students, although Seikei University also has exchange agreements with universities in the East Asian region. The list of universities with which Seikei University has exchange agreements can be found on Seikei University's Japanese web page (<http://siis.seikei.ac.jp/abroad/kyotei-list.html>). The list starts with the North American region: two universities in Canada and two in the United States; then ten universities in Europe: three in the United Kingdom, one in Ireland, three in Germany, one in France and two in Spain; followed by ten universities in the Asian region: six universities in China, two in Korea, one in Thailand, and one in Malaysia; finally five universities in Australia. The universities on the list are presented in this particular order perhaps because of the world map that indicates where those universities are. The world map that is used on this particular web page shows Europe at its center, so maybe it makes sense to introduce the universities from left to right: from North American universities, European universities, Asian universities, and Oceanic universities. However, it may be possible to argue that the order was to give more emphasis to the institution's ties with Western universities. Other pictures also emphasize the presence of Caucasian or European-looking students (Figures 3 and 4).

Interestingly, the terms ‘international(ization)’ and ‘globalization’ are not found on the web page, aside from the expressions ‘international students’ and the ‘International House’, while exchange programs are managed by the office of Seikei Institute of *International Studies* (italics by the researcher). Perhaps it is considered self-explanatory that offering exchange programs itself suggests the international nature of Seikei University. Or perhaps Seikei University is not as internationally-oriented as some other universities. The philosophy of the university is explained on the web page as follows: “The cornerstone of the educational philosophy at Seikei is to guide and lead students into becoming confident individuals who can share their own opinions, while also respect the views and individuality of others” (<http://siis.seikei.ac.jp/incoming/>). The focus is on the growth of individuals and whether this growth includes nurturing their international or global mindset is not stated here.

As for the English language proficiency of the students, there is no reference on Seikei University’s English home page. On the other hand, Japanese language courses are introduced and explained. There is also a message from their chief Japanese language lecturer, emphasizing how Seikei University is an ‘ideal’ place for international students to learn and improve their Japanese language skills. The German exchange student, whose message is shown just below that of the Japanese language lecturer, also emphasizes how his Japanese has improved, as well as how his ‘advisors’ – Seikei University’s Japanese students who support exchange students on daily basis – have been helpful. Currently Seikei University is not offering any EMI degree courses, and that may explain the absence of any reference to English language proficiency expected of either the home or the international students. Again, the terms ‘international’ and ‘global’ are absent.

The above analysis of Seikei University’s English-version home page, which is about the exchange program run under their Seikei Institute of International Studies, suggests that, since the courses offered are aimed at exchange students whose primary aims of studying at the institution include learning and improving Japanese language skills and also because those students are not enrolled to earn degrees in English, there is no need to mention English

language requirements or English language classes. Pictures of students seem to emphasize the image and presence of international students from North America, Europe and Oceania, or those representing West, rather than that of students from other Asian countries. No mention of internationalization or globalization is found on the web page targeting exchange students.

The same Institute of International Studies, however, provides a different discourse for Seikei University's home students, as described in the next section.

### **5. Seikei University home page – Japanese version (Seikei Institute of International Studies)**

The Japanese version of the home page for Seikei Institute of International Studies (SIIS) is addressed to Japanese rather than international students. Unlike the English version, which only slightly, if ever, mentioned the international nature of the university, the Japanese version is peppered with the terms 'international' and 'global'.

When you visit the Japanese version of the SIIS home page, the first thing that catches your eye is the moving images that occupy the upper half of screen. The images are those of Japanese students and European-looking students talking to each other; two Japanese students and one Caucasian teacher in conversation; and European-looking students and Japanese students walking in front of the main building. Then the image stops moving when a picture of five students talking appears. The picture (Figure 5) is the same picture used for the English version home page of the SIIS (Figure 1), with one interesting difference: While the absence of 'international(ization)/globalization or of English language education is noticeable in their English counterpart, it stipulates, 英語教育と異文化理解を柱に真の国際人を育成する [*eigo-kyoiku to ibunka-rikai o hashira ni shin-no kousai-jin o ikusei-suru*]. (We nurture truly international persons and we place emphasis on English language education and international understanding: (translation by the researcher).) In this message that is addressed to their Japanese readership, Seikei University seems to acknowledge its mission to foster their students' international



mindset by providing solid English language education programs and the teaching of intercultural understanding.

From this home page the visitor is directed to four tabs: one, about the SIIS; two, study abroad; three, English language education and support programs; and four, international exchange. 'About the SIIS' provides what could be called its mission statement, and it states, in large, green-colored letters that, 小・中高・大 連携教育により、グローバル社会で本当に役立つ力を養います [*sho, chu-ko, dai renkei-kyoiku ni yori, guroobaru-shaai de honto-ni yakudatsu chikara o yashinai-masu*]. (Through the coordinated education from its primary school, secondary schools and university, we cultivate the real strength that will enable them to work in global society: translation by the researcher.) Here, there is no definition provided about what is meant by the strength that will enable their students to work in a global society in the future. Possibly to make up for the lack of the said definition, the above statement is followed by the next sentence, which is written in a smaller font and not in green but in black. 他者と協力することで新しい価値を生み出す「グローバル人材」の育成を目的とする教育機関です [*tasha-to kyoryoku-suru-koto de atarashii kachi o umidasu 'guroobaru jinzai' no ikusei o mokuteki to suru kyoiku-kan desu*]. (We are an educational institute that aims to foster 'global human resource' who can create new values by cooperating with others: (translation by the researcher).)

The term *guroobaru jinzai*, or global human resource, has been extensively used in Japan since 2011, when the Council on Promotion of Human Resource for Globalization Development was founded by the government. It led to the Project for Promotion of Global Human Resource organized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the subsequent selection of universities that would qualify for the funding for the project in 2012. It is therefore not surprising to find the term *global human resource*.

When you click on the 'Study Abroad' tab, the screen shows a picture of two Japanese students in front of posters about exchange programs, the largest of which is written in English. The picture is followed by an explanation of how

studying abroad helps students' learning and how Seikei University supports those who are interested. It states as follows: "In today's globalizing society, you need to be able to work together with people from different cultural backgrounds and work with them in order to solve problems. It is this kind of human resource that is in demand. If you experience study abroad, you will be able to not only improve your language skills but also foster a mindset that helps you understand different cultures. Seikei University offers various kinds of support to students who study abroad so our students will grow up to be truly international people" (translation by the researcher). Again, the reader is presented with the terms 'global(izing)', 'human resource', and 'international'. The discourse that is presented by the SIIS presupposes that university students should be aware of what kind of human resource is deemed desirable by any future employer and that universities that help their students attain those desirable qualities are 'good' universities. It then states that studying abroad is a very good way to obtain those necessary skills (language skills as well as understanding of different cultures).

The third tab, English language education and support programs, briefly introduces SIIS's English language programs such as extensive reading, English conversation sessions called English Chat Time, as well as their support for those interested in taking official English proficiency tests such as TOFEL and IELTS.

Finally the 'international exchange' tab directs you to, at the top of the screen, a picture of eight students, including two European-looking students, talking in front of a wall covered with pieces of paper in students' handwritings in English (possibly related to their extensive reading activities). Then, below the picture, it explains that the SIIS provides many opportunities for Japanese students to take part in international cultural exchange through events or the 'buddy system' where student volunteers are paired up with international students to help them in their daily lives.

The Japanese version of the SIIS home page uses pictures just as extensively as its English counterpart does. In addition to static pictures, it also has moving images at the top of the screen when you first visit the home page.

It ensures that all the major images include European-looking students (or teachers) and Japanese students together. International students from Asian countries seem to be either absent or just appear to be so. (Overlooking Asian students can happen because, to put it bluntly, Japanese students and students from other Asian countries look similar in terms of complexion and bone structures.) The predominant presence of European-looking or Caucasian students seem to suggest that, from the university's point of view, the internationalization that they are promoting is one that takes place between the Japanese student population and European students. This is in stark contrast to the recent trade volume and activities. According to the statistics provided by Trade Statistics of Japan (2016), the top three countries in trade volume in yen since 1995 have been the United States, China, and Korea (with the exception of 1989, 1998 and 2000 when Taiwan was in the third place replacing Korea). If the SIIS aims to cultivate global human resource in line with Japan's business trend, there should be greater emphasis on neighboring countries and therefore a larger presence of Asian students. However, there seems to be an emphasis on East-meets-West discourse. Since the web page is supposed to address prospective students and their parents as well as the institution's existing students, it is surmised that that is the discourse which is expected to meet their expectations.

Although acquisition of English language skills is expected to be an important part of students becoming 'international', there is no explanation as to why. In order to find out what kinds of requirement there are to study abroad using Seikei University's exchange program, it is necessary to go from the SIIS home page to the 'Study Abroad' page, then to 'Study Abroad Q & A' page. You will then have to scroll down to find the requirements.

While there seems to be a connection between English language skills and internationalization as the 'Study Abroad' page indicates, there is no definition of 真の国際人 or 'truly international persons' that their English language education is supposed to help nurture. On the other hand, グローバル人材 or 'global human resource' is defined loosely. When the term 'global' is mentioned, it seems to be placed in the context of economy, which is in line with the

definition of globalization provided by Maringe and Foskett (2010, 2013). The term 'global' on Seikei University's web pages so far collocates with 'human resource' and refers to someone who can work successfully in this globalized society. This seems to suggest that, while the concept of *kokusai-jin* – international person, or a person with an international mindset – is not made clear, when it comes to global human resources, Seikei University presents a more practical picture of someone who can contribute successfully to today's globalized economy. It could be argued, therefore, that the primary purpose of internationalization (whatever it is) of the institution is to prepare students in such a way that would help them make a living after they graduate.

The above analysis has been carried out on the web pages that are readily accessible from the SIIS home page. When you scroll down, on the right hand column, you will find a picture of a classroom featuring a Caucasian teacher and students with the headline, 成蹊国際コース or Seikei International Course. This is not a degree course but it offers several classes taught in English. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this is an area that is closest to the currently widely-spreading English-medium instruction (EMI) courses (e.g., Dearden 2015, Jenkins 2014; Mock, Kawamura and Naganuma 2016; Margić, and Vodopija-Krstanović 2017) which was introduced to improve the home students' English proficiency. Since this particular study follows the study carried out by Jenkins (2014), it does not attempt to go further into the multilayer of web page information; rather it focuses on the most accessible information. However, it will be interesting to learn what Seikei University considers 'internationalization' for both the institution and their students by exploring the visual and verbal information in this section of the website.

## 6. Conclusion

The home page designed by Seikei Institute of International Studies for international students is addressed only to those who are affiliated with universities who have exchange agreements with Seikei University. Therefore it has a very limited audience compared with those 'international' universities – for example, those selected by the Japanese government to take part of their

Global 30 initiative – studied by Jenkins (2014). There is no degree course offered in English and there is no mention of any English language requirement. Instead, there is an emphasis on Japanese language study for international students. The terms ‘international’ and ‘global’ are absent. There are many pictures presenting images of European-looking or Caucasian students and Japanese students talking in groups, which, together with the emphasis on the international students’ learning of Japanese language and cultural exchange events, seems to illustrate an East-meets-West discourse rather than a discourse of internationalization or globalization.

The Japanese counterpart, also designed by SIIS, presents a different discourse. The terms ‘international’ and ‘global’ are used, and while what the ‘truly international person’ they claim to nurture means is not specified, they use the term ‘global’ in the expression ‘global human resource’. This seems to suggest that the idea of international or global minded person is to be understood in association with a global economy and how successful Seikei graduates will be in the business sector. The importance of learning English is stressed but it is not stipulated why it is important in relation to students’ acquisition of intercultural understanding or international mindset. There is an extensive use of pictures, as in the English version, and again SIIS prominently portrays European-looking students and Japanese students in conversation. International exchanges illustrated in the pictures seem to suggest those of East-meets-West, just as in the English version of the SIIS home page. Finally, throughout the web pages, the absence of the definition of ‘international(ization)’ or ‘truly international persons’ by SIIS or by the university remains noticeable. Whether the omission is intentional or not cannot be judged. It is possible to speculate that, since internationalization is supposed to be a good thing and both the institution and the public take it for granted, it has now become dominant ‘ideology’ (Simpson 1993, Mooney and Evans 2015). Once an idea or value is accepted as ideology, it is usually not contested by the individual who upholds it. It can be further argued that Seikei University, therefore, did not think it necessary to define ‘internationalization’ or an ‘international person’.

## Appendix 1: Seikei University web pages and their screenshots

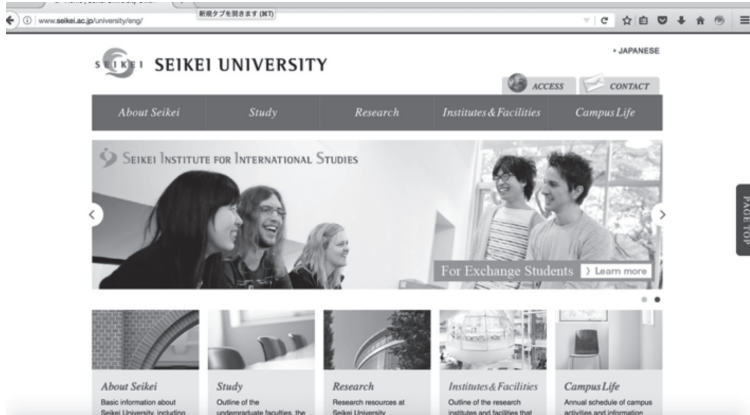


Figure 1: Screenshot of Seikei University's SIIS home page (1)

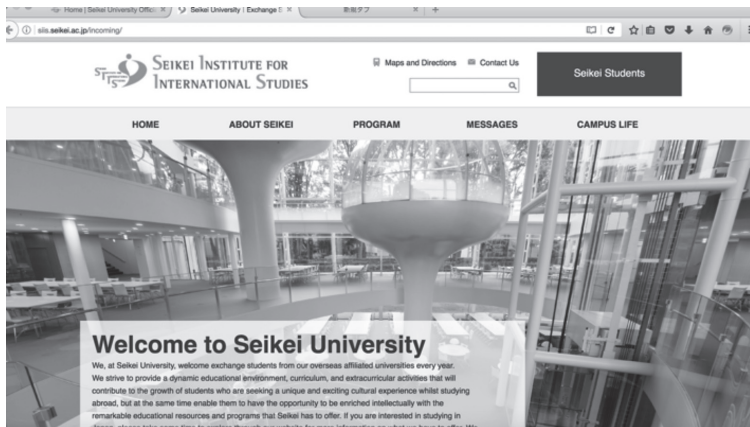


Figure 2: Screenshot of Seikei University's SIIS home page (2)

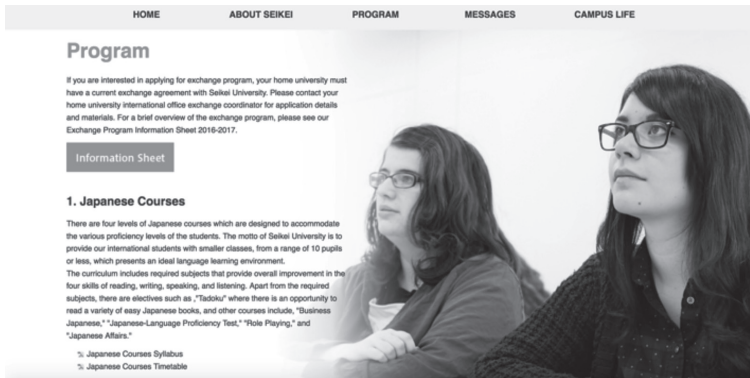


Figure 3: Screenshot of Seikei University's SIIS home page (3)

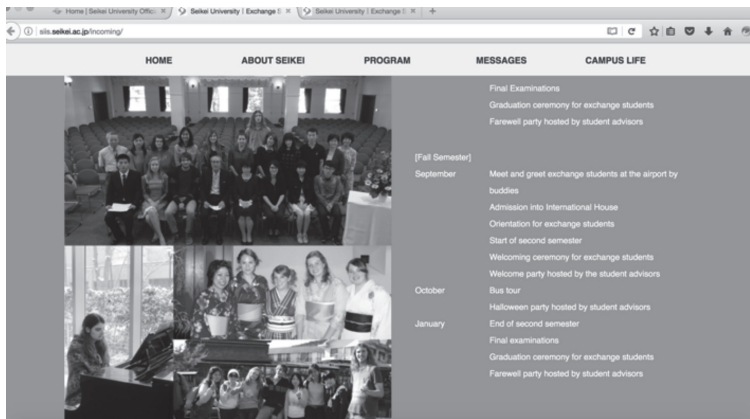


Figure 4: Screenshot of Seikei University's SIIS home page (4)



**Figure 5: Screenshot of Seikei University's SIIS home page (5)**

## Appendix 2: List of web pages

Seikei University Homepage (English version)

<http://www.seikei.ac.jp/university/eng/> (last accessed May 6, 2017)

Seikei Institute of International Studies (English version)

<http://siis.seikei.ac.jp/incoming/> (last accessed May 6, 2017)

Seikei Institute of International Studies (Japanese version)

<http://siis.seikei.ac.jp/> (last accessed May 6, 2017)

Trade Statistics of Japan

<http://www.customs.go.jp/toukei/suii/html/data/y3.pdf> (last accessed May 6, 2017)

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