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Towards a Transcultural Perspective of Internet Pragmatics. The 1st International Conference on Internet Pragmatics. College of Foreign Languages, Fujian Normal University, Fuzhou, PR China, 21-23 September 2018.

Abstract:
With increasing globalisation and digitalisation, convergence as well as divergence in pragmatic performance can be found across cultures. As early as 1999, German Philosopher Wolfgang Welsch criticizes the notion of “interculturalism” as “a conception of cultures as islands or spheres” and argues for a turn to “transculturality” which conceives cultures today as being extremely interconnected and entangled with each other. This keynote proposes a “transcultural” (rather than “intercultural”) perspective of studying internet-mediated communication. By “Transcultural Pragmatics”, we mean to draw attention to: 1) sameness-cum-variation in the use of pragmatic strategies, moves and acts in exchanges and interactions across cultures, and 2) the merging, converging and/or hybridisation of pragmatic practice in multicultural/multilingual societies of today. The contexts of internet-mediated communication to be compared and examined in this presentation include the use of Chinese versus English on the internet, ranging from personal communication (e.g., celebrities on Weibo versus Twitter) to corporate communication (e.g., Chinese vs American brands in internet-mediated communication). A re-visit of politeness theories between the East and the West will also be conducted in the process.