

Preface

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This first issue of Volume XXIV is devoted to celebrating the 20th International Conference of the International Association for Intercultural Communication Studies (IAICS). The conference was held on July 31 to August 4, 2014 in Providence, Rhode Island, USA, hosted by the Harrington School of Communication and Media of the University of Rhode Island. More than 200 scholars and practitioners from 26 countries participated in this productive and successful conference.

The theme of the conference was “Enhancing Global Community, Resilience and Sustainability through Intercultural Communication,” which aimed to achieve the following four goals:

- 1.To provide scholars, educators and practitioners from different cultural communities with opportunities to interact, network and benefit from each other’s research and expertise related to intercultural communication issues;
- 2.To synthesize research perspectives and foster interdisciplinary scholarly dialogue for developing integrated approaches to complex problems of communication across cultures;
- 3.To advance the methodology for intercultural communication research and disseminate practical findings to facilitate understanding across cultures; and
- 4.To foster the importance of global cultural awareness and involve educators, business professionals, students and other stakeholders worldwide in the discourse about diversity and intercultural communication issues.

This issue includes ten papers. Five of the papers were competitively selected presentations from the conference, while the rest were competitively selected through the blind reviewing and submission process. The issue covers diverse topics from culture and communication to language and globalization, and the authors represent a diversity of academic disciplines and nations, including from China, Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, United Kingdom, and USA. The first two articles are derived from invited keynote speeches delivered at the conference.

The first of these two keynotes is “The Stratification of Cultural Networks,” presented by Professor Robert N. St. Clair from the University of Louisville, USA, and it explores a new perspective on culture by analyzing its multitudinous relationships among different social realms. The author provides an overview of what constitutes a mathematical framework for cultural theory and how it can be used to explain the social and cultural structures among various groups. He argues against the limitations of traditional communicative theory and enhances it with a communicative network mode, and further proposes a model of the torus

as replacement for how intercultural communication operates over time to overcome the limitations of social network analysis.

The second keynote speech, “Stop! Listen! Learn! – Language in Intercultural Communication” by Professor David Bellos from Princeton University, USA, problematizes the usage of a single language for international communication and the global community by explicating the upsides and downsides of this practice, both historically and today. As Professor Bellos shows, ever since the founding of the International Red Cross in Geneva in 1863 through the establishment of the League of Nations and its agencies in the 1920s to the United Nations and the World Bank that were set up after World War II, state-sponsored international organizations have continued to multiply and expand, as has the need to communicate across and within the global community. The speech questions whether or not we can even begin to understand another culture if we don’t speak its language, and suggests what we can do to improve global communication today.

The subsequent and third article in this volume from the research team of Steve Elers, Frances Nelson, and Rosser Johnson in the Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand is “Māori Perspectives of Public Information Advertising Campaigns.” In this study the authors attempt to investigate reactions to the constructed identities of Māori people in public information advertising campaigns in New Zealand. The results show that participants perceive the advertisements as reinforcements of negative Māori stereotypes, most likely the result of failing to consult with Māori in the process of producing the advertisements. In the fourth article, “Discursive Construction of Corporate Identity on the Web: A Glocalization Perspective,” Ming Liu from Sun Yat-sen University, China and Doreen Wu from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong use a corpus-assisted discourse analysis approach to compare English websites of the top ten energy companies in China and the US for understanding the process of corporate identity construction in the two cultures. As they discover, both global patterns and local preferences exist in companies from the two cultures. The authors argue that the results can be explained by the special functions of the discourse itself and the companies’ specific socio-cultural context.

From the University of Benin, Nigeria, Diri I. Teilanyo’s “Cultural Values and Norms in Intercultural Communication: Insights from Icheoku and Masquerade” is the fifth article in this issue. This study examines value disparities regarding interactional norms in and between black African cultures and their Western counterparts by using two media comedies, Icheoku and Masquerade, which illustrate and dramatize these challenges among interactants from the different cultures. The author concludes that understanding the differences of cultural values and norms is the prerequisite for the success of intercultural communication.

The next two articles, the sixth and seventh in this volume, deal with cultural perceptions of intercultural behaviors. In “Everyday Experiences of Account-Giving from Victims’ and Offenders’ Perspectives: A Comparison of U.S. American and Japanese Students’ Perceptions,” Takuji Shimada from Tenri University, Japan, Carl L. Thamel from the University of Louisiana at Monroe, USA, and Jiro Takai from Nagoya University,

Japan find that the perceived cause of the offense from both Japanese and U.S. American participants had a significant impact on victims' judgment of offense severity and reproach strategies. However, offenders' perspectives do not confirm most of the hypotheses, but further hierarchical regression analysis shows that a violation of interpersonal norms is a significant predictor of the severity of the reproach.

The article, "Judgments of Politeness in Russian: How Non-Native Requests are Perceived by Native Speakers," by Anna Krulatz from Sør-Trøndelag University College, Norway aims to demystify how native speakers of Russian perceive electronic requests from native and non-native speakers of Russian. The author finds that the requests from non-native speakers are perceived as less polite than the ones from native speakers. The author argues that the problem might be caused by the lack of linguistic competency in the Russian language, which leads to a failure in intercultural communication.

The eighth article, "Linguistic Landscape on Campus in Japan—A Case Study of Signs in Kyushu University," by Jing-Jing Wang from Northwest A&F University, China and Kyushu University, Japan brings linguistic landscape research into a multilingual campus in Japan by exploring how languages used in signs are operated, and how the campus linguistic landscape is constructed. The findings of the study show that students tend to maintain multilingual contact and greatly value bilingual ability in their daily campus life. The next article, "Multimodal Analysis of Graphic Novels: A Case Study Featuring Two Asian Women Travelers," by Kin-wai Chu and Simon Coffey from King's College London, UK analyzes two autobiographical graphic novels featuring two Asian women travelers. Employing the three-dimensional critical discourse analytical model developed by Fairclough, the authors unravel the genre of graphic novels in Southeast Asia as a means to empower both writers and the readers.

Finally, the tenth article, "The Mind in Motion: Hopper's Women through Sartre's Existential Freedom," by Zhenping Wang from the University of Louisville, USA deals with the cross-cultural influence of Jean-Paul Sartre on American painter Edward Hopper, based on the women in solitude in his oil paintings. Specifically, Sartre's philosophy is applied to examine how the women's individual agency determines their own identity that indicates the mind in motion.

To summarize, the ten articles included in this issue do not set out to focus on a single theme of research, but instead to demonstrate various aspects of the study surrounding the concepts of culture, communication, and language in global context by scholars with diverse cultural backgrounds and from a multiplicity of academic disciplines. The heterogeneous nature of these studies reflects the ideal and goals of the International Association for Intercultural Communication Studies (IAICS), which was established in 1985.

Lastly, this issue is dedicated to the Harrington School of Communication and Media at the University of Rhode Island in appreciation for its strong support of the IAICS-2014 annual conference and its consistent promotion of the study of intercultural communication.