Preface

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The articles in this issue are presented in the alphabetical order of the authors. In various ways, these studies advance our understanding of intercultural communication theory and its applications.

Firstly, Li Pu's longitudinal study of foreign TV programming in a regional TV station in China from 1981 to 2010 reveals a shift in programming preference over time on the part of Chinese consumers. The data show that by 2010, the proportion of foreign programs declined significantly in comparison to the 1980s. The author argues that current TV viewers prefer programs with content close to their local culture, confirming Strabhaar's (1997, 2011) finding that "regionalization in terms of media and media flow is more significant than the phenomenon of globalization in current international trade of television programs."

Consumer behavior is also addressed by Lin Ma's article, which examines a large body of authentic microblogging texts from the point of view of content analysis using Hofstede's (1980, 1991, 2001) intercultural dimensions. The author's statistical analysis reveals significant differences in consumer behavior in terms of content sharing on microblogs, between consumers' word-of-mouth messages in the US and China, as revealed by data collected from Twitter and Weibo, with implications for business communication and marketing.

Several papers have theoretical implications for intercultural communication studies. The article by Satomi Nakatsugawa and Jiro Takai proposes a new perspective on conflict management strategies by focusing on salient vs. non-salient strategies among Japanese. The authors argue that non-salient strategies are not simply a matter of conflict avoidance, but reflect a culturally significant preference for non-confrontational conflict management style. The authors' questionnaire-based statistical analysis supports their proposed model of communication behavior along the salient vs. non-salient axis in conflict situations.

In a study supported by data from authentic student narratives, Elizabeth Root argues that the perspective of cultural differences in the study of intercultural communication should be replaced by, or supplemented by, an awareness of the differences—similarities dialectic in its relational aspect.

From the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Eduardo Urios-Aparisi analyzes the cinematic storytelling of Sofia Coppola's film *Lost in Translation* and Isabel Coixet's *Map of the Sounds of Tokyo*. He argues that the setting of Tokyo forms the metaphor of labyrinth in *Lost in Translation*, and of fluidity (water and air) in *Map of the Sounds of Tokyo*, and these

in turn are exploited in the characterization of the protagonists as disoriented selves in *Lost in Translation*, and fluid selves in *Map of the Sounds of Tokyo*, evoking the conceptual metaphors of SELF CONTROL IS BEING IN ONE'S NORMAL LOCATION and SELF AS CONTAINER proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1999, pp. 274-276). The author thus contributes to the multimodal analysis of conceptual metaphor, extending the theoretical framework that originated in linguistics to the medium of film and visual imagery.

Finally, Qiufen YU proposes a pragmatic approach to addressing culture and its relationship with communication style. The study examines data from radio advice talk programmes in light of the framework of Sperber and Wilson's (1992, 1993) Relevance Theory. The author argues that a close examination of utterance production and interpretation reveal similarities, rather than differences, between communication styles in China and Britain, at least in the high-context setting of this type of programming and communication. This finding has theoretical implications for our conceptualization of high vs. low context and indirect vs. direct communication, because "in this particular context, there is no difference in the use of communication style between speakers in cultures that have been characterized as using direct style and speakers in cultures that have been characterized as using indirect style, because they both use markers of procedural meaning to guide the hearers' interpretation process."