Foreword

This rich collection of papers (Chapters 2–14) from an international group of authors from Europe, Asia, Australia and South America is the natural extension of the path-breaking work of Paula Kalaja and her colleagues on the use of visual narratives in applied language studies (Kalaja & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2018; Kalaja *et al.*, 2013). Because of the large-scale migrations of adolescents and adults who cross borders these days to go and live, study or work in industrialised countries, educational institutions have been grappling with the task of teaching the language of the host country to multilingual newcomers with varying amounts of educational, social and economic capital. Traditional language classes, with their emphasis on speaking, reading and writing are not always the optimal way of reaching these language learners, who come with special social, emotional, and cultural needs.

Responding to David Block's call to move 'beyond lingualism' and to pay greater attention to embodiment and multimodality in SLA (Block, 2014), the authors in this volume propose to go beyond words and to access the lives and worlds of these multilinguals through the visual medium. By asking students to express their lives today and in one year's time through drawings, or to represent their pathways of international mobility through pictures, or to narrate their linguistic autobiographies through photographs, they compensate through the visual medium for the deficiencies in these students' verbal abilities, they validate their life trajectories and they provide a common object to talk about in class. Language is not replaced but enriched by these visual representations and other semiotic modalities. While visuals can provide the basis for a narration of their experience, language can offer a common metalanguage to reflect on this narration.

It is easy to think of such multilingual adolescents and adults as foreigners, refugees or other minorities, rather than members of the mainstream national population that is trying to integrate them. And it is a fact that language educators in France, Germany, Scandinavia and other countries, who teach their national language to newcomers, would not have such an urgent need to develop new teaching methods if globalisation did not compel them to deal with this recent influx of immigrants to their shores. But the papers in this volume show that, with the increasing social,

cultural and economic diversity of students within one and the same country, such pedagogies would also be beneficial to the native language education of autochtones.

The translation of experience in one or the other modality must raise important ethical, social and political questions. Visual representation can have a more immediate effect on emotions, memories and beliefs than grammatical sentences; its symbolism says more than words; its mythical dimensions require critical awareness. The papers in this volume confront these issues honestly and with a thorough awareness of their complexity. It is to the editors' credit that they have assembled such an exciting and multifaceted group of perspectives on the lives and worlds of multilinguals in our increasingly complex educational endeavours.

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