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## **Editorial**

Volume 12 of *Language and Intercultural Communication* will comprise the usual two open issues and two special issues. However, we will break with our regular alternate ordering, in as much as the volume will be topped and tailed with open issues, with two special issues in between. The June issue, edited by guest editors Miri Gal-Ezer and Khalil Rinnawi, will bring together a highly pertinent collection which considers *Conflict and Coexistence- in between Nationality and Globalization*. The September special issue, edited by Marie-Noëlle Guillot, will feature a collection of papers entitled *Intercultural Communication at a Theoretical and Methodological Crossroads: Cultural and Media Interfaces*. At present we still have capacity to accommodate submissions for the December 2012 issue.

The papers in this issue cluster around two themes: the discursive construction of culture and identity; and the relationship between FL pedagogy and policy. It features data from China, Germany, Canada, New Zealand – and the Holy See. At the end of this editorial we also feature for the first time a short update from the co-Chairs of our Association, the *International Association of Language and Intercultural Communication* (IALIC). We hope this will become a regular feature to enable readers to keep up with association news, and in particular news of forthcoming association meetings.

### *The discursive construction of culture and identity*

The first three papers in this issue analyse very different types of text in order to tease out radical implications for the constitution of identity and the realization of culture. Both Fred Dervin & Emily Gao and Andreas Musolff consider the relationship between very different public narratives of culture and the construction of individual and national identities. While Dervin and Gao suggest that the discursive constitution of the identities of a Sino-Armenian

couple on Chinese television resist glib classification from the purview of their respective cultural origins, Andreas Musloff explores the conceptual blending of a national foundation myth with a discursive framework which is simultaneously local and global. Then, Alain Wolf analyses three contemporary documents on inter-religious dialogue to suggest that inter-religious dialogue is central to intercultural understanding.

Dervin and Gao explore the ways in which the identities of intercultural couples are constructed in the media, here with particular reference to data collected from television programmes in China. Contra modernist configurations which rely upon static and monolithic conceptualisations of identity and culture, this paper takes a more radical, social constructionist approach, in order to analyse the multiperspectival ways in which the identities of a Sino-Armenian couple are discursively constituted in a Chinese soap. Underlying the study appears to be the assumption that there is no inherent distinction between mediated constructions of identity and relationship and those in everyday life, since both are discursively constituted. The paper concludes by suggesting that while this modern soap is homologous with the narrative structure of other 'global fairy tales', the identities of the characters in the show ultimately resist easy categorisation into 'culturalist' categories and maintain an indissoluble 'in-betweenness' and hybridity.

In 9 A.D. Germanic tribes led by the mythic figure of Arminius, or Hermann in its later Germanised form, inflicted a comprehensive and humiliating defeat upon invading Roman legions in the Teutoburg Forest. For centuries later, the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest was used as a reference point for nationalist narratives of victorious German(ic) resistance against threats of conquest and invasion. Our second paper, by Andreas Musloff, analyses how the deployment of nationalist narrative accounts of the first century battle were superseded as the focal point for nationalist discourses in the battle's anniversary year of

2009. Instead the battle was reconfigured as a ‘symbol of inter-cultural diversity and international reconciliation’. In so doing, Andreas Musolff distils a large and variegated corpus comprising historical collections of Latin and Greek sources and translations as well as stories and essays about the battle, contemporary accounts in detective novels and children’s literature, newspaper articles, magazines and weblogs websites “wiki”-pages. The paper grounds an interpretative approach towards these texts on ‘conceptual integration’ theory (after Fauconnier & Turner 1998, 2002) and the ways in which is used in critical analysis of discourse and history (e.g. Wodak & Reisigl 2009; Musolff 2010). Musolff describes how in the 2000th anniversary celebrations, the ancient battle became instead a symbol for inter-cultural diversity and international reconciliation. In this, the public commemoration supersedes the significance of the narrative of for national(ist) identity-constructions by becoming foregrounded in its regional and local associations. Here, historical events are re-used in humorous characterisations of the modern inhabitants of Westphalia, there is a new emphasis on cultural exchanges in scholarly and popular representations of Roman-Germanic encounters in Antiquity, and the nationalist-chauvinist narrative tradition is subjected to critique. In a hybridised conceptual blend, the victorious Germanic warlord Arminius, or Hermann, remains recognisable as the local hero but at the same time he is re-interpreted through appeal to a global universal humanitarianism and a spirit of optimism and hope about inter-cultural encounters.

The third paper, by Alain Wolf, engages with contemporary theories of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue found in the areas of linguistic pragmatics and intercultural theology. Wolf’s argument suggests that recent contributions which address the notion of intercultural identity (e.g. Holliday et al., 2004; Monceri, 2009) fall short in as much as they fail to address issues of religion and inter-religious dialogue. By engaging in a detailed analysis of three

contemporary religious documents, Wolf proposes an alternative conception of the individual subject that incorporates a polyphonic articulation of the self. In order to do this, the paper draws on Ducrot's (1984) Bakhtian theory of polyphony to explore the role that dialogism has on our understanding of inter-religious encounters. Through reference to three contemporary documents on inter-religious dialogue, it argues against the privileging of the secular nation state in the enactment of the intercultural and appears to reach the powerful conclusion that intercultural dialogue is in simply not possible without an inter-religious encounter.

### *Language pedagogy, policy and culture*

Our final pair of papers consider the ways in which the issues of culture and interculturality inform language policy and FL pedagogy in two different contexts: New Zealand and Anglophone Canada. For over 30 years now, communicative approaches to foreign language teaching, and in particular the teaching of English, have been accused of failing to embed culture and interculturality within a language teaching pedagogy (Byram, 1989). Cultural knowledge is still all too often simply tacked on to the language class in order to learn facts about the target country (Dasli, 2012). Martin East's paper brings empirical evidence to bear on whether task-based language teaching (TBLT) can successfully address the intercultural dimension. East's consideration of the intercultural potential of TBLT takes place in the context of recent developments in FL teaching and learning in New Zealand. A new national curriculum for schools in New Zealand was introduced which features a major strand which focused on learning languages. A series of one-to-one interviews are used to explore FL practitioners' current understandings of cultural knowledge, and how these understandings influence their practices. While several teachers in the study agreed that they regard exploring knowledge about the target culture as an integral part of language learning,

evidence suggests that they failed to recognize the potential of language learning tasks for achieving this. East concludes that at least in language classrooms in New Zealand, the cultural knowledge strand of the new curriculum area requires requires more explicit incorporation into learning tasks if teachers are to help their students fully realize its potential. This is an interesting study for those of us engaged in language teaching and learning, as it demonstrates that while there has been considerable raising of the awareness of the importance of having an intercultural element to language teaching and learning, its dissemination into practice has still been sluggish - despite the best efforts of colleagues (e.g. Corbett, 2002, Halliday et al, 2004; Phipps, 2007; Dooly, 2009).

In the concluding paper in this issue, Callie Mady explores the implications of Canada's official bilingual status on young immigrant undergraduates who study in Canadian universities. She investigates these young adults' perceptions of French as a second official language (FSOL) learning in "English-dominant" regions of Canada. After attrition, responses to a survey were received in all from 125 post-secondary school students, representing a sizeable sample. Four interviews were also conducted with volunteers in order to provide richer insights into the students' experience. Participants reveal that they invest in FSOL with the goal of adding French to their multilingual repertoire that includes English primarily in hopes of future economic gain. Examining the data through the lens of investment (Norton, 2000), Mady posits that access to FSOL as an investment and conversion of the investment into economic gain is mitigated by unequal positions of power that highlight Canada's emphasis on official language bilingualism to the practical exclusion of multilingualism. She suggests that changing unequal practices may require a two-way relation between education and society (Cenoz & Gorter, 2010). The paper concludes that,

rather than having language education in Canada reflect the official discourse, education be used as a means to influence the discourse and practice in order to include all languages.

### *Book reviews*

This issue also sees the continuation of our revived book reviews section. Tözün Issa reviews Melinda Dooly's (2009) edited collection which looks at the ways in which language teachers make sense of their language classrooms; Tao Xiong reviews Xiaoye You's intercultural account of the history of English language teaching and learning in China from 1856. We welcome contributions to this section of our journal; please contact our reviews editor, Melinda Dooly (MelindaAnn.Dooly@uab.cat) if you want to contribute a review.

*Chairs' Notes: from Prue Holmes (University of Durham) and Veronica Crosbie (Dublin City University).*

Much of the research published in *Language and Intercultural Communication* was first presented in the conferences of its affiliated association, the *International Association of Languages and Intercultural Communication* (IALIC). IALIC's next conference will be held at Durham University, UK, from 30th Nov-2nd Dec. The conference welcomes scholarly research that addresses theoretical, empirical, and pedagogic issues in languages and intercultural communication. The conference also has an interdisciplinary focus, encouraging papers from broader areas of intercultural studies, tourism and management, cultural studies, media, translation, intercultural relations, etc. More details about this conference will be appearing in due course.

IALIC's membership has spread to East and South-East Asia, resulting in a symposium hosted by the Institute of Occidental Studies (IKON), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, which was held from 9-10 December, 2011. If you would like to know more about IALIC and association membership go to <http://www.weblearn.eu/IALIC/wp/>. Membership includes free copies of the journal (four issues a year). For further information about the conference you may contact the co-Chairs, Prue Holmes ([p.m.holmes@durham.ac.uk](mailto:p.m.holmes@durham.ac.uk)) or (Veronica Crosbie [veronica.crosbie@dcu.ie](mailto:veronica.crosbie@dcu.ie)).

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