

Research Statement

In the Facebook age of social media engagement, enterprises utilize social intranet tools like Twitter, Yammer, and Facebook to facilitate information sharing, collaboration and interpersonal connectivity within the workplace. Analyzing how gender and culture interact in such an environment, over computer-mediated communication (CMC), was the focus of my study. My dissertation explored the interplay of gender and culture in a prisoner's dilemma task. The impact of these variables in a trust manipulated game are analyzed through the lens of language over a computer-mediated medium. This dissertation was funded by the National Science Foundation under the grant, "Understanding the Effects of Culture and Communication Medium on Conversational Interaction and Group Outcomes."

Understanding what people say and how they behave cross-culturally can inform management practices, the design of social network infrastructure, and increase the probability for productive conditions among dispersed and diverse members of a team. Matching task-type to medium within an environment sensitive to cultural differences in work processes, conversational norms, and social conventions, can mitigate challenges that present when interpersonal conflict occurs. Trust, as the proverbial "social lubricant" becomes even more important in exchanges when people who do not know each other well are required to participate in a task using lean media for communication.

A welcome question at the dissertation defense is, "Given a "do-over", what would you do differently with your study?" Having conducted a lab study with human subjects, it is natural to seek out a field opportunity to observe and collect data. Particularly for cross-cultural researchers, there has probably been no better time to explore working relationships among Asian and North American people. Benefitting from existing associations among colleagues, it is my goal to continue this line of research among varied task-types and mediating technologies, expanding the inquiry to alternating cultures and variations on in-group (own nation) or out-group (visitor) affiliation.

One aspect of the analysis performed on data collected in my dissertation included a sociolinguistic analysis of the IM conversations. It is my goal to expand on this line of inquiry to examine the language in the workplace. As more conversations move online, I am curious about how one's workplace culture impacts language and in turn, how these cultural forces shape our language online.