

Preface

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The first issue of Volume XXVII contains several sections: Education, Identity Studies, Literature, and Media Communication. We begin with two articles concerning the role of critical thinking in higher education. In “Assessment of Higher-Order Thinking Skills Required for Intercultural Learning”, Etsuko TOYODA discusses the vital role that higher-order thinking skills play in the development of intercultural competence, within the pedagogical context of an advanced Japanese language class at a higher education institution in Australia. The second article, by Adrian J. DAVIS, presents a case study of an institutional assessment of the “far transfer” of English language skills from the academic context to the work context by graduates of an HEI in Macao.

The section on Identity Studies contains two articles on the experience of study-abroad students in the US. Rita DANIELS and Christine E. RITTENOUR examine female international students’ experience and find that communication satisfaction is negatively predicted by a personal-relational identity gap. They also find a variety of communication strategies employed by the students to manage the personal-enacted and personal-relational identity gaps that they experience in their relationships with host-country students. In the second article, Yang LIU examines the acculturation of Chinese students in the US, and finds that they place a high value on cultural maintenance of their Chinese identity, which is not mutually exclusive with cross-cultural adaptation to the American academic context.

The Literature section contains an article by ZHU Ying on the English-language Chinese American writers Ha Jin and Yiyun Li, whose work “endeavors to give presence to the ‘weightless’ mass whose voices in modern Chinese history have been intentionally dismissed or silenced”. Ha Jin’s award-winning novel *War Trash* (2004) is a fictional memoir of a young prisoner-of-war during the Korean War, while Yiyun Li’s acclaimed literary debut *The Vagrants* (2009) is set during the dark time of the Cultural Revolution. These writers are unique in that they both learned English as a foreign language and yet they publish only in English, existing in the marginalized and yet heightened space between two languages and cultures.

The final section, on Media Communication, contains four empirical studies using a variety of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Y. Anthony CHEN examines the valence of portrayal of the LGBT community from 2000 to 2014 in two best-selling US magazines: *TIME* and *People*. He finds that there was a statistically significant shift in valence between the time-periods 2005-2009 and 2010-2014, reflecting a cultural and societal shift in the depiction of the LGBT community at that point in time. Vivienne LEUNG, S. Y., Kimmy CHENG and Tommy TSE discuss the practice of using celebrities in marketing communications in Greater China, on the basis of in-depth interviews with three renowned marketing specialists in Hong Kong, and conclude that “matching up a celebrity with a brand or a company is just as tricky as a

marriage”. In the third article, Xiao WANG investigates audience responses to HIV public service announcements. The PSAs are simulated for the purpose of the study, to ascertain the mediating role of attitude toward the ad and source identification. A quantitative analysis of path models has implications for advertising theory, by providing insights into the “nature of underlying psychological processing”. In the final article of the issue, which employs quantitative factor analysis, Wenzhen XU, Jiro TAKAI and Li LIU construct a “Social Media Uses and Gratifications Scale” (SMUGS) and suggest that East Asians’ motives for using social network sites “are formulated with more social concerns and hesitations” than in Western culture.

It should be added that the authors in this volume represent ten different universities in four countries (Australia; China, including also the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macao; Japan; and the US), reflecting the international nature of current scholarship in intercultural communication studies.