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Editorial

Compiling this after two consecutive special issues, this second ‘open’ collection of papers in the present volume brings together a particularly rich and varied mix of papers, which I have grouped around four main themes. The first theme is *intergroup relations in the workplace*, and includes two papers which explore contexts which lie beyond academia: two communities of Latin American emigres working in London; and a community work project in Mexico. The second theme focuses on our staple topic of *internationalisation and diversity in higher education*, concluding with a paper which echoes the import of our previous issue (Corbett and Guilherme, 2021) by arguing for the ‘decolonisation’ of the language curriculum in universities in Mexico. The third theme considers the *attitudes, beliefs and perceptions* towards different forms of languages and intercultural communication which are held in three different pedagogic contexts. Here for the first time in LAIC, we particularly welcome a paper which explores the learning of sign language. Then our final theme focuses on what I have called here *tasks and missions*, essentially yoking together two collective endeavours of a highly disparate nature: first, a training voyage on a ‘tall ship’; and to conclude, an intriguing historical paper which reports on the forms of intercultural communication which took place in the Resistance movement in Occupied France during the Second World War.

Beyond the academy I: intergroup relations at work

In recent years, the border between Mexico and the United States has become a site of heightened ethical and political tension - as is conveyed by the recent popular discourse in politics, the news media and in the movies. This has already been reflected in some of the work reported in these pages over the past decade: on reverse language shift in response to cross-border language policy (Hidalgo, 2001); on *transfronterizo* literacy practices (De la Piedra & Araujo 2012); on intercultural citizenship among binationals volunteering across the border (King de Ramírez, 2018); and on the production of short narratives in Spanish and English by border bilinguals (Dávila-Montes & Rathbun, 2020). In the opening paper of this issue Elise DuBord presents a welcome continuation of this trajectory with an ethically motivated piece of research from a context new to most of us: Fronteras Unidas, a binational, bilingual non-profit organisation working across the Mexico–US border. As with many liberal multinational or binational community groups and NGOs, the Anglophone members of the organisation make a conscious effort to accommodate their Mexican co-workers by using Spanish during their interactions with them. However, as Dubord cautions, ‘liberal intergroup

positioning can hide ingroup validation and racism’ (after Giles and Coupland, 1991). In her paper, Dubord deploys ethnographic inquiry into participants’ understanding of their lived experiences, and close analysis of the discursive construction of identity to investigate whether this conscious effort towards intergroup communication and integration does indeed successfully create and maintain a collective sense of ingroup identity on the part of participants from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. The paper ends by identifying a range of discursive ploys and tactics that very usefully serve to shore up interpersonal relations within this particular community group. However DuBord shrewdly observes at the end of her paper that ‘[a]lthough the binational employees of Fronteras Unidas were committed to contesting established social, political, and economic hierarchies through their social justice work, it was impossible for them to remove themselves from the relationships of power that informed and framed their interactions’. Here Dubord nicely captures the double-bind which confronts much of the ethically motivated work of our association.

Readers will by now be very familiar with a central tenet of much of what we publish in these pages: that inhabitants of a nation state can no longer be regarded as a homogenous group which exhibits uniform attitudes, beliefs and values. However despite this, members of different minority ethnic groups within nation states can still be routinely regarded as sharing broadly similar attributes. The next paper in this issue, by Francisco Morales, continues an insightful strand of small-scale research into the Latin American community which has made their home in London – many having arrived to flee the right-wing *juntas* which prevailed in Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Peru during the 1970s and 1980s. A generation after this *diaspora*, many members of this community still find themselves engaged in the, now outsourced, service sector in London, the precarity of which characterises the current *episteme* of neoliberalism. This phenomenon was first reported in these pages by Adriana Patiño-Santos and Rosina Márquez Reiter in 2019, when they generated the productive notion of ‘banal interculturalism’ to characterise the sometimes mutually antagonistic views which are generated amongst members of the same diasporic cultural group when they are working under these conditions. In this paper, Morales draws on Patiño-Santos and Márquez Reiter’s concept while deploying techniques of Critical Discourse Studies to report on the experiences of three Latin American workers in the service sector, whose families have migrated to London from Ecuador and Venezuela respectively. His findings reveal the contradictory discourses that emerge when participants simultaneously construct a discourse of commonality amongst Latin American workers, and at the same time expose how the tensions that arise out of the hierarchical relationships

between supervisors and workers can be attributed to the negative characteristics of different national groups. Inter alia, this study reveals how competitive employment practices can fracture and splinter the relations between members of a diasporic cultural group who might otherwise be expected to have mutual interests which exhibit more commonality than antagonism.

Internationalisation and diversity in higher education

The hope, if not the dream, of the internationalised university is that it can lead to the conditions whereby students and staff alike are able to undergo at the very least some form of intercultural experience, and at the most some form of intercultural transformation. And the different ways in which this intercultural experience has been engaged - both good and bad – have been frequently reported in these pages (e.g. Baker, 2016; Castro, Woodin, Lundgren & Byram, 2016; Çiftçi & Karaman, 2018; Holmes, Bavieri, Ganassin & Murphy, 2016; Ladegaard & Ho, 2014; López-Rocha, 2021). It is a particular delight to feature in this issue the report of an encounter between applied linguistics and cultural studies, which takes place both metaphorically and interpersonally in an Australian University: between two disciplines which are not only cornerstones of the field of intercultural communication but also of my own academic trajectory over the past four decades. Fiona O’Neill and Jeanne-Marie Viljoen teach applied linguistics and cultural studies respectively on an undergraduate programme in an Australian university – a university which, like so many worldwide, has become increasingly diverse over the past ten years or more. This set the challenge for the authors of ‘extending intercultural pedagogies in higher education beyond the context of languages education’ – not least by redesigning their courses and recording the ways in which their students engaged with them. In this endeavour, they drew on Bakhtin’s (1981) notion of dialogism and Derrida’s (1997) notion of translation, to explore the ways in which their practice enabled them to deepen their focus on the ways in which ‘language, culture and knowing’ are interpreted, and on the ways in which they can lead to the creation and recreation of ‘meaning, and the self’. In their study, they use techniques of auto-ethnography to construct two case studies which pull together selected extracts from the reflections which they recorded in their journals of their own experiences of teaching the different courses and the experiences of their students. In particular, they home in on the ways in which their (re)design of each course enabled the students to broaden their ‘conceptual horizons’ in acknowledging multiple perspectives, and relating the symbolic meanings which they

encountered on them to their sense of self - leading to intercultural insights and personal transformation.

For the most part, studies of international education in this journal – and elsewhere - have focused on issues of identity, language learning or policy. Fewer studies have considered the ways in which intercultural experience in the internationalised universities is discursively constituted, and even fewer have investigated the role metaphor plays in participants' constitution of these experiences. In our next paper, Esko Johnson deploys the 'small story' approach (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008) to investigate the role metaphor plays in the narratives which four third-year South Korean student teachers create while taking part in a mobility programme at a Finnish university, using English as the medium of instruction. These dialogically constructed narratives reveal the metaphorical projections of two central image schemas: those of FORCE and CONTAINMENT. The participants in this study draw on these figurative expressions to describe both positive and narrative aspects of interculturality during their international sojourn, to disclose both differences and commonalities with the others who they encounter during their period of study abroad.

While there have been a plethora of studies that have reported on how European, American and Asian students experience international higher education, there have been far fewer reports on the experience of higher education by students from the Global South, and in particular those who come from countries in Sub-Saharan Africa – countries including Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia. Next, Abdulai, Roosalu, and Wagoner carry out a phenomenological study to ascertain the value which international higher education holds for both home students and students from Sub-Saharan Africa studying in universities in Estonia and Denmark; and also to explore the experience of both Sub-Saharan-African (SSA) and home students. On the upside, home students appreciated the value that international students' presence brings to the multicultural experience in class and meeting people from different backgrounds and countries; and university faculty also noted that the activity of international students contributed to the local economy. On the downside, some discernible differences in learning styles emerged between SSA students and home students, particularly during group work; and SSA students also reported some experience of discrimination more generally on campus and in their communities where they live. In terms of the quality of their experience, SSA students reported gaining confidence through their encounters with the local students and lecturers. Both international and home participants also reported the ways in which their preconceptions about each other became recalibrated after these pedagogic encounters. The authors conclude with the caveat that,

despite some positive outcomes intercultural learning cannot be automatically guaranteed by the presence of international students from either Sub-Saharan Africa or elsewhere. It recommends that ‘more work needs to be done to build university cultures that create an environment for intercultural teamwork and shared learning’ and, more specifically that local stakeholders in higher education should be prepared to adopt more culturally relative practices in order to ‘promote intercultural co-existence’.

According to our next authors, for some centuries after its constitution as a Spanish colony in the 16th century, the indigenous populations of Mexico were rendered invisible as the country become constituted as a ‘peripheral’, or a ‘third world’ country and Europe was positioned as the ‘epistemic centre of the world’. In our sixth paper, María Marcelín Alvarado, Javier Collado Ruano and Miguel Orozco Malo report critically on the way in which higher education in Mexico has responded to the need to redress this asymmetry by ‘including indigenous people and other social groups historically marginalised by the epistemic political power matrix’ (after Bai, Eppert, Scott, Tait & Nguyen, 2014). Their paper gives informative historical insights into the emergence of the phenomenon of ‘intercultural universities’ in Mexico and then draws together disparate source materials including interviews, documentary evidence and secondary sources to give a critical account of two universities which are engaged in this ‘decolonising’ endeavour in Chiapas and Oaxaca. Based on the evidence derived from their critical comparison of these two cases, the paper concludes that, while for the most part the promotion of intercultural universities in Mexico remains a worthwhile initiative, as a contribution to the wider project of decolonisation they only remain partially successful. Marcelín Alvarado et al. conclude that there remains a need for a further enhancement of intercultural dialogue between the ethnically dominant, often more metropolitan, social groups and indigenous and marginalised social communities; as well as a more vigorous mutual engagement in different languages and cultural and artistic practices.

Attitudes, beliefs and perceptions towards intercultural communication

Until quite recently, we had not featured any reports of intercultural teaching and learning from across the archipelago of Indonesia, despite its vast expanse and plethora of languages. However, more recently we have been experiencing a flurry of insightful and highly practical research, particularly into the nature of intercultural teaching which takes place in classes in different parts of Indonesia (see Curtis, Robertson and Mahony, 2019; Munandar and Newton, 2021), which quite possibly reflects recent policy concerns with intercultural

pedagogy in schools and institutions of this region. In our next paper, we welcome another contribution to this strand of research from Tabitha Sidwell. Drawing intensively on ‘thick’ data drawn from a small cohort of language teachers, Sidwell’s paper focuses on the tension which emerges between the desire of language teachers in the region to uphold the traditional attitudes, beliefs and values which are advocated by government policy, and their professional aspirations to expose their students to more cosmopolitan ideals of globalisation and interculturality. In the event, Sidwell is able to identify two different sub-groups of teachers: one group which she dubs ‘protectors’, who promote the upholding of more traditional values; and one group which she dubs ‘preparers’, who veer more towards orientating their students towards a life of international engagement and intercultural exchange. These approaches are reflected in each group’s beliefs regarding the teaching of culture in the language classroom: the protectors viewed culture as something which is static and immutable; the preparers saw culture principally as the way of life underlying a society’s ‘behaviour, communication, and beliefs’. From her findings, Sidwell highlights the value of teacher education programmes which expose novice teachers to intercultural encounters so that they come habituated to the practice of interculturality, not only through their modes of communication but also by developing ways of intercultural understanding.

While we often maintain in these pages that the idea of culture need not be homologous with the nation state, all too often the studies which we have published have for perfectly understandable pragmatic reasons settled into this conceptualisation which, despite all our caveats, still seems to remain the default way of approaching culture in our field. We therefore particularly welcome our next paper written by Sara Pivac Alexander, Rachel McKee and David McKee, which explores one of the ways in which hearing people semiotically constitute their identities as members of the deaf community by adopting a particular sign name. To the best of my knowledge this is the first time in the past twenty years that we have published a paper which addresses the issue of identity as it relates to the deaf community. In their paper, Alexander and her colleagues draw out the similarity between learning a sign language and the learning of a foreign language. Apparently there has been a widespread growth in the teaching of sign languages worldwide, not least in New Zealand where this study is carried out. Part and parcel of this boom has been the acquiring of sign names by hearing persons to signify that they are connected to a deaf social network. Sign names can be derived from ‘distinctive’ features such as someone’s appearance or personal traits, or they can be derived from ‘arbitrary’ features such as one’s initials or some form of numerical identification. In this paper Alexander and colleagues combine a survey

and group interviews to investigate the practices and values which both teachers and hearing sign language learners associate with the adoption of their sign names as part of their intercultural learning experience. The authors conclude that for New Zealand teachers and learners of sign language, adopting a sign name comes early in the learning process, and this is perceived as being significant in the construction of their (inter)cultural identity as a new signer. While for the most part the sign names of hearing signers were similar in kind to those of deaf people, crucially, findings indicate that some deaf teachers view sign names as a “reward” for hearing learners choosing to learn sign language’ and involving themselves with the deaf community, while some of them also see their adoption of a sign name as a ‘type of cultural initiation’.

Our ninth paper in this issue brings you the next instalment of a rich stream of intercultural research we which have been publishing for over ten years now from the culturally complex, plurilingual region of Catalonia (e.g. Huguet & Janés, 2008; Petreñas, Lapresta & Huguet, 2018). While arguably, the English language remains somewhat over-represented in journals such as ours, ironically in the Catalonian region where local and national languages of Catalonian and Spanish sit alongside the multitude of other tongues spoken by a highly diverse immigrant population, attitudes towards English on the part of different ethnic groups have been largely under-explored. Here, a team comprising Fernández-Costales, Lapresta-Rey, Huguet Canalís, and González-Riaño report from a large-scale study into the attitudes of both local and immigrant students towards English, which is taught in schools as a foreign language. Principal findings indicate that immigrant students who live in Catalonia have more positive attitudes towards English than their local peers; while students who originate from Latin American countries record more positive attitudes than their peers who originate from Maghreb. However, the study was unable to find any effect on participants’ attitudes towards English which yoked together their general language competence and their countries of origin. While this study is a worthy, wide ranging cross-sectional survey of language attitudes on the part of Catalonian students from many different ethnic groups, the authors themselves concede that more quantitative and qualitative, longitudinal studies may well be necessary to uncover any social injustices that might arise from these varying dispositions towards English as a foreign language.

Beyond the academy II: tasks and missions

It is not unreasonable to say – however dedicated we are to teaching in schools or higher education – that the university, college, polytechnic or school is a fairly contrived

environment in which to learn knowledge and skills in speaking other languages and develop one's sensitivity to people from other national cultures. And perhaps no less a contrived environment – but one which is possibly more successful in achieving a certain intensity of intercultural communication - is that of the project: a sort of grand task that has to be achieved by a group or team of participants; or a mission – where a group or team of people are engaged in collectively striving towards a shared goal. The final pair of papers which I present to you this month address the way in which communication between different languages and cultures takes place in just such endeavours.

Our penultimate paper, by Yujun Xu, provides a closely observed ethnographic account of the author's own engagement, as part of a group of international trainees and their trainers during their voyage on the tall ship *Vega Gamleby*, originally built in Sweden, as part of an EU exchange programme. We have been at sea before in these pages, all of ten years ago in fact, with Hashimoto and Kudo's intriguing (2010) account of a similar sailing project for young people. However, in this account Xu conceptualises the ecology of the tall ship as a 'third space', in which opposing forces are melded together dialectically in the manner of Yin and Yang, as set out in the Chinese *Book of Changes* (or *I Ching*). Here a total of 43 trainers and trainees from Sweden, UK, Ireland, Germany and China - from different genders, ages, backgrounds and life experiences - were brought together. As these trainees not only navigated the high seas but also different shared spaces and novel personal routines, they constructed an experiential nautical space of learning which Xu conceives of as an 'oceanic intercultural space'. This revealed a range of practices which are synthesised from her data as the three dimensions of sail-training that contribute to the construction of third space. The first emerges from the restrictions around the space on board the sailing ship, which leads participants to 'reconstruct' their selves in relation to their personal routine and self-presentation. The second arises from the inevitable breaking down of the usual barriers maintained by crew members such as gender and social status, which leads to a fluidity and authenticity in negotiating personal relations with each other. The third gives rise to a 'communal space' from which mutual meanings emerge from the sharing of routines, rules, disciplines, goals and everyday chores. Xu's compelling account supports the thesis that the 'interactive and dynamic' nature of experiential learning, such as sail training, quite possibly offers more potential for the development of interculturality through intimately shared experiences than the rather more formal and possibly even alienating chambers of higher education.

It is rare – if not completely new to these pages – that we bring to you a historical account of intercultural communication, in which the seductive tones of 'presentism' can

lurk behind both professional research and research into intercultural communication education. It is often implied or explicitly stated that intercultural communication is a burgeoning phenomenon of globalisation, which – particularly for undergraduates and postgraduates – always seems to be unfolding in the present. However as I have stated elsewhere, one can effortlessly trace communication between different languages and cultures back at least as far as the ancient imperial powers of Greece and China; and the early trading routes of the Levant (MacDonald, 2019, p. 556). In our closing paper in this issue, we present Jorge Marco’s documentary investigation into multilingualism in the ‘Resistance in France’, or as he call it, deliciously, with reference to their perilous linguistic strategies: ‘an army of mutes in disguise’. While at one level, it seems banal to group together life on a sailing ship and the heroism of the Resistance fighters, yet at a more general level there is a sense of shared purpose and intensity of communal engagement which perhaps is common – if somewhat different in degree - to both spheres of human activity. The central thesis of this paper is that a mythic memory of the French Resistance was created after the end of WWII portraying it as ‘military, masculine and national’. However according to Marco, this has in fact emerged more recently from memoirs and the continued presence of a multinational cohort of Resistance veterans at commemorations over the years, that the contribution of foreign fighters to the Resistance movement in France was considerable. In this paper, rather than study the role of discrete national groups of foreign fighters in the Resistance, Marco undertakes his analysis from a transnational perspective, and particularly focuses upon how the interface between different languages was achieved, often using strategies of subterfuge, such as claiming a false nationality in the face of a challenge to one’s accent - when revealing one’s true identity through distinctive traits of communication could lead to incarceration, torture or death. In so doing, he opens up an underexplored area of research, which straddles the disciplines of history and sociolinguistics: ‘the role of languages in irregular armed groups with a great ethnic and linguistic diversity’. In his paper, Marco gives a detailed account of how as the Resistance movement in France developed, it implemented a range of both planned and ad hoc linguistic policies and practices. These included: the use of mime; the use of non-verbal communication such as humming or whistling; potential recruits learning languages in refugee camps; non-French speakers consolidating their forces in the mountains; developing hybrid languages within groups; organizing resistance groups of conationals who spoke a common tongue; and the strategic use of polyglot resistance members as intermediaries and cadre leaders. As Marco concludes resoundingly, the hybridity of ethnicities and languages within the resistance in France during WWII constituted a

microcosm of the opposite polarity to the fascist society which its members fought to overthrow. These practices can only serve as an example which remain humbling for the work of our of our own association, however noble our continued promotion of worldwide multilingualism, interculturalism and egalitarianism is in the 21st century.

Updates: valete and salvete

As hard copy of this issue plonks into departmental pigeon-holes around the world, members will already be frantically writing their presentations for the 21st annual meeting of IALIC (22-26 November) on the theme of *Language, culture and interculturality: Global debates, local challenges*. Due to the continuing threat of the global pandemic our annual conference will be held online again this year. It is being hosted by the Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, the first of our association meetings to be hosted – if virtually - in South America. While it will now be too late for you to submit an abstract for this conference, why not join us for at least a day? You can check out the programme or still register for the conference at <http://ialic.international/conference-2020-bogota/>.

Since my last editorial (LAIC 21.2) was just going to press as they were joining us, I want to introduce to you two important members of the LAIC team who have been working on our behalf through this particularly testing year. Our production editor Irudayaraj Edwards left us at the start of 2021 after a short period of hard work, ensuring that good copy got to all of you bang on schedule; and Kavitha Sambantham has now taken over the role of LAIC's production editor. And after a lengthier period of service, our editorial assistant, 'Claude' (known to most of you as Jean-Claude Larracas) left at the beginning of the year to start his own business, and we wish him well in his endeavours. Venalyn Somejo has now taken over as editorial assistant on our team. I look forward to working with Kavitha and Venalyn for some time to come.

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