Istvan Kecskes (Ed.), **The Cambridge Handbook of Intercultural Pragmatics**, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2023, 1003 pp., $165.00 (hardcover).

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Intercultural pragmatics is an emerging field of study that focuses on how individuals with different first languages and distinct cultural backgrounds communicate in a common language during social interactions (Kecskes, 2013). Over the past two decades, there has been a surge in research interest in intercultural pragmatics, leading to a proliferation of approaches and applications. *The Cambridge Handbook of Intercultural Pragmatics*, containing five parts and 32 chapters, is a timely volume that provides an up-to-date survey of intercultural pragmatics research, presenting key concepts and research issues, introducing theories and applications, and suggesting future directions.

Part I lays the theoretical foundation with four chapters that introduce the fundamental theories in pragmatics, analyze their relevance to intercultural pragmatics, and demonstrate their utility for intercultural communication. Chapters 1 and 2 review the main development of post-Gricean pragmatics and elaborate on Relevance Theory respectively, focusing on their place in pragmatics today, their convergence with and divergence from the intercultural pragmatics paradigm. Chapter 3 reports findings of experimental studies on default interpretation in first language, showing the superiority of defaultness even in intercultural communication. Chapter 4 introduces the theoretical framework for intercultural pragmatics, such as the sociocognitive approach (SCA). SCA embodies both the pragmatic view of cooperation and the cognitive view of egocentrism, which work together in meaning production and meaning comprehension in intercultural communication.

Part II contains ten chapters that provide critical surveys of key issues in intercultural pragmatics research. These include a broad range of topics such as common ground, context, creativity, and idiomaticity. Chapter 5 discusses the interfaces and relationships between situation, context, common ground, and cultural knowledge and analyzes their use for retrieving the meaning of speech acts in intercultural pragmatics. Chapter 6 presents two different perspectives on context and discusses its adaptation and application in intercultural communication. Chapters 7 and 8 focus on ELF interactions, English as a Lingua Franca. The former explores (mis/non) understanding occurring in ELF context and presents strategies for achieving mutual understanding, while the latter examines the forms and functions of creativity and idiomaticity in intercultural communication. Chapter 10 proposes emergent common ground and highlights its significance in interpreting Internet memes, which always include an intercultural
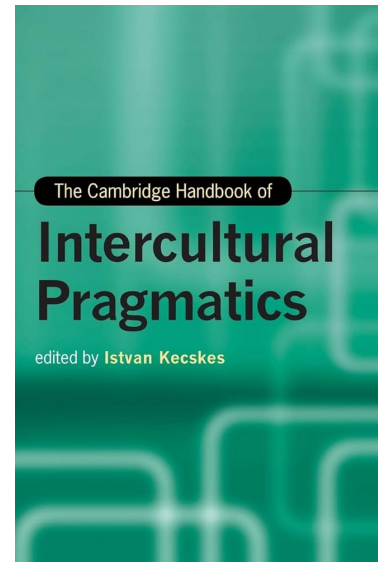
perspective. The other four chapters discuss metaphors (chapter 9), vague language (chapter 11), humor (chapter 12), and emotions (chapter 13), issues that represent major challenges in intercultural pragmatics research. Chapter 14 offers a comprehensive overview of the "most saliently trending research methods adhered to in current and recent research in intercultural pragmatics" (p. 362). This chapter is significant for those interested in the field of intercultural pragmatics, as it delves into methods of data collection, data analysis, research designs, and observational techniques.

Part III comprises six chapters that examine the interface of intercultural pragmatics and other related disciplines such as semiotics and sociopragmatics. Chapter 15 examines the role of semiotics in intercultural pragmatics, with a specific emphasis on the notion of semiotic code as a theoretical framework for the study of intercultural communication. Chapter 16 explores the dynamic relationship between sociopragmatics and intercultural pragmatics, highlighting their shared focus on the intricacies of interpersonal interaction in language use. Chapter 17 delves into the characteristics of ELF communication and suggests its parallels with communication principles and strategies found in monolingual communities. Chapter 18 probes into the relationship between intercultural rhetoric and intercultural pragmatics, focusing particularly on the influence of intercultural rhetoric on several other disciplines such as English for Specific Purposes and English for Academic Purposes. Chapter 19 scrutinizes politeness and rapport management through the lens of intercultural pragmatics, highlighting the influence of cultural context on intercultural politeness behavior and the politeness evaluation process. Chapter 20 demonstrates the effectiveness of a corpus-based approach to study intercultural communication by centering on research topics such as academic and scientific language in intercultural contexts.

Part IV consists of seven chapters that deal with intercultural pragmatics across various communication contexts, including multimodal and digital communication, as well as business, healthcare, political, and professional communication. Chapters 21 and 22 delve into issues of multimodality in online communication from an intercultural pragmatics perspective. The former discusses the interpretation of semiotic resources such as static visuals and multimodal messages in intercultural communication. The latter provides a multimodal analysis of miscommunication and interactive nonalignment resulting from certain misunderstandings in online intercultural teamwork communication. Chapter 23 offers a comprehensive review of research on online intercultural communication with a special focus on ELF context and multilingual contexts. Chapter 24 introduces business communication from an intercultural pragmatics perspective, highlighting language strategies and interpersonal issues in different business genres ranging from business meetings to call center exchanges and further to emails and social media platforms. Chapters 25 and 26, respectively, propose an intercultural pragmatic approach to healthcare communication and academic discourse, emphasizing its usefulness for clinical practice and academic writing. Chapter 27 analyzes the interculturality of conspiracy theory in far-right populist discourses by using the Dynamic Model of Meaning theory.

Five chapters that highlight the importance of intercultural pragmatics in language learning comprise Part V. Chapters 28–30 explore intercultural pragmatic competence, (meta)pragmatic awareness, and pragmatic and sociolinguistic learning respectively, examining their development from a more long-term perspective. Chapter 31 reviews the recent development of intercultural mediation in language learning, which is a recent topic of interest in pedagogy. Based on empirical analysis, the author proposes that language

learners need to be able to mediate between languages and cultures. Chapter 32 delves into the dynamics of multilingual classroom interaction from an intercultural pragmatics perspective, providing a comprehensive review of relevant studies conducted from the perspectives of ethnography, translanguaging, and conversation analysis.

The authors show a unifying theme throughout the volume with a common concern about intercultural pragmatics and focus on actual language use and interaction, aiming to "show where the field is now and in what directions it is going" (p. 8). Moreover, the volume expands the scope of intercultural pragmatics research by exploring its connections to other branches of pragmatics and addressing pertinent issues in various contexts, including computer-mediated communication, business discourse, healthcare communication, and pedagogical settings. Additionally, through the collaboration of globally representative contributors, this volume stands out for its integration of various disciplines, such as discourse analysis, communication, sociolinguistics, psychology, and second-language education. This highlights the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of intercultural pragmatics research and the diverse range of approaches it encompasses. Insights from related disciplines can enhance the depth and breadth of research in intercultural pragmatics, helping readers "better understand the foundation of the paradigm and its relationship to other branches of pragmatics" (p. 4). Finally, the volume features a variety of research methods for analyzing intercultural data, among which multimodal analysis and empirical investigations such as corpus and experimental methods have become very popular in recent years. Multimodality undoubtedly plays a crucial role in pragmatics when analyzing contextualized data (O'Halloran & Smith 2014). Various aspects of multimodality such as gaze, prosody, facial expression, and body position will "further deepen our understanding of how multicultural speakers understand one another" (p. 181). Experimental and corpus-based investigations of the dynamic aspects of intercultural communication provide the necessary database of conversational facts to test theories in this field, thereby contributing to theoretical development.

While the chapters in this volume do not adhere to a particular pattern, they cover various aspects of intercultural pragmatics. As a result, this volume serves as a valuable resource for researchers seeking to delve deeper into the realm of intercultural pragmatics, expanding their research horizons, and discovering new avenues for exploration.

References

Kecskes, I. (2013). *Intercultural pragmatics*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

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