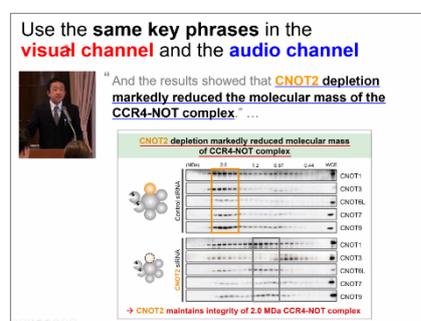


IMSUT FY2022 Online English Seminar Series Held

The IMSUT International Joint Usage/Research Center held its FY2022 Online English Seminar Series on November 10 and 24 and December 1.

The series focused on three themes: Presentations, Writing, and Oral Communication. These themes were selected as areas of particular importance for learners of scientific English in Japan by the series instructor, Prof. Philip Hawke of the University of Shizuoka, based on his 26 years of experience as an English teacher. In each seminar, Prof. Hawke gave a 90-minute lecture that included Q&A sections and group work activities.

In the Presentations seminar, Prof. Hawke emphasized in particular the importance of including sufficient information about the key idea of each slide in the slide title, introducing good and bad examples to aid participants' understanding. He also advised the participants to read their slide titles exactly as they appear on the slide when they explain slide content so that the audience will receive the same message with both their eyes and their ears. As English is not the first language of many conference participants, the audience simultaneously seeing and hearing the same key message reinforces their understanding.



The Writing seminar covered both basic and advanced issues related to academic papers. Among several key points, Prof. Hawke explained in detail the “zero article,” the unwritten property of certain nouns that prevents the use of the article “a” with them, a grammatical issue that is particularly difficult for Japanese learners of English. Participants deepened their understanding by looking for mistakes in example sentences before being presented with the correct answers.

Five levels of pronunciation errors

- 1. Inside syllables:** Say the correct sounds
protein: /prou tɪn/
- 2. Inside words:** Stress the correct main syllable
protein
- 3. Inside noun phrases:** Stress the correct word in word sets
We took several protein samples.
- 4. Inside sentences:** Emphasize new information
We took several protein samples. Two samples were contaminated.
Two samples were contaminated.
- 5. Inside paragraphs:** Emphasize relationships
We took several protein samples. Two samples were contaminated. The first sample contained laboratory chemicals, and the second heavy metals.

The Oral Communication seminar practiced skills needed in academic conference settings. Prof. Hawke gave participants practical tips on how to introduce themselves, how to respond in Q&A sessions, and what to do when having trouble answering. To learn how to introduce themselves effectively and concisely and to handle Q&A sessions well, each participant introduced his or her affiliation and research area, then exchanged questions and answers with the others.

While all of the participants had considerable fluency, they still sometimes had trouble expressing their thoughts smoothly in the practice activity, and Prof. Hawke introduced some filler phrases that

could be used while they continued to think. Through this practice, the participants had it impressed upon them that, in addition to English skills, the ability to interact appropriately in the academic conference context is essential for the smooth communication of their research.

The English proficiency level of this year's participants was in the high range. As few participants with lower proficiency attended the seminars this time, we would like to emphasize that such speakers are also very welcome to participate. The seminar is designed to be useful and easy to understand to speakers of all ability levels. We welcome all suggestions about how the seminars can be made as effective as possible in preparation for the FY2023 series.