



# Is intercultural communication changing the way we think about language?

**Istvan Kecskes**

***Distinguished Professor, State University of New York, USA***

**June 5, 2017 (Monday)**

**11:00 - 12:30**

**Room 408-410, Meng Wah Complex, HKU**

***(Chair: Dr Elizabeth Loh)***

## **Abstract:**

What standard linguistic and pragmatic theories assume about how things work in communication and language use depends on there being commonalities, conventions, standards and norms between language users. These conventions of language and conventions of usage (e.g. Morgan 1978; Searle 1979) create a core common ground on which intention and cooperation-based communication is built. When, however, this core common ground is limited as is the case in intercultural communication interlocutors cannot take them for granted, rather they need to co-construct them, at least temporarily. In the talk I will argue that this difference between L1 communication and intercultural communication may change our understanding of language in four aspects:

- 1) Shifts emphasis from the communal to the individual,
- 2) Modifies our understanding of linguistic creativity,
- 3) Alters the nature of the semantic/pragmatic interface,
- 4) Changes the role of context in language use.

The presentation will discuss these four issues through several examples from actual language use.

## **About the speaker:**

**ISTVAN KECSKES** is Distinguished Professor of the State University of New York, USA. He teaches graduate courses in pragmatics, second language acquisition and bilingualism at SUNY, Albany. Professor Kecskes is the President of the American Pragmatics Association (AMPRA) and the CASLAR (Chinese as a Second Language Research) Association. He is the founder and co-director of the Barcelona Summer School on Bi- and Multilingualism, and the founder and co-director of Sorbonne, Paris – SUNY, Albany Graduate Student Symposium.

His book "Foreign language and mother tongue" co-authored by Tunde Papp and published by Erlbaum in 2000 was the first book that described the effect of the second language on the first language based on a longitudinal research. Dr. Kecskes' book "Intercultural Pragmatics" published by Oxford University Press in 2013 is considered a groundbreaking monograph that shapes research in the field. His latest book is "Explorations in Chinese as a Second Language" published by Springer in 2017. Currently he is working on a new book titled "English as a Lingua Franca: The pragmatic perspective" to be published by Cambridge University Press in 2017.

Dr. Kecskes received a Senior Fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation in the Rockefeller Research Center in Bellagio, Italy in 2004, a Senior Fellowship from the Mitteleuropa Foundation, Bolzano, Italy in 2005, a Honorary Professorship from Zhejiang University, Hangzhou in 2009, a Yunshan Chair Professorship from Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Guangzhou, China in 2011, a Distinguished Visiting Professorship from Monash University, Melbourne, Australia in 2013 and from the University of Messina in 2017. He was the recipient of the Chancellor's Excellence in Research Award of State University of New York in 2014.

**~ All are welcome ~**

**For enquiries, please contact the Office of Research at 3917 8254.**