Editor's Welcome

Sara Baker Bailey
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The spring issue includes two book reviews and a series of spotlight essays highlighting recent research published in Communication Studies. Spotlight essays include:


• An essay from Yachao Li, Jennifer Samp, Valerie Coles Cone, Laura Mercer Kollar, Ralph DiClemente, and Jennifer Monahan exploring African American women's language choices (i.e., I-, you-, we-language, and hedging) during condom negotiation interactions with male partners.

• Jennifer Zenovich and Leda Cooks examine the question: What does postsocialism provide for intercultural communication in the #MeToo era?

Book Reviews


Courtesy of SCSU
**Book Review Call: Fall 2019**

For the Fall Scholarship Supplement, I am currently seeking reviews for the following books:

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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
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<tr>
<td>Steven R. Wilson and Sandi W. Smith</td>
<td>Reflections on Interpersonal Communication Research</td>
<td>Cognella</td>
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Additionally, if you have a publication that may be of interest for the scholarship review, please forward your recommendations.

To be considered for a review of the above publications, email Sara Baker Bailey at bakers21@southernct.edu with:

1. Name of the publication you wish to review
2. A brief (200-word) explanation as to how the publication fits within your areas of interest/expertise.

If selected, CSCA will provide a copy of the assigned publication to the selected reviewer. Submissions must not be under review by other publications. Reviews should adhere to the most recent edition of the publication manual of the American Psychological Association. The editor has reserved final discretion regarding the publication of all reviews. I would love to hear from you. Please contact me with questions, comments, and feedback:

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Scholarship Spotlight:


Over 15 years ago, communication researchers Travis L. Russ, Cheri J. Simonds, and Stephen K. Hunt discovered that college students would rate a gay instructor lower in teacher credibility and perceived learning than a straight instructor. At the time, Russ et al. (2002) claimed that this finding could be linked to homophobia in college classrooms. Their findings sparked an important discussion in the instructional communication literature that led some to argue that teachers may not want to self-disclose something so personal in the classroom.

Teacher behaviors and characteristics can affect students' perceptions of learning and credibility in and out of the classroom. Teacher credibility is an important variable in the instructional communication literature given that students' perception have been linked with cognitive and affective learning, motivation, and other outcomes. Researchers linked teachers' personal disclosure with increased credibility, but many scholars have indicated that the content of disclosure is pretty critical. Furthermore, disclosure of information alone does not necessarily promote higher credibility and learning. Those outcomes may depend on what is disclosed or revealed about the instructor.

The goal of this project was to complete an as-close-to literal replication of the 2002 article by Russ et al. (2002). We wanted to consider how overt disclosure of sexual identity in a college classroom might still impact credibility and perceived student learning over 15 years later. We also wanted to evaluate student perceptions in a different region of the United States. We based our hypotheses and research questions on the 2002 study:

H1: Students rate a gay instructor lower in credibility than a straight instructor.

H2: Students rate a gay instructor lower in character (trustworthiness) than in competence.

H3: Perceived learning is positively correlated with credibility.

H4: Students perceive they learn more from a straight teacher than a gay teacher.

Our Study: Testing the Hypotheses

We conducted a literal replication of Russ et al.'s (2002) original study and were able to replicate their procedures as closely as possible. Our participants included 278 college students from a large Western university. Most were first year students who were primarily Hispanic or Latinx, Asian, and White. Our sample was far less homogenous than the original study's sample.

(Continues on page 4)
Students were sampled in four different sections of a general education course. In each section, a white male confederate delivered an approximately 20-minute extemporaneous lecture on culture and communication. During the lecture, he used the name of his partner three times – either “Jason” or “Jennifer” (again, closely matching the 2002 study). Immediately following the lecture, the confederate left the room and a member of the research team instructed the class on completing the “teacher evaluation survey.” This survey contained McCroskey and Teven’s (1999) measure of credibility: competence, goodwill (caring), and trustworthiness. Russ et al. (2002) measure of perceived student learning, and McCroskey’s (1994) measure of affective learning.

Our Findings:

H1: Not supported. We found no significant differences on overall credibility between the gay instructor and the straight instructor conditions. However, for the individual dimension of goodwill/caring the gay instructor condition was rated higher than the straight instructor. No significant differences existed for either competence or trustworthiness.

H2: Not Supported. With a dataset restricted to just those participants who viewed the gay teacher condition, respondents rated the instructor higher on trustworthiness than competence. This result was in the opposite direction from the prediction.

H3: Supported. Credibility and learning, on both the single-item measure of learning and the measure of affective learning, were positively correlated.

H4: Not Supported. There was no difference in perceived learning between the gay and straight instructor on either the single item measure of learning or the affective toward the class. However, we students rated the gay instructor significantly higher than the straight instructor in affect for the instructor.

What does this mean for instructors?

Apparently, student perceptions of gay instructors, or at least the disclosure of sexual orientation, have changed over the past 17 years. Since the original study was published in 2002, same sex marriage in the United States became legal and protection rights for gay and lesbian individuals have increased. Correspondingly, our data shows that students did not rate the gay confederate differently in overall credibility from the heterosexual instructor condition.

Students might perceive the disclosure of sexual orientation positively if that disclosure is relevant to the course material. In our study, both the gay and straight instructor conditions disclosed relevant information about their partner to explain concepts of culture and communication. Thus, positive evaluations of the teacher for such disclosure would affect both the gay and straight teachers similarly and be consistent with previous findings. However, the gay instructor condition was perceived as more caring and are better liked (instructor affect) than the straight instructor condition. Perhaps students recognize the risks involved when instructors disclose they are gay. Revealing potentially more sensitive information may be related to perceptions of caring and higher liking.

(Continues on page 5)
When comparing credibility dimensions for the gay instructor condition, students in our study judged that condition as significantly higher in perceived character (trustworthiness) than competence, the opposite of our prediction. As noted, students may perceive teachers' examples using same-sex partners as riskier than teachers' examples using opposite sex partners. The instructors' inherent trust in students to reveal sensitive information may have invoked reciprocal trust from the students. Although opinions of competence may be positively influenced by relevant self-disclosure, trust may be uniquely affected when the disclosure is perceived as risky. Still, we acknowledge that respondents were selected purposefully in a different location (a more progressive school) from the original study and we may not find these null results in other locations across the United States. We note that the location for our replication was a west coast university in a highly progressive area of the United States. We suspect that these findings may not hold true for instructors who teach in other locations around the country or in schools that may not be as progressive.

Where do we go from here?

Moving forward, we would like to include student perceptions of instructors from a wider array of gendered perspectives by including perceptions of both gay and lesbian disclosures on student attitude. Although perceptions of gay men have changed, we do not know if students perceive gay male teachers and lesbian teachers in similar ways. Our understanding of sexual orientation and gendered identity is much more complex than nearly two decades ago and warrants research that reflects greater variations. Additionally, we would like to include students from a wider variety of locations and representing a greater range of people. While we do believe that progress has been made for gay and lesbian teachers in the United States, we are slightly more cautious to think that similar progress has been made for college teachers disclosing their sexuality to their students. That said, we do believe that these findings may provide some hope for LGBTQ college instructors.

About the authors: Justin P. Boren is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication at Santa Clara University. Mary B. McPherson is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at California State University at Long Beach. This essay is based on the article:

Scholarship Spotlight:

African American Women’s Language Use in Response to Male Partners’ Condom Negotiation Tactics

African American women are at disproportionate risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV; thus, condom use plays a crucial role in their sexual health. For heterosexual women, using a condom requires a male partner’s cooperation. In circumstances where a male partner is ready and willing to use a condom, cooperation is implicitly present; otherwise, condom use is often a point of negotiation. Condom negotiation is a goal-driven behavior aimed to achieve a safer sex goal. One way to study goal-driven communicative behavior is to examine the messages produced by communicators during interactions to achieve their goals. Specifically, people use different pronouns to achieve various goals in interpersonal interactions (i.e., using I-language to achieve self-oriented goals, you-language to pursue other-oriented goals, and we-language to achieve relational goals). When they do not assert their goals or are uncertain about their goals, they may use hedging language (e.g., “maybe”) to reflect their lack of commitment or uncertainty. Thus, we aim to explore African American women’s language choices (i.e., I-, you-, we-language, and hedging) when they have the goal of convincing a man to use a condom during negotiation interactions. In addition, because individuals often change their goals during the course of an interaction based on behaviors of a partner, we investigate how women change their strategic use of language in reaction to their partners’ resistance to condom use. Finally, pronoun use has been considered an implicit marker of partner collaboration that has health outcomes. We explore how women’s language use in response to men’s negotiation tactics is associated with their self-reported recent condom use.

Method

We assessed African American women’s language use during a condom negotiation role play with a confederate male partner. We recruited 193 African American women, between 18 and 24 years old, from the Atlanta, Georgia area. Confederate role-play partners (RPPs; N = 10) were African American male actors, between 18 and 30 years old, who were similar in physical appearance and selected based on their interpersonal skills. During the role play, RPPs consistently attempted to influence the participants to engage in sexual intercourse without a condom. RPPs were trained to utilize three tactics (i.e., attack, seduction, and information seeking) a minimum of two times for each participant. After providing informed consent, participants reported their condom use in the past 90 days. Then, they were randomly assigned to role play a condom negotiation scenario. RPPs and participants were given 3 to 5 minutes to get acquainted. After the informal conversations, participants were given some time to collect their thoughts about how to convince the partners to use a condom. After that, participants and RPPs conducted the role play, which generally lasted 5 to 7 minutes.

(Continues on page 7)
As each RPP engaged in attack (e.g., “What are you saying? That you don’t trust me?”), seduction (e.g., “I want to feel all of you”), and information seeking (e.g., “Why do you want to use a condom?”) a minimum of two times, coders first marked the first two times the RPP used these tactics. Then, coders coded the woman’s first utterance in response to each of these influence attempts to assess the participants’ language choices. Specifically, women’s language use was coded as I- (e.g., “I don’t want to catch an STI”), you- (e.g., “You said you didn’t want me to get pregnant”), we- (e.g., “We haven’t been dating long enough for us to trust each other enough”), and hedging language (e.g., “probably”; “well you know”). As three tactics were used twice each, messages were coded six times into those categories for each interaction.

Results

Across all the six attempts, women used I-language significantly more than you-language, hedging language, and we-language.

Women used more I-language in response to men’s attacks, more you-language in response to seduction tactics, and both I- and we-language in reaction to information-seeking attempts.

Women who engaged in more recent condom use were more likely to use you-language in the role play. When RPPs attacked, women who used more condoms were more likely to respond with you-language and less likely to hedge.

Theoretical Implications

Followed by I-language, women were most likely to use you-language. Given that people often resort to you-language that reflects a blaming accusatory orientation during difficult relational discussions, this result shows that, although women were most often assertive (I-language), they also took a more aggressive tone (you-language) in asserting their desire to use a condom. Moreover, results showed that women who engaged in more condom use were more likely to use you-language in the role play, suggesting that emphasizing the male partner’s responsibility and sometimes blaming their lack of responsibility may be risk protective. In addition, although I-language was used most often in response to male partners’ use of attacking language, women who used more condoms were more likely to use you-language, and less likely to hedge when male partners attacked them. The results indicate that women’s ability to strategically respond to a partner’s attack may be a critical skill that is associated with less sexual risk.

About the authors: Yea-Wen Chen is an Associate Professor in the School of Communication at San Diego State University. Brandi Lawless is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of San Francisco. This essay is based on the article: Chen, Y.-W., & Lawless, B. (2018). Rethinking “difficult” conversations in communication instruction from an intercultural lens: Pedagogical strategies for “SWAP-ping” the communication classroom. Communication Studies, 69(4), 372-388. doi:10.1080/10510974.2018.1472117
**Practical Implications**

Because I-language demonstrates assertiveness, you-language is risk protective, and we-language shows inclusiveness, sexual risk reduction interventions can utilize these widely used and accessible personal pronouns to teach women how to intentionally and appropriately ask questions about their partner’s sexual health (e.g., “We do not know each other so I need to know your sexual history first”), and how to encourage condom use (e.g., “We need to protect ourselves, and that’s why you need to wear a condom” and “If I want to use a condom, you should wear one”). In addition, the ability to be sexually assertive in response to a partner’s attack can be particularly risk protective. Thus, future interventions should also teach women how to cope with a partner’s potentially aggressive behaviors, and to incorporate those coping mechanisms with assertiveness skills. For example, interventions can help women generate safer sexual scripts that they can readily use (e.g., when a partner verbally attacks, say “We love each other” first [using we-language to defuse the attack], and then say “so I want to use a condom and you should wear one” [using I- and you-language to assert condom use intentions]).

**About the Authors**

Yachao Li is a Future Faculty Fellow at the University of Georgia where Jennifer A. and Jennifer L. Monahan are Professors, and Valerie B. Coles Cone was an Instructor. Laura M. Mercer Kollar (served as a Research Project Manager with the University of Georgia on the NLITEN Project, an alcohol-related sexual risk reduction intervention. Ralph J. DiClemente is a Professor in the Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University. This essay is based on the article:

Scholarship Spotlight:
What Does Postsocialism Provide for Intercultural Communication in the #MeToo Era?

At a moment when the international response to the #MeToo movement, the rise of global nationalism and, correspondingly, the increased marginalization of immigrants and refugees have directed popular and political attention to the legislation of women’s bodies and to their difference, we look at how the boundaries of women’s personal and cultural embodiment were adjudicated across nations and cultures after the Bosnian war. The Kunarac trial at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) was the first time rape was recognized as a crime against humanity internationally, but it also combined several firsts of particular interest to communication scholars: 1) the trial was broadcast across the globe, 2) the tribunal itself was multinational, but the justices were not culturally representative of the former Yugoslavia, and thus 3) the determination of justice was an international and intercultural negotiation of history and embodiment.

Global capital and capitalism drive multinational, as well as national and local determinations of justice. Judicial systems in most nations are shaped by the reverberating legacies of colonization and socialism. The Cold War and the end of Eastern European socialism help to form our interpersonal, intercultural, and international experiences of national belonging in an era of global postsocialist capitalism. We consider postsocialism to be a global condition that is structured through the material and symbolic equations of precarity and property ownership (Zenovich, 2016), and coincides with the manifestation of racialized, sexualized, and gendered hierarchies in the national transitions from socialism to late capitalism. Postsocialism argues that property is a constant throughout bodily relations to the nation across the world, and so we argue for its added consideration to postcolonial theory in analyzing and enacting intercultural and international relations of/for social justice. Relationships become monetized and commodified when they are institutionalized. Using concepts of (postsocial) relationality and performativity, we theorize how the temporal, cultural, and geographic positionalities of women’s experiences of rape can critique patriarchy and global capitalism.

We draw on excerpts of the Kunarac trial: one in which a witness gives testimony, another in which the judge offers reason for the determination of rape as a war crime. The intercultural communication of cultural identity and rape in these excerpts is contingent on the performance of embodiment in relation to power—imperial, colonial, patriarchal. These performances of embodiment, we argue, are imperative for the judgement to be rendered and celebrated as socially just on this global stage. However, the trial process and discourse obscures postsocialist histories and relations, and moreover, women’s value as national property.

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The ruling of rape a crime against humanity provides telling insight into how women’s bodies enter inter/cultural discourse to seek international justice. We should remain critical of the discursive and performative conditions that enabled this judgment, especially in relation to our current moment and thinking about the future of #MeToo in relation to “justice.”

Furthermore, we might question how survivors of rape can have their experiences validated in androcentric, neocolonial, and neoliberal international judicial systems. Does the ruling of rape as a crime against humanity in this particular international legal circumstance have any ramifications for the everyday enactment of rape all over the world? How does #MeToo or the celebration of the Kunarac ruling negotiate abolitionist politics? The Kunarac ICTY case demonstrates the precarious relationship women survivors have to narrating their experiences as their own and not as the property of the nation, culture, or abusers who reappropriate inflicted violence as their own devastation.

The focus on sensemaking is to emphasize the significance of context in leadership. That is, different leadership contexts require different skills and approaches. Particularly in such contexts as discussed above, the sensemaking process is useful for labeling organizational prerogatives. We sought to draw attention to the role of communication in bringing different theoretical concepts together to explain complex leadership experiences of African student leaders in U.S. universities. We argued “that communication is the linchpin that connects leadership to discourse within specific political, social, historical, or cultural contexts because it provides an important resource for creatively navigating such organizations.”

The Kunarac case shows the need to examine the framing of rape within and among institutions, cultures, and (gendered, sexualized, raced) bodies and spaces—as each is enacted and given meaning in relation to the other. From this perspective, communication is not solely a matter of institutional objects/texts (laws, media content) or people (perpetrators, bystanders, victims) but is how we make sense of and act on all of these relationally. Our communication about rape, whether viewed as mediated, interpersonal, or institutional (among other modes of conveynance) is always also cultural. Communication constitutes our understanding of what rape does and should mean, yet its specific characteristics of violence, violation, and pain make it difficult if not impossible to express from a personal standpoint, much less on a global stage. This discursive slippage, for rape survivors of all genders, but specifically in our study involving women, is not accidental but is embedded in intimate and global relations of power.

Sexual violence against women, in our article, was a communicative practice among men. The Kunarac case put the destruction of property as the masculine nation (as performed through/on the body of the woman) on trial. Formed to deliver justice to the uncivil Balkans, the Tribunal interpellated the former Yugoslavia into the global capitalist order by colonizing postsocialist bodies into the court’s jurisdiction.

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Rape, no matter the context or judicial weighing of consequences, is always an act both of intimate violence and a re-membering of (inter)national and (inter)cultural power relations. From a critical intercultural communication perspective, we act collectively as citizens through our interaction with the institutional entities and social identity categories that name and are named as oppressor/perpetrator or target/victim. These interactions show gaps in theorizing and legislating social justice, are enactments of discourse and embodiment and, as such, offer the possibility of change. Postsocialism offers an important view on power relations that allow for different mobilities toward and away from ownership of bodies and/as capital.

References


About the authors: Jennifer Zenovich is a Lecturer in the Communication Department at San Francisco State University. Leda Cooks is a Professor in the Communication Department at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. This essay is based on the article:

Book Review: 
Hample (2017) Interpersonal Arguing

Few topics have been in as dire a need for reassessment and understanding than argumentation. It seems as though society has forgotten the real benefits of understanding both sides of every situation, wherein a lesson can be learned by taking the time to at least hear other perspectives that exist. Moreover, subjective emotional claims, void of scientific or reasonable footing, have almost superseded the importance of a logical foundation in our political, personal, and social lives. So how do we argue to those who do not want to listen? Where do we start? I would recommend Dale Hample’s Interpersonal Arguing.

Dale Hample’s Interpersonal Arguing offers an incredibly compelling and well-rounded approach to understanding and explicating what an argument is and what it is not, highlighting the internal mechanisms, research findings, evolutionary traits, and practical application of the topic. Emotional representations are cast aside for a more logical and objective look at argumentation as a shared learning experience, a tool both educators and practitioners alike could benefit from.

One of the key strengths of this book is its attention to detail and applicability. Researchers in the communication field will appreciate the representation of empirical findings, analysis, and access to associated instrumentation. Instructors teaching courses on argumentation, or coaches for university forensics teams, will find use of the chapters on framing, relational dialogues, and the highlighting of culture throughout. Specifically, this book does a wonderful job in attempting to not only understand the formulaic nature of arguments throughout history and situations, but it offers broader insight into the myriad of variables that can make up an argument, providing specific historical and real world examples along the way.

It is evident that the author took time and did his due diligence to make this readable from cover to cover, or to use chapters piecemeal as supportive text. I would also go so far as to argue that almost any communication focused course could benefit from at least one chapter in this book. Beyond academics, this book would be useful for anyone interested in alternative forms of dispute resolution (mediators, arbitrators, etc.), especially the chapter looking at argumentation as a process which takes a more practical approach to diagnosing and assessing the goals and needs of disputants. Law students will also find use of nearly every chapter for similar reasons.

References

Patrick Idzik (M.A. in Communication from Michigan State University) is an instructor and researcher interested in conflict, defensive communication, and communication research methods.
Book Review:
Lindemann (2018) Composing Research, Communicating Results: Writing the Communication Research Paper

Many students learn how to write by trial and error through feedback from their instructors. Through this process of trial and error, students slowly get a clearer and clearer idea of what good academic writing entails. Kurt Lindemann essentially takes this process of trial and error based on instructor feedback and puts it into an easy to understand book, laying out strategies and best practices to help students navigate the writing process for various kinds of academic writing. Lindemann casts a positive light on writing, portraying it as something to learn and practice, rather than as something to dread. Often overlooked in the classroom, writing is an essential component to student success not only in the classroom but also in students’ future careers. Lindemann’s book meets instructors and students where they are at by addressing the gap between what instructors assume students already know about writing and what students actually know about writing going into the course.

Composing Research, Communicating Results can easily supplement any undergraduate communication course that requires a research paper. The preface indicates that the intended audience is upper-level undergraduates and master’s-level graduate students; however, parts of the text are also appropriate for students in introductory courses. While master’s-level students may benefit from the chapter on presenting and publishing, the other chapters provide information that is likely too general for most master’s-level students. The book primarily focuses on higher-order concerns (e.g., brainstorming and organization), but it also provides a few tips about common mistakes made in lower-order concerns (e.g., grammar and style). A few examples of these include alternatives to “according to” when introducing texts, clarity, word choice, and subject-verb agreement.

Each of the text’s eight chapters address either an aspect of the writing process or a specific type of paper: the first chapter introduces the book and is followed by chapters on brainstorming, making arguments, style and format, writing a literature review, application and reaction papers, writing empirical research papers, and presenting and publishing. The chapters offer exercises to practice the tips provided within the chapter, building blocks that help break up writing the paper into manageable chunks, student examples of certain techniques, and helpful suggestions for further reading. The chapters addressing specific types of papers provide a general overview of the function of each type of paper and provide strategies to start writing and organizing that type of assignment.

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The chapters addressing specific types of papers provide a general overview of the function of each type of paper and provide strategies to start writing and organizing that type of assignment. The chapters addressing specific parts of the writing process are helpful and provide clear, detailed explanations of how taking the time to do each part of the writing process well will result in a higher quality paper. Lindemann emphasizes the idea that there is not a single correct way to write by providing multiple strategies and examples for each stage. For example, the brainstorming chapter overviews several different ways to go about brainstorming (e.g., idea mapping, freewriting, journaling, fill in the blanks, abstracts, and elevator speeches). Further, Lindemann not only describes what students should do; he also describes why the concepts he addresses are important. This is particularly apparent in the concept of audience consideration and in the chapter on making arguments and providing support. Because editing and revising are also important parts of the writing process, I would have liked to see a chapter on strategies to help students with this too. Lindemann does offer brief suggestions for doing this, but since many students struggle to edit and revise their papers, a chapter dedicated to this could be a good addition to the text.

Of course, excellent writing takes time, practice, and patience. It also takes a certain level of skill and knowledge of what is acceptable and unacceptable for certain types of writing and writing assignments. Lindemann does an excellent job outlining the different kinds of writing students are likely to encounter and explaining the processes through which students will achieve success in that type of writing. Overall, I recommend including this as a supplemental text and assigning chapters based on the types of assignments in the course.

References


Jessica Kahlow received her B.A. and M.A at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and is currently pursuing a PhD in Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Her research interests explore technology in interpersonal communication and group contexts. She has taught courses in Business and Professional Communication as well as Human Communication and Technology.