

## Preface

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The 24th International Conference of the International Association for Intercultural Communication Studies (IAICS) was held at DePaul University in Chicago on July 5th-8th, 2018. IAICS expresses its deepest gratitude to the President of DePaul University, A. Gabriel ESTEBAN, as well as the conference conveners, Salma GHANEM, Xing LU and Shena RAMSAY, for their wonderful organization and hospitality and their strong support for intercultural communication studies.

The 2018 IAICS conference included 287 scholars (paper authors, co-authors, and other participants) from 40 countries and territories: Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Iran, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Macao, Malaysia, Malta, Morocco, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of South Africa, Russia, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, Taiwan, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States. A total of 148 papers were presented at the conference. Organized by the College of Communication, the theme of the conference was “Communication and Dialogue: Integrating Global Communities”. The conference participants shared research from diverse interdisciplinary perspectives, so as to engage in intercultural dialogue in a globalized world and promote “diversity, interconnectedness, and interdependence through open borders and intercultural collaboration as the antidote to the global problems of inequality, terrorism, and climate change”.

This issue of Volume XXVIII contains several sections: Presidential Address, Cultures in Contact, Interpersonal Communication, Pragmatics, and Social Media. Eight of the twelve selected papers represent the 2018 IAICS conference at DePaul University.

The first section contains the Presidential Address delivered at the conference by Robert W. VAAGAN. The author stresses the importance of our ethical responsibility as communication scholars and introduces an explanatory model of "why and how different types of ethical dilemmas arise in today's complex global information and communication system, which is increasingly dominated by the Internet and social media". The model shows the interplay of three factors: the pervasiveness of information and communication technology (ICT), the complexity of information systems, and the intangibility of information software. These, in turn, affect ethical issues such as privacy, accuracy of information, intellectual property rights, freedom of access, and freedom of expression. For example, according to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." However, given the pervasiveness of ICT, this right can infringe on intellectual property rights, issues of

access and security, and privacy of information pertaining to individuals, thus creating ethical dilemmas for international and intercultural communication.

The section on Cultures in Contact contains three articles on communication in several different intercultural contexts. Mariah PASTERNAK, Linda ROUILLARD and Samuel PARK examine attitudes towards Islam in French society by conducting a survey on two university campuses, in Pau and Lyon. The researchers find significant differences between the responses given by French Catholics and people with no religious affiliation. Munzhedzi James MAFELA studies intercultural conflict and traditional leadership in the indigenous communities of South Africa, in particular, the process of choosing a traditional African chief or king. Cecilia B-IKEGUCHI and Patricia ROBINSON explore the relationships between stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination among Japanese university students, in the context of teaching cross-cultural communication. The authors argue that teaching culture and communication should go beyond the visible tip of the cultural iceberg, because focusing on the tip "runs the risk of creating stereotypes" and avoids the deeper issues of affect and cognition at the bottom of the iceberg. For educators, "it is essential that we continue to address bias and discrimination and to help spark critical, compassionate, and creative thought and action among students about these issues."

The third section, on Interpersonal Communication, contains four empirical studies using a variety of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Dominique DARMON conducts an intercultural analysis of gossip, using semi-structured interviews and qualitative coding, and finds differences in the interpretations of gossip in the workplace among Chinese, German and Dutch research subjects. Dianjun GAO and Xiaoshu ZHU discuss the phenomenon of miscommunication and misunderstanding between Chinese teachers and Mexican students at a Confucius Institute in Mexico. Eliciting rich-description case study data through academic diaries, questionnaires, interviews and retrospective interviews, the authors find that "culture elements play an essential role in miscommunication, but are not the sole explanation for misunderstandings in intercultural interactions". In a quantitative-methods study, May Cho MIN and Jiro TAKAI conduct a cross-cultural comparison between Japan and Myanmar in regard to emotional competence, conflict management styles, and relational factors. The study is particularly significant for its comparison of two Asian cultures and their patterns of interpersonal interaction. In the last article in this section, Truman R. KEYS argues for using the classroom as a safe space "to tear down barriers to inclusion" by incorporating "the similarities - differences dialectic and the Staircase Model of Intercultural Communication Flexibility in intercultural pedagogy". The author utilizes sense-making activities which promote students' awareness of diversity and inclusion.

In the Pragmatics section, Yoshinori NISHIJIMA adduces linguistic landscape evidence of public signage in a contrastive analysis of preferred expression styles in Japanese and German. Comparing and contrasting corresponding sign expressions, the author finds differences in the perspectives of subjective vs. objective construal of events, in the negative vs. positive formulation of prohibitions, in implicitness vs. explicitness, in

the inclusion of politeness towards the reader, and in the attribution of responsibility to the administrator vs. the user of the public space. The study has interdisciplinary significance for translation studies, tourism, public administration, and sociolinguistics.

The final section extends the scope of research on Social Media. Through a double case study, Kenneth YANG and Yowei KANG discuss the enabling function of mobile social media applications among Chinese environmental non-governmental organizations. They find that "social media and their ever-changing applications have clearly opened many opportunities for ENGOs to interact with their stakeholders and audiences in their environmental communications activities". Yiping MA and Guo-Ming CHEN examine the impact of social media use motives on the adjustment of international students to life in the United States. Using a questionnaire survey and quantitative methodology, they show a negative correlation between social media use motives and overall intercultural adjustment level, which is interpreted as indicating that social media use may in some circumstances be a hindrance rather than a facilitator of adjustment. The survey also found that older students at the graduate level had better overall adjustment than undergraduate students, "but relied less on social media to gain social support, obtain information, and maintain relationships". Lastly, Hsien-Ming LIN investigates virtual communities on Facebook, established by Taiwanese immigrants in Belgium. The author finds that "Facebook users perform different *guanxi* behaviors and gain different levels of online social capital in various virtual communities", which may in part be explained by differences in "closeness and social distance evaluations" dependent on the size of the virtual community.

It should be added that the authors in this volume represent fifteen different universities in nine countries and territories (Belgium, China, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of South Africa, Taiwan, and the United States), reflecting the diverse membership of IAICS and the great success of the 2018 conference at DePaul University.