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## Editorial

The relationship between language, actors and the specific social contexts in which they speak emerges as a prevalent theme in this issue. This is due in part to the mobilities of populations, amplified to varying degrees by the competing social forces of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: both the good, such as lifestyle and education; and the not-so-good, such as economic pressure and conflict. In various ways, the papers in this second issue of Volume 17 describe how this experience of mobility - both terrestrial and virtual – can vary in relation to the amount of capital, both economic and cultural, with which our sojourners travel: from Mendez-Garcia's postgraduate sojourners in Spain to Park's South-East Asian marriage migrants in Korea; from Lapresta, Huguet and Fernández-Costales's inward migrants to Catalonia to Dong's '空中飞人' ('flying people') in Beijing; from Chen's Chinese students using social media in the USA to Akiyama's *eTandem* intercultural interlocutors; and from Zhu's university students in China and the USA to Koshiba's bilingual secondary school pupils in Australia.

Another theme which emerged as I was splicing this issue together was the perennial ontological conundrum of the relationship between language, discourse and culture itself. This journal – and indeed the Association - support a position which reflects what is broadly regarded as a constructivist approach to culture, one in which culture is constituted through language and semiosis – enacted with varying degrees of knowing by interlocutors. However, there remain many voices within the field which still adhere to the view that culture is in some way an 'a priori' of language and discourse, and acts as the motor of the communication which takes place. While we advocate the former position, it is not our editorial policy to censor papers which adopt an 'a priori' approach if it is approached critically and the study emerges well from our rigorous process of blind peer review. Thus, in this issue we present a range of positions: from Maria Mendez Garcia's and Mi Yung Park's narrative accounts of the construction of (inter)cultural identity by their participants, to Akiyama who maintains 'one of interactional sociolinguistics' key assumptions is that cultures ... shape people's interaction'; from Lapresta, Huguet and Fernández-Costales's complex analysis of the interrelationship between attitude, language and ideology and Dong's powerful study of the relationship between a post-Bakhtinian notion of 'voice', and its implications for power and ideology, to Zhu's rather contentious claim that 'it is universally accepted that different cultures structure discourse in different ways'. The issue also features

Chen's account of the co-construction of knowledge, attitudes and awareness by users of social networking sites; and it rounds off with Koshiba's bracing assertion that 'intercultural communication is not an instance of communication between individuals belonging to different and bounded cultures, but rather between interlocutors who are socialised into and who draw upon multiple and sometimes conflicting...'' discourse worlds'' (after Kramsch, 2011).

In the narrative study that opens this issue, Mendez Garcia offers us selected accounts from the 'autobiographies of intercultural encounters' (AIE) which were produced by three Masters students on a course in interculturality and language teaching at the University of Jaén, in Spain. The AIE is a pedagogic device developed under the auspices of the Council of Europe to provide a structure whereby learners can think about their intercultural development by considering retrospectively a particularly significant intercultural experience. The main aspect of interculturality that is reported by these three students is their relationship with the people and environment that they encounter in their transitions. This gives the opportunity for the students not just to reflect cognitively upon the material aspects of their transition, but also to engage emotionally with its impact, ranging from prejudice to excitement. Here, languages emerge as a key affective element as the participants alternate between speaking English as a shared language, Spanish, and its regional variants such as Catalan. Throughout the study, the longitudinal aspects of the narrative accounts afforded by the AIE give us powerful insights into the complexity of the participants' processes of identity construction (and reconstruction), as well as the dynamics of the resources of plurilingualism and multilingualism which they bring to their encounters with strangers in strange lands. Our second paper, by Mi Yung Park, brings us data from a larger ethnographic project, which investigates language learning and identity construction amongst Southeast Asian marriage migrants. Here, the focus is upon the experiences of five women from Vietnam and Cambodia who have moved to (South) Korea to marry Korean husbands. Using a methodology broadly similar to that of Mendez Garcia, she considers these narratives not only in relation to the content of the story but also to the wider social and political factors that influence the narrative account. However, if Mendez Garcia's elite postgraduate sojourners were able to exercise some degree of agency over the extent to which they could select from the three languages on offer in Jaén, this was not an option that was extended to Park's Vietnamese and Cambodian wives. Apart from other forms of marginalisation, these young women found themselves under continuous pressure to adhere to the rather strict norms of Korean culture and their highly-nuanced encoding in the national language.

However, the mobility of populations also has an impact upon the linguistic and cultural make-up of regions and nation states. We have previously seen in Volume 16, that the autonomous region of Catalonia, in Spain, has a fertile mix of the official language (Spanish), an indigenous language (Catalonian) and languages spoken by other immigrant groups (Madariaga, Hugué, and Jané, 2016). In this issue, Lapresta et al. go on to report on the impact that generational difference has upon attitudes towards both the autochthonous and the official language held by those migrating to Catalonia. Their findings support other studies by suggesting that a migrant's generation does have some impact upon their attitudes towards the Catalan language, it also combines with the extent to which subjects also speak Spanish. The paper concludes by proposing that measures taken to enhance communication between the different language cultures within the region of Catalonia should not only entail that languages be learnt at school, but also that issues of integration be addressed. In the third issue of this volume, Petreñas, Lapresta & Hugué continue this rich stream of research currently being carried out into language and culture in Catalonia and demonstrate how young Romanian migrants redefine their cultural identity through language in the region.

While many of the papers in this journal have considered the relationship between languages which mark the identities of different cultural groups, our next paper considers the shift and inter-relationship between varieties of one language - Chinese - which is becoming of ever increasing global significance. Jie Dong's paper considers the changing position of Putonghua, or 'standardised Chinese', that is taking place along with the changes in status which have been brought about through the impact of globalisation upon different categories of worker within China. Drawing on two theories of 'voice' which have been displayed in linguistics and anthropology (Bakhtin, 1981; Hymes, 1996), Dong's paper draws on wide-ranging ethnographic field work which was carried out in Beijing on a cohort of internationally mobile Chinese professionals who have returned there for education and employment. This paper gives a rich, qualitative account of just two cases and the ways in which the potential for voice is realized differently according to the different conditions of socialisation for the two global professionals. In the event, each participant displays their proficiency in Putonghua for different ideological reasons and to different strategic effect. However, once again, the sense of agency which emerges from these two accounts of the way in which they use their language

potential to respectively realise their voice gives a powerful impression of the ways in which culture and cultures are constructed ‘on the go’.<sup>1</sup>

Over the last two decades, the use of Internet and computer-mediated communication (CMC) technologies has increased exponentially for social elites. Our next paper, by Hsin-I Chen, investigates the ways in which participants in online social networking sites develop specialised forms of intercultural communicative competence within this emerging modality of discourse. Chen adopts a case study approach to carry out an in-depth study of how one Chinese student developed her intercultural communication and literacy practices using social media during a two-year study abroad programme in the USA. From qualitative analysis of data triangulated from the learner’s biographical information, Facebook postings, semi-structured interviews and participant observation notes, Chen concludes that the learner engaged with the technological and social affordances of Facebook in order to reflect her cultural practices and articulate her intercultural understanding during her period studying abroad. Furthermore, the development of the intercultural competence indicates that Byram’s (1997) model broadly holds good in this social and discoursal context, providing the potential for learners to practice intercultural knowledge, interpretation skills, intercultural discovery, attitudes, and critical cultural awareness in their development of intercultural competence. If Chen’s paper focuses on the relatively monologic modality of social networking sites, Akiyama’s paper addresses the very immediate, moment-by-moment engagement by interlocutors who are engaged in long-term telecollaboration in *eTandem*, a form of remote video communication in which the participants instruct each other in their respective languages. The paper selects data from a larger study which investigates a telecollaboration project between universities in the USA and Japan in order to focus contrastively on just two dyads containing participants who had profiles which were similar in psychological make-up and language proficiency. The paper draws on a body of literature from interactional sociolinguistics which suggests the ways different turn-taking conventions are differentially shaped by participants’ cultures, status and power. Exacerbated by the video-mediated context, these may result in dysfunctional communication which entails negative judgements of each other by the participants. Of particular interest to this study is the phenomenon of *aizuchi* - the short, distinctive, responses which Japanese listeners can use to indicate listenership. Where this phenomenon is not fully understood by a listener unfamiliar with this convention, it can

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<sup>1</sup> after Adrian Holliday (personal communication).

result in overcompensation within the conversation, and result in what is referred to here as a ‘vicious cycle’ of turn negotiation. In the case of these participants, one pair reported relatively successful communication, and one pair reported relatively unsuccessful communication. The author concludes that intercultural collaboration can be enhanced not just by increasing the participant’s awareness of potential idiosyncrasies of communication on the part of their interlocutor, but also by monitoring and even intervention by an online mentor.

This issue concludes with two papers which feature participants who are engaged in intercultural communication within educational institutions: Wuhan Zhu compares the emails written by students in universities in China and the USA; Kenta Koshiba investigates the Japanese-English bilinguals in their final year of a secondary school in Australia. Zhu’s paper carries out a cross-cultural comparison of the pragmatic strategies used by two different groups of students, from China and Britain, to manage the emails which they write to their university lecturers. Zhu analyses a sample of 125 authentic emails which were sent by members of each group to their university lecturers. Enough differences were found across between the two national cohorts to indicate there were some features of rapport management in these groups of students might be specific to certain shared values, attitudes and beliefs about institutional relations, which the members of each group bring to the email genre from their national cultural context. However, since the members of both cohorts also inhabit the same institutional context, that of higher educational institutions, we would question whether these two groups really do constitute different ‘discourse communities’, as argued by the paper (after Swales, 1990). A certain commonality in their social organisation might be also suggested by the considerable number of similarities in the moves which, the author concedes, were used by each national group. Sufficient counter-evidence has also been presented in these pages elsewhere of more nuanced contexts in which intercultural communication takes place to balance the view proposed in this paper that language and discourse is necessarily circumscribed by national culture.

I am of a generation which grew up in the UK in the wake of the 1939-45 ‘World War’ whose engagement with ‘modern and foreign languages’ was almost exclusively conducted through a daily grind of rather leadenly conceived pedagogic translation tasks. It is therefore intriguing to encounter - after a long period of dominance of the communicative method in language pedagogy in Australia, Europe, New Zealand and North America - a paper which explores the creative potential of translation within a pedagogic context. Koshiba engages with the relatively under-researched experiences of six bilingual speakers of English and Japanese in their final

year at secondary schools. In contrast to Zhu's cross-cultural focus, Koshiba draws on a discourse approach which 'shifts the focus of inquiry from differences based on a priori categories to interaction and language-in-use'. The paper draws on Kramsch's (2011) notion of 'symbolic competence' and applies it to the complex mediational process of translation. While the students varied in their levels of engagement with the symbolic aspects of the text, the data for this study suggests that all the students reflected to some degree upon the symbolic dimensions of the communication that was taking place between 'cultures'. However, this 'in-between space' was not so much one which pre-existed the act of translation but one which was produced in and through the hermeneutic act of translating a text from one language to another.

I would like to thank our two book reviewers in this issue - Giuliana Ferri and Jonathan Mason - for keeping us abreast of recent developments in the field. Looking ahead, the annual meeting of the Association (IALIC) will be held a little earlier this year, on 19-20 June at Edinburgh Napier University. The focus of the conference will pick up on some of the themes that are reflected in this issue, and is entitled *Interrogating the 'third space': Negotiating meanings and performing 'culture'*. As we go to press, the call for abstracts is closing (February 12), but if you are interested in submitting a paper to the conference it is still worth checking out the conference website, available at: [staff.napier.ac.uk/ialic2017](http://staff.napier.ac.uk/ialic2017). While we acknowledge the centrality and importance of intercultural communication within educational institutions, and institutions of higher education, which are our stock in trade – we continue to encourage submissions to this journal, and to our meetings, which investigate non-pedagogic contexts of communication, particularly those which feature communication within or across non-elite social groups.

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