



## CCCL Seminar: Professional English Writing Skills for Non-Native Speakers (22 Mar 2022)

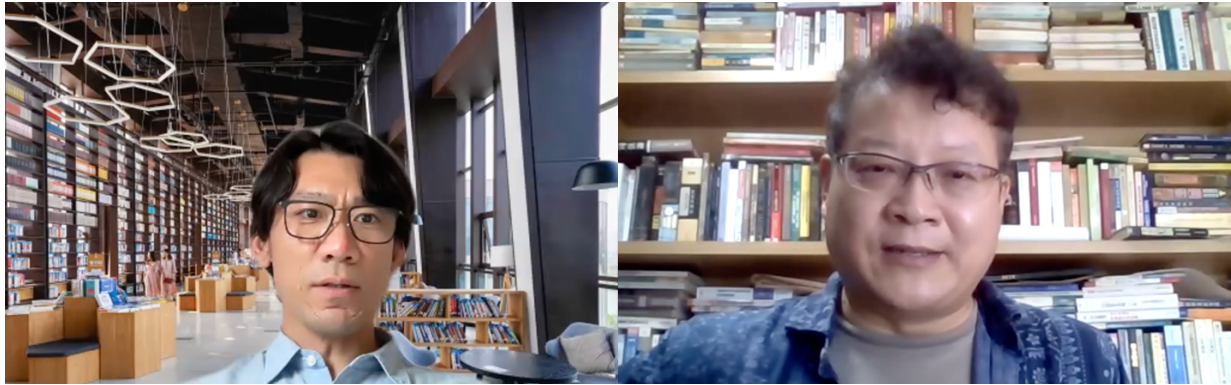
24 Mar 2022

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The Centre for Chinese and Comparative Law (CCCL) of the School of Law of the City University of Hong Kong organized an online seminar on 22 March 2022 to assist students in developing skills in English legal writing and research. **Mr. Wang Feng** has been invited as a guest speaker to discuss how non-native speakers could avoid common mistakes when writing in English.

The seminar kicked off with a welcoming speech by **Professor Wang Jiangyu**, Director of the CCCL. **Mr. Wang Feng**, Editor in Chief of FTChinese.com, has more than 20 years of experience in the media industry. He has worked for the Financial Times as Editor in Chief of FTChinese.com since April 2015. Previously, he had worked for 3 years as Online Editor at the South China Morning Post in Hong Kong, in charge of the English-language website scmp.com. Before SCMP, Wang Feng was with Thomson Reuters in Beijing for 5 years, first as founding editor of Reuters China Website (cn.reuters.com), and then as Editor in Charge of Reuters Chinese News Service. Mr. Wang first introduced four hallmarks of effective writing, including accuracy, concrete, conciseness, and clarity. He recommended to every participant a book called "The Elements of Style," written by William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White, which conveyed the principles of English style to millions of readers and made a significant contribution to English writing. He summarized some key writing elements from the book, such as using the active voice and putting statements in positive forms, omitting unnecessary words, and avoiding a string of loose sentences. He then emphasized that the inverted pyramid structure is preferred not only for writing news articles, but also for writing English essays. The inverted pyramid structure is as simple as putting the most important information in the first paragraph of the story and then arranging the remaining details in the nut graphs below, from most important to least important. He also went over how to deal with numbers when writing articles. In general, he advised participants to consider how much information their readers can take in at a glance and to summarize a set of numbers with a single number such as mean and median. Finally, he used Hong Kong and its infamous 'cum' problem as an example of some obsolete words that are no longer used. He cited Claudia Mo, a former Legco member, who argued that the word "cum" is an old English word from the colonial era that, if used today, will make people laugh, particularly tourists.

After Mr. Wang thought-provoking speech, we moved on to a discussion session led mainly by **Professor Wang Jiangyu**, Director of CCCL, who presented his insightful views on English writing skills. The majority of attendees jumped on the opportunity to express their opinions, many of which were thoughtful and innovative. The seminar concluded with a closing speech by **Professor Wang**, who thanked the speaker for his valuable contributions and all the participants for their attendance, which made the seminar a fruitful one.



Mr. Wang Feng and Professor Wang Jiangyu (from left to right).