Preface

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In this issue of *Intercultural Communication Studies,* the articles are grouped into three thematic areas: firstly, cultural and intercultural aspects of the problem of identity; secondly, perspectives on discourse and translation; and thirdly, cross-cultural comparisons.

The section on Identity Studies begins with an article that combines theory, autoethnography, reflective writing, and action research. In their collaborative research, Elizabeth ROOT, Tara D. HARGROVE, Anchalee NGAMPORNCHAI and Matthew D. PETRUNIA tackle the problems that teachers of intercultural communication (IC) encounter when they face their students in the classroom. Much more than in other communication courses, the authors suggest, in the IC classroom the identity of the instructor him/herself comes into play within the course content. When we, as IC teachers, challenge students to examine their cultural values, biases and assumptions, we invite them to examine their identities, and this invitation to self-examination thereby also tends to include the instructor in a dialogical process. In the authors' experience, they have had to confront their own identities and assumptions when engaging with students in the dialogical process of the IC class.

The thematic section of Identity Studies continues with three articles that in various ways foreground gender identity. Firstly, the study by Kara CHAN and Yu-Leung NG examines Canadian Chinese adolescent girls' gender roles and identities. The data are collected through the method of autovideography, and examine the consumption of images of gender roles in mainstream media. Secondly, the article by Sandra HOCHEL ethnographically examines the meanings of the veil to Muslim women in Malaysia, through "privileging the voices" of their self-reports. The data were collected by interviewing 30 professional, highly educated women in the state of Sarawak on the island of Borneo, including 14 who consistently veil when in public and 16 who only veil sometimes or under religious circumstances such as prayer. The study investigates dimensions of the women's individual decisions to veil or not to veil. Thirdly, the last article in this section, by Jiuquan HAN, Sisi ZHOU and Wei SONG, examines dialogicality as a mirror of homosexual cultural identity struggle in China. The authors examine the discourse of proponents, mediators and opponents of a distinct social identity for homosexuals in China, and suggest that Chinese society is increasingly changing to accommodate diversity.

The thematic area of Perspectives on Discourse and Translation includes four articles on cross-linguistic comparison. Firstly, ZHANG Yi's study of communicative purposes in translational activities examines the motivation for different versions of a translated text, as evidenced not

only in the text itself, but also in the rationale articulated in the preface and postscript to the text. Secondly, Kimie OSHIMA's article reports on the online project "Japan's Funniest Story", which aims to identify the discourse characteristics of Japanese humor. Next, the study by Yoshinori NISHIJIMA proposes a new method for the comparison of perspectives in linguistic formulation in Japanese and German, within a cognitive-linguistics approach to translation. Finally, the article by Munzhedzi James MAFELA focuses on the indirect communication style of the South African language Tshivenḓa, in which a negative verbal construction may be used to express a pragmatically positive meaning.

The last thematic section, Cross-Cultural Comparisons, includes two articles. In the first, Yi-Fan CHEN investigates similarities and differences in tablet adoption and usage between the United States and Taiwan, with reference to Geert Hofstede's individualistic vs. collective cultural dimensions. In the second article, TAO Lin compares the concepts of politeness in Chinese and Japanese verbal communication, based on a survey of Chinese and Japanese university students. The author finds that on the one hand, the Chinese cultural concepts of *limao* (respectfulness and refinement) and *lian* and *mianzi* (face and reputation), and on the other hand, the Japanese concepts of *tatemae* (facade) and *honne* (true feelings), affect the respondents' perceptions of politeness.

Overall, the articles in this issue represent contributions by scholars from several countries. In terms of content, they touch upon the cultural contexts of Canada, China, Japan, Malaysia, Russia, South Africa, Thailand, and the United States. They employ a range of methodologies, including ethnography, survey methodology, textual elucidation and linguistic analysis. *Intercultural Communication Studies* is honored to represent the range and breadth of research in our field.