

# ERC NEWS LETTER

**No. 1**

**July/2018**



## **Book racks**

The newest book racks in the ERC are custom-made and very expensive. Professor Kusuda provided the money to buy them. He retired last year, but we wanted to thank him for his generous help.



## **Russia travelogue**

In October 2017, the ERC had 2 graduate students present a travelogue. Hanna Takahashi and Kakeru Mikami went to Russia for about 10 days for a study trip.



## **Jack O' lantern carving in 2017**

Yoshie Nakamura reports about this event.

About 20 people, most Japanese and one foreign student, came. We were divided into 2 groups and each group had a pumpkin. Then we drew face, eyes, nose and mouth on the pumpkin. After that, we cut the top and pulled out the seeds with a spoon. Someone did it with hands, but the seeds were so sticky, so then his hands were getting dirty. Then, we carved the face with a small knife. We paid lots of attention not to cut a finger. The pumpkin was much thicker than I had thought, so it took much power. The hardest part that I thought is the nose. It was triangle and the smallest part of the face, but we had a lot of fun. It was first time I made jack o' lantern, so I was very excited before doing that, and also I came to love making it.



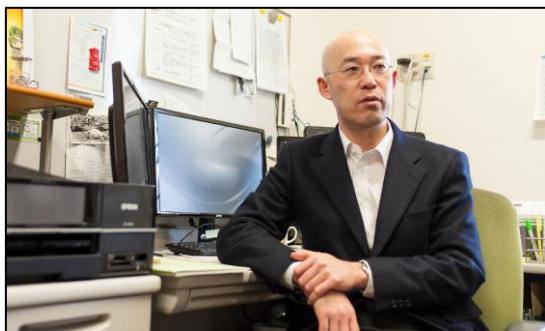
## **Christmas party 2017**

The ERC held its second Christmas party last year. We were happy that so many people came, about 30 or more. Foreign students were there, and so was President Okuda and Vice-president Inoue. We exchanged presents like you see in the picture, and everyone had a good time eating and talking.

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## ***Interview with Prof. Noboru Inoue***

Our guest this time is Prof. Noboru Inoue. He is a professor in Obihiro University and Vice-President of Research.

### ***Please describe your English learning experience after high school.***

English grades in my junior and high school days were terrible, so, I failed Chikudai entrance examination once. Later, I studied English intensely and was able to enter Chikudai. But I quickly forgot all English. Fortunately I am very good at memorization, so my grades in English and German were excellent, but my foreign language skills did not improve at all. I wanted to be a clinical veterinarian, and I did not feel the need for foreign language skills at all.

The turning point came when I joined the National Research Center for Protozoan Diseases. Because of my research topic, most of my students came from foreign countries. To communicate and teach my students, I had to improve my English. Also, I had to publish our research data in international journals. So, I had to improve my English writing skill.

But I had no time to learn English. To solve this problem I (1) learned speaking & listening from foreign students in my lab, and (2) learned writing English by writing scientific papers. I tried to read all parts of papers, instead of only

sections we need, for example, Materials and Methods, Results, or Discussion.

### ***Which English skill do you use more: reading, writing, or speaking?***

All skills are equally important for me, so it is difficult to rank.

### ***What is the most difficult part of English?***

The most important thing in learning a foreign language is to know the culture of the country where that language is used. I feel that many US and UK English words are influenced by Christianity or so-called Western culture, which are quite different from Oriental or Japanese culture. Thus, I am struggling to learn foreign cultures by reading many kinds of books, such as music, culture, history, etc.

### ***In your opinion, what are the differences in English that undergraduate students and graduate students should learn?***

Graduate students need more speaking and writing skills because of research presentations. They should increase opportunities to be exposed to English as much as possible. If you find sentences or phrases you like (from books, movies, etc.), use them. Lastly, you have to be interested not only in the language but also foreign cultures and people.

### ***What advice do you have for any Chikudai students about learning English?***

There are a lot of foreign friends in Chikudai, including students from outside the English-speaking countries. Please do not hesitate to communicate with foreign students, and improve your English via communication with them. Then you will be able to learn practical English!