

Preface

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The second issue of Volume XXIX contains three sections: Cross-cultural Communication, Education, Pragmatics, and Social Media. We present a variety of international perspectives, representing China and Macao, Japan, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the United States.

The issue begins with an article on Cross-cultural Communication in the social context of Japan. Anqi HU and Jiro TAKAI investigate the imagined contact method of improving attitude toward the outgroup, within the context of Japan, featuring Chinese as the outgroup. Participants were asked to read imagined contact scenarios and respond to a questionnaire of measurement scales of perceived social distance, intergroup anxiety and outgroup evaluation. The study found a positive effect of the treatment of imagining favorable contact on the participants' attitudes toward the outgroup.

The section on Education contains four articles, the first two of which are on the current topic of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. LAM Tat Iong reflects on her experience of online teaching of international students who were unable to return to their face-to-face classes due to travel restrictions. As an experienced teacher who is at once a novice to online teaching, she discusses the challenges faced by the teacher and the students. Lourdes Evangelina ZILBERBERG OVIEDO and Xiaoshu ZHU provide a valuable overview of the experience of Confucius Institutes (CIs) in Latin America and the Caribbean in offering online and blended learning during the pandemic. According to their survey of all the CIs, they find that "it was observed that the disruption caused by the pandemic of COVID-19 rapidly virtualized almost all CIs' activities". They also note the challenges experienced during the process of virtualization, which include "the lack of materials in the local language, lack of time to prepare classes properly and access and internet connection".

In the third article in the Education section, Yunying ZHANG and Eun-Jeong HAN explore the effectiveness of technology-mediated cross-campus teaching and learning and its effects on students' intercultural competence. They report on a cross-campus collaboration between two universities in the United States, which "were chosen because of their different demographics, and therefore their different cultural make-ups", one being a small faith-based liberal arts college, the other a medium-sized public university. The students were enrolled in co-taught cross-campus communication research methods courses, and the effect of their cross-campus interaction was evaluated using the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale and other measures. The researchers recommend this kind of technology-mediated cross-campus teaching and learning as an enhancement of students' diversity and intercultural sensitivity, especially on small, demographically homogeneous campuses.

The fourth article in the Education section, by Youqi YE-YUZAWA and Norihiro HARASAWA, examines the career development of former Chinese international students in Japan and the influences of their developmental networks. The article gives an overview of the recent immigration policy in Japan and the situation of international students who

continue to stay and work in Japan after their graduation. The authors recommend that human resource managers should help to provide support networks for employees of international origin in Japan.

The issue continues with an article on Pragmatics. Yoshinori NISHIJIMA analyses the expression *irassyaimase* ["welcome, please come in"] in Japanese as an unreplyable utterance in Japanese in the context of ostensible hospitality. This expression is a greeting that is "often heard in Japan upon entering shops or stores", but unlike with other greetings, no response is expected. Rather, its pragmatic function is "to show hospitality or a caring attitude towards customers". The author points out a similarity in pragmatic function to other expressions of ostensible hospitality in restaurants and on public transport, such as *omotaseitasimasita* ["apologies for the wait"] or *tomarimasu* ["the bus is stopping"], which state the obvious and do not expect a reply, but show caring towards the customers.

The last section in this issue, Social Media, contains a study which is pertinent to social media and interpersonal communication. Wenzhen XU and Jiro TAKAI ask the question, "Why do people experience loneliness while using social media?" They expand the Cognitive Discrepancy Model of Loneliness from face-to-face to the digital context in two East Asian countries, Japan and China, and find confirmation for the model but also differences between the two East Asian cultures, which may be related to differences in the pattern of expression of the cultural value of collectivism. Because "Japanese emphasize a peer-group orientation" and "forgo his/her personal needs over the socially desired norms", when encountering "cognitive discrepancy between one's ideal level and actual level of SNS social activity [...], the Japanese would naturally accept the reality, and adjust their goals accordingly". "Conversely, for Chinese people, the need for self-restraint [of their stronger sense of individuality] makes the cognitive discrepancy more salient, and this frustration leads to dissatisfaction and feelings of loneliness."

It is noteworthy that the authors in this issue are affiliated with ten different universities and institutions from across the world (Brazil, China, Japan, Macao S.A.R., and the US), reflecting the diverse international nature of current scholarship in intercultural communication studies.