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Editorial

Over the sixty years or so during which the area of intercultural communication has been framed as a recognisable interdisciplinary area of study (Martin, Nakayama and Carbaugh, 2012), it has often been constituted through research methodologies which employ the machinery of the natural sciences to investigate human behaviours – quantitative instruments and statistical measurement with their accompanying rubrics of ‘validity’ and ‘reliability’. Even our once pliable and humanistic engagement with the other through the humble interview has become subjected to a whole paraphernalia of coding, classification of themes and categories, and ethical approvals (Phipps, 2013). At times these are necessary protocols to wheel out for particular purposes. However, within our Association and within this journal we certainly do not subscribe to the view that these are the most important vehicles with which to investigate our field, or even necessary ones. While the consequences of the research assessment regimes which have burgeoned internationally as the drivers of departmental research funding drive us to seek refuge in more predictable, conventional and quite possibly less revealing systems of positivity, it remains refreshing that there are many researchers in our field that remain bold enough to explore less predictable, more risky and arguably more revealing approaches to intercultural research.

The submissions to our concluding issue of LAIC 2015 engage with the two autochthonous contexts of intercultural communication – education (Ahn, Jacobsen, Bloom and Miranda, Starks and Willoughby, Erdmann) and the workplace (Baraldi and Luppi, Lahti). While intercultural communication often entails a period of sojourn in a ‘foreign’ culture – be it a new university, country or company - running through some of the papers also is our perennial theme of migration (Baraldi and Luppi, Starks and Willoughby, Erdmann) – although in many respects this is only a measure of how long the period of sojourn takes place. We also feature an unusual contribution from Alain Wolf which engages with the 19th century imagination in his exploration of the use of French in a novel by George Eliot, hardly a person many of us would regard as an exponent of intercultural communication. Apart from this historical shift, the intercultural contexts addressed in this issue range from immersion language learning camps in Korea (Ahn) to a study abroad programme in Salamanca (Bloom and Miranda); from secondary schools in Australia and Norway (Starks and Willoughby, Erdmann) to seminars in a Danish business school (Jacobsen); and from women’s health centres in Italy (Baraldi and Luppi) to the technologically-mediated communication of an internationally dispersed team (Lahti).

Arguably, and not without some justifiably persistent controversy, English remains the language promoted in many countries as an index of global citizenship. In South Korea this is especially the case, with the widespread study of English being endorsed by the national government and sought after by members of the South Korean elite for their offspring. To enhance the pursuit of ‘authentic’ English, over fifty camps have grown up across the country, where mostly secondary school students travel for a few weeks’ sojourn in order to mingle with largely ‘native’ speakers of English. In an analysis of a wide-ranging corpus of promotional materials and websites, Ahn draws on Byram’s (1997) model of intercultural competence in order to interrogate what these programmes offer ‘in terms of developing intercultural communication competence and cultivating future global citizens’. While they doubtless achieve an improvement in the measurable language proficiency of learners, the paper suggests that they fall short of facilitating the deeper levels of criticality integral to Byram’s model. Not least, is their restriction of teachers to those originating from countries within

Kachru's (1992) 'Inner Circle'. Moreover, there is little attempt to delve deeper into either the students' or the instructors' experience of living and working together in a multicultural environment which is temporarily more symmetric, rather than being weighted towards more hegemonic national cultures.

If there is some doubt about the degree of intercultural engagement of students on language courses - irrespective of how heterogeneous their focus might be - uncertainty also remains with regard to the efficacy of study abroad programmes, particularly when they are of a relatively brief duration (Jackson 2009). Bloom and Miranda adapt Olson and Kroeger's (2001) Intercultural Sensitivity Index to investigate the experience of a group of students from Nebraska University on a summer study abroad programme in Salamanca, and to investigate their development in intercultural sensitivity which takes place over their period abroad. Taken as a whole, the group did not appear to change significantly during their month long stay. However, examination of qualitative data appeared to suggest that differences emerged depending on how much previous intercultural experience the students had had. The students with less intercultural experience appeared to be more defensive and less open to their new environment and experiences, whereas those with more intercultural experience fear appeared to be more 'ethnorelative', i.e. more open to engaging with the range of meanings and experiences they encountered in their new environment. To my mind, this study does more than just point up the limitations of homogenising quantitative research methods. Rather by engaging with idiopathic qualitative data, it offers useful insights into what the students actually say themselves about their sensitivity to the differences between their dwelling in the two cities: Omaha and Salamanca.

While Ahn's concern arises from a judgement that Korean immersion camps offer a somewhat conservative approach to the relation between language and culture and perhaps provide to affordances which are interculturally insufficiently challenging for the learners, Ushma Chauhan Jacobsen – teaching a course on Global Englishes at a Danish business school - reflects upon the apparent security sought by her students even when engaged in a more cosmopolitan learning experience. In an altogether more risky, post-hoc study which accesses the voices of her students through a corpus of exam papers, the author found that her students tended towards an intercultural conservatism, displaying group homogeneity, self-identification as business communication students and similarities in their attitudes towards diverse manifestations of English. Indeed, previous research has indicated that few students necessarily want to engage with the 'other', nor are many of their identities necessarily expanded as an outcome (Jackson, 2011). Jacobsen's paper narrates how, in her role of intercultural teacher, she felt she had to challenge this sense of security on the part of her students in order to open up a 'sensation of vulnerability' on their part. She concludes that 'cosmopolitan learning requires fostering discomfort, which in turn opens room to imagine alternatives'. Yet this also presented her with the challenge of maintaining ethically informed boundaries around the degree of discomfort and uncertainty permissible within the classroom, seminar or lecture theatre.

The voices of students who are arguably travelling in the opposite cultural direction feature in our next paper by Erdmann, in this case a group of first generation immigrants to Norway writing in English, a language which is neither their L1 nor that of their host nation. Studies in applied linguistics, informed by poststructuralist thought, have led to an increasing acknowledgement of the role in which language – and in academic contexts, writing in particular – plays in the formation of

the identity of the speaker; and this not least when he or she is negotiating the interplay between sets of meanings constructed in different cultural contexts. For Erdmann, the use of the personal pronoun in English is a linguistic marker is particularly indexical of the cultural identity which the speaker is creating for him or herself in a third language. A concordance analysis of a corpus of texts discussing themes related to language preservation and immigration produced by nine participants in their Norwegian secondary school indicates that while the immigrant students are more likely to align their identifications with their host country, they also tend to identify with immigrants as a pan-national group, not tied to any given culture of origin. Thus the students appeared to negotiate a 'third space' (after Bhabha, 1994) which provides them with a recognizable community in a social landscape without a long history of multicultural integration.

If standardisation and purity of language is a guiding principle of the 'small culture' of a Korean immersion camp, how much more might we expect it to dominate the government policies and the popular ideologies of the nation state? Although famously in 2010, Cameron, Merkel and Sarkozy declared the death of multiculturalism within a pan-European context, Australia has continued to reaffirm its commitment to multicultural policies – albeit in the shadow of a points-based system of migration. Against the contrasting policy backdrop in the North, Willoughby and Stark have undertaken a systematic, large-scale study of the language ideologies held by everyday Australian-born adolescents. Their quantitative data indicates participants mostly subscribe to a dominant discourse that migrants should speak English prior to their arrival. However, closer examination of qualitative data indicates that this is not so much due to a 'discourse of fear', but rather to a concern for their well-being that arises from a softer discourse of inclusion and social cohesion. In this respect, it is perhaps less surprising that their participants tended to view the use of Australian slang as being a necessary requirement for inward migration and, at most, viewed it as having a utilitarian function rather than being a necessary marker of identity. Likewise, participants did not believe that migrants should acquire an Australian accent, with many being quite vehemently opposed to the proposition. This large sample suggests that students in Australian schools are committed to the richness of multiculturalism, and are open to the possibilities of a burgeoning of language varieties within an increasingly heterogeneous national culture.

In many ways, the writing and reading of a novel, or any other work of fiction, remains an encounter with another culture. Not least, it entails - on liberal accounts - a dialogic engagement by the reader with the imagination of the author and, more radically, by the author with the other authors and texts who have preceded her (Bakhtin, 1981). And 'literature' becomes more self-evidently an act of intercultural communication either when the author draws on the resources of different languages within the construction of the text itself, or where the reader has been brought up speaking a different language from the writer (MacDonald, 2000). In this issue, our two papers which look at the intercultural literary experience maintain that this form of communication also extends to the construction of the very identities of both fictional characters and reader. When at Durham in 1973, I first read the great novels of the 19th century English author George Eliot - on perhaps one of the last university courses which served merely to compound the virtues of Englishness - I was blind to the intercultural dimensions of Eliot's work, and the use of French lexis within her novel *Daniel Deronda* struck me only as a stylistic flourish. Forty years on, in a paper jocularly entitled 'George Eliot's French', Alain Wolf draws on Bakhtinian (1981) 'dialogics' and Rampton's (1998) notion of 'crossing' to investigate the ways in which Eliot borrowed French vocabulary to enable her characters to 'transcend their monocultural selves'. In this respect, he indexes and explores how

many of these French words constitute 'composite idioms' which are voiced by the novel's characters in order to 'present their identit[ies] through the perspective of enunciators from another language background'.

However, most readers of this journal would probably agree that the meaning of a novel is constructed by the reader as well as by its author. And this has particular resonance for us when the reader has been brought up speaking a different language from that of the writer. For Riazantseva and Shin, this does not simply entail the reconfiguration of a reader's schemata - but drawing on reader response theory (Rosenblatt, 1978) and more recent research into the relationship between language and social identity (Norton, 2013; Norton and Toohey, 2011) - they consider how the identities of readers emerge as they work continuously to construct a coherent narrative from the text with which they are engaged. This case study explores the ways in which the multiple identities of three graduate students from South Korea 'meet, clash, transform and coexist' when engaged in a close reading in English of the American author J. D. Salinger's novel *Catcher in the Rye*. Analysing the results of a think-aloud protocol, their findings suggest that their readers appear to be working out aspects of their own identities in a dialogic relationship with the text, resulting in sets of meanings which were at once the same and different, individualised according to each participant. Contra previous research, this suggests that readers' engagement with themselves in the act of reading is much more than just a compensatory mechanism for a lack of L2 proficiency. It is in fact an integral part of a process which reflects the reader's engagement with new sets of cultural meanings when reading a fictional work arising from an unfamiliar social setting.

Within the current period of increased globalisation and migration, increasing numbers of people from different nations intermingle within hospitals, health centres and clinics around the world. Thus the clinic has become a potent site in which communication between members of different cultures can take place (Baraldi, 2009). These sites can comprise medical professionals from different countries, and also patients who have arrived from many dispersed points of origin. This can create challenges for the communication which takes place in the clinic not only between health professionals but also between health professionals and patients (Lu and Corbett, 2012). While there is a rich seam of research into these contexts, increasingly researchers are drilling down into more and more specialised medical contexts. Baraldi and Luppi's paper is no exception in this regard, as they examine the communication that takes place between Italian midwives and pregnant migrant women from Ghana, Morocco and Nigeria in two women's health assistance centres. They focus in particular on the formulations and reformulations that take place when the midwives engage with their patients' limited language ability when speaking Italian. Formulations are used to clarify the main idea of an earlier statement. Baraldi and Luppi's findings indicate that these can be considered as patient-centred communication which engages with the transactional, interactive and affective aspects of the exchanges that take place in the health centre. At its most general level, a reformulation can be seen as a kind of repair of a previous utterance, but in this context it emerges that the Italian midwives often use this strategy more specifically to adjust a previous utterance to enable a patient to better understand what they have just said. The paper concludes that the epistemic authority of the patient can be enhanced through this type of utterance.

Within the present *episteme*, the embodied nature of most medical practice dictates that intercultural communication in the clinic takes place in a material location; however increasingly, communication within corporate organisations is mediated through virtual technologies such as

Skype. Lahti's study uses an ethnomethodological approach to challenge 'the traditional treatment of concepts such as culture and the knowledge associated with it'. In her study, she explores how culture is made relevant within the online conversations that take place between the four members of a Finnish-Russian team working for a company based in Finland. Her findings suggest that differences in cultural and linguistic knowledge - realised in both the Russian and Finnish languages - were not necessarily omnipresent in the interaction between members. Rather, analysis of participants' actual communicative engagement with culture and knowledge indicates that the production of such matters is achieved contingently and collaboratively. In particular, participants appeared ready and willing to establish common ground for the accomplishment of shared tasks and common goals. If small scale in its design, the increasing accumulation of such sensitive analyses will serve to further support our understanding of the delicacy of the ways in which intercultural communication is accomplished in real-time interaction.

Thus, this issue concludes with studies featuring the Italian, Finnish and Russian languages. However, while this issue was in no way intended as a riposte to Valdeon's collection which explored the use of Spanish in the USA (15.3), it has predominantly featured studies which are situated in English language contexts. However, if this is indeed the language of globalisation as we are led to believe, never has a dominant language been subject to so much problematization and critique. It seems facile to remind readers that there remain many other languages in the world! As the provenance of both our authors and readers expand, we look forward to more diverse linguistic contexts being featured in future issues. Pang, Sterling and Long's paper in Issue 2 on the use of Chinese in the Beijing's silk market was an interesting case in point. Looking ahead, the journal welcomes submissions to the forthcoming volume which investigate intercultural communication through a wider range of languages, be they widely spoken, minority or even endangered languages.

I just want to conclude this editorial, by saluting our three book reviewers for this issue – Cots, Diaz and Peiser. Our Reviews and Criticism Editor, Melinda Dooly, remains open to receiving reviews for Volume 2016; as ever, it is best to email her before actually writing the review (laic.reviews@gmail.com). I also want to thank our Editorial Assistant, Jennifer Tunstall, for her tireless work liaising with authors during this volume; and our Production Editor, Katherine Williams, for ensuring that each issue comes out in time and in good shape.

Erratum

With some embarrassment, I would just like to correct an error which appeared in the review of Jane Jackson's book, featured in Issue 1 of this volume. Her book, *Introducing Language and Intercultural Communication*, was in fact published by Routledge in 2014 and not 2013 as stated in the review. I apologize for the inaccuracy.

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