# Introduction

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**Abstract** Language learners' activities in the world are not just contexts for applying lessons learned in the classroom. Their unscripted activities and discoveries in a myriad of places are themselves significant sites of language development, transcultural awareness-building, and identity growth. This volume seeks to capitalize on this wealth of language and literacy learning opportunities in the discursive world of public texts and textual practices, through a paradigm of "mobilization". With fourteen chapters drawing from numerous pedagogical traditions, situated in varied geographic and institutional contexts, and narrating diverse learning projects amongst the languages of public space, this volume pursues three overarching goals. First, it aims to illuminate powerful opportunities for language and literacy teachers to expand their approaches to teaching, with a particular emphasis on the development of political awareness and social transformation. Second, the volume illustrates how language teaching and learning in the linguistic landscape brings opportunities to integrate training in research methodologies with language instruction—a mobilization of language pedagogy for cross-disciplinary knowledge growth. Third, just as it addresses researchers and practitioners of language pedagogy, this volume seeks to inform and stimulate researchers in the field of linguistic landscape with numerous opportunities for conceptual, methodological, and praxiological cross-fertilization.

**Keywords** Curricular change · Engaged learning · Mobility · Multiliteracies · Second language instruction · Social pedagogies · Transdisciplinarity

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# 1    Overview and Goals of this Volume

Language teachers and students in the early twenty-first century are both literally and figuratively finding themselves in unknown places. As schools and cities continue to diversify, and as networked technologies transform classrooms and mobile learning opportunities, language educators are exploring new ways for students to learn "beyond the classroom" (Benson and Reinders 2011; Nunan and Richards 2015) and "in the wild" of unplanned social interaction (Wagner 2015; Dubreil and Thorne 2017). In their everyday navigation of multilingual home, neighborhood, and school environments, through community-based or service-oriented learning projects, and in intercultural encounters in online affinity and gaming spaces, language learners' activities in the world are not just contexts for applying lessons learned in the classroom; their unscripted activities and discoveries in a myriad of places outside—including radically transformed home and online learning contexts in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic of 2020—are themselves significant sites of language development, transcultural awareness-building, and identity growth.

Learning to capitalize on this wealth of language and literacy learning opportunities is a primary motivation for this volume on linguistic landscape and language teaching. Linguistic landscape, a term used to designate the visible, audible, and otherwise textualized languages of public space (Shohamy and Gorter 2009; Van Mensel et al. 2016), has captured the imaginations of language teachers and SLA theorists for the encounters it offers with the authentic, complex, and often contested languages and ideologies of everyday life (for reviews, see Gorter 2018; Huebner 2016; Malinowski and Dubreil 2019). As Cenoz and Gorter (2008) note in an early overview of the topic, "The linguistic landscape can provide input for second language learners and it can be particularly interesting for the development of pragmatic competence" (p. 274). In a more recent review, Schmitt (2018) extols the virtues of the linguistic landscape for awareness-building and analytic learning activities in areas including multilingual writing practices, dialects and dialect writing, writing systems, toponyms (place names), onomastics (proper names), and language play.

Indeed, while the languages of public space may be read and studied for their grammatical, lexical, and other formal linguistic properties—as many of the chapters in this volume illustrate—a primary motivation for learners and teachers to move 'beyond the classroom' is to engage with the linguistic landscape as a nexus of social, cultural, and political phenomena, an environment that "signals what languages are prominent and valued in public and private spaces and indexes the social positioning of people who identify with particular languages" (Dagenais et al. 2009, p. 254). Accordingly, one theme that runs through the chapters of this volume is that, through their studies in the linguistic landscape, language learners have the opportunity to consider their own affective responses and ethical stance toward the people and places around them. Consequently, language educators can readily consider a wide variety of topics for learning activities anchored in the linguistic

landscape, such as cultivating greater social and political consciousness through critical language awareness activities (Thorne and Reinhardt 2008), fostering dispositions toward linguistic activism (Shohamy and Waksman 2009), and even expanding understandings of citizenship (Stroud 2001; Williams and Stroud 2015).

As a first collection of papers on language teaching and learning in the still-new field of linguistic landscape, this volume has multiple, intersecting goals. With fourteen chapters drawing from numerous pedagogical traditions, situated in varied geographic and institutional contexts, and narrating diverse learning projects amongst the languages of public space, its first goal is to illuminate powerful opportunities for language and literacy teachers to expand their approaches to teaching design and practice. As suggested above, one such opportunity is to advance dialogue about the linguistic landscape as a site for critical, social justice-oriented pedagogies that increase recognition of the heterogeneous literacies and languaging practices typical of learners' classrooms and communities (cf. Blackledge and Creese 2010; Leung and Wu 2012; Norton and Toohey 2004). In the United States, the institutional home of the three editors and over half of the authors represented in this volume, this goal accords with the growing call among foreign, heritage, and second-language (L2) educators to enable learners to "use the [target] language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world" (ACTFL World Readiness Standards, "Communities" Goal Area 1996). However, as this volume's chapters illustrate through their projects in Canada, Finland, Germany, Israel, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Spain, and Sweden, the linguistic landscape is relevant to socially aware language pedagogies across many national, geographic, and cultural contexts. As Cope and Kalantzis (2016) note in tracing the origins of the dynamic, holistic *multiliteracies* approach (one that informs several of the chapters of this volume; cf. New London Group 1996; Cope and Kalantzis 2009), literacy and language education should be premised upon learners' need to participate fully in the fast-changing realms of work, citizenship, and identity at both local and global scales, a social and political mandate that goes far beyond the manipulation of formal elements of language and text.

Of course, as we alluded to above, the plethora of real-world public texts that can be captured with visual or audio recording devices is readily available as a source of "authentic, contextualized input" (Cenoz and Gorter 2008, p. 273) for all sorts of purposes in second language learning and teaching. Student-driven projects of image collection, categorization and interpretation as documented in Sayer (2010) and Rowland (2013), for instance, can be used to foreground the functional, sociopragmatic, or intercultural affordances of particular linguistic forms that are instantiated in the landscape (cf. Gorter 2018). Yet, as Shohamy has argued for well over a decade (e.g., Shohamy 2006; Shohamy and Waksman 2009), the opportunity, if not responsibility, afforded by the linguistic landscape is for students to observe, document, analyze, reflect upon, critique, and even intervene in the social and political processes themselves: "LL as an engagement device can turn students into concerned people with attention to language as a political and economic tool, and to

activists in their communities as they become aware of the public space as an arena they 'own' and should take an active role in shaping" (Shohamy 2015, p. 167). In particular, pedagogies of engagement (Pennycook 1999) that focus on "how students are invested in particular discourses and how these discourses structure their identities and pathways in life" (Kramsch 2009, p. 206) may be particularly efficacious for L2 students, who can be said to have a unique perspective on language as symbolic form. Neither complete outsiders or insiders to the discourses in places where the target language(s) may be found, language students in the linguistic landscape can record, annotate, hypothesize about and question meanings in forms useful for their own development trajectories as well as larger classroom and research communities.

The ACTFL World Readiness Standards goal for language learners to "interact and collaborate in their community and the globalized world" points to an expanded role played by language learners and teachers outside the classroom and, in this, to the volume's second goal. As illustrated especially in the chapters in Section III "Language students as researchers and the LL," language teaching and learning in the linguistic landscape brings opportunities to integrate training in research methodologies with language instruction, such that students become accountable for the co-construction of knowledge as they forge connections with other disciplines of study. In many cases, language teachers find that cultivating students' ability to conduct in-depth investigations into language, culture, and place is well served through techniques of ethnography, including participant observation and detailed interviews (cf. Roberts et al. 2001)—even if the time, material, and curricular affordances of many language classes do not allow for the long-term, in-depth engagement typical of *doing* ethnography in the anthropological tradition (Heath and Street 2008; cf. Green and Bloome 1997). Whether language teachers choose to incorporate elements of research methodologies from the social sciences, humanities and arts, or further afield, there is growing consensus among theorists of language pedagogy and second language acquisition that cultivating rich linguistic and cultural competencies involves students' development of their own tools for awareness-building, analysis, and critique of real-world language use (Modern Language Association 2007; Canagarajah 2013; Wiley and García 2016; Mori and Sanuth 2018).

Third, just as it addresses researchers and practitioners of language pedagogy, this volume aims to speak to the diverse interests of researchers in the field of linguistic landscape, as they draw from disciplines such as "applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, language policy, literacy studies, sociology, political science, education, art, semiotics, architecture, tourism, critical geography, urban planning and economics" (Shohamy and Ben-Rafael 2015, p. 1). Indeed, in the editors' introduction to the inaugural issue of *Linguistic Landscape: An International Journal*, the "educational context of LL in schools and classrooms" is identified as a key arena for advancing the field's general mandate to understand "the development of society and political regimes and communities" (Shohamy and Ben-Rafael 2015, p. 3). As language educators have been able to design robust pedagogical interventions by including theoretical and methodological frameworks from linguistic landscape

studies, researchers in the field of linguistic landscape can refine their epistemological stance by gaining a broader understanding of the potential and impact of learning languages and cultures through the linguistic landscape, while considering lines of inquiry that are traditionally situated in applied linguistics. For example, applied linguistics can inform issues pertaining to the language itself (e.g., lexical borrowing, syntactic patterns, metaphors), to language ideology (e.g., language policy, heteroglossic practices), and to the cultural dimensions of language (e.g., symbolic values, identity and subjectivity). It is our hope that this volume can contribute effectively to the cross-pollination between fields so as to facilitate LL researchers' capacity to learn from language students and teachers as "go-betweens" (Kramsch 2004), and engage with their complex objects of study through the transformational lenses of development and learning.

## 2 Mobilizing Pedagogy in the Public Space: Converging Research Trajectories

This volume's subtitle, "Mobilizing pedagogy in the public space," speaks to the practical reality of language teachers and students who are teaching and learning outside the traditional classroom, developing and applying their competencies in the heterogeneous and unpredictable real world of everyday life. Throughout the contributions to this volume, we see students conducting linguistic landscape-based learning activities in far-away study abroad settings (e.g., Bruzos chapter), in the 'close-by' city surrounding their school campus (e.g., Abraham, Lozano & Jimenez-Caicedo chapter), and in novel activities that join study abroad and study-at-home activities together (e.g., Richardson chapter). While students may travel far across their home states or territories to make observations, take photographs, conduct interviews, and otherwise engage with the living language of public spaces (as in the chapters by Lee & Choi, Sterzuk, and Hayik), they may also turn their focus to familiar neighborhoods, school environments (Seals chapter) or, indeed, their own homes (Szabó & Dufva chapter). Additionally, the chapters of this volume demonstrate that linguistic landscape representations in language textbooks (Chapelle chapter) and online environments (Kim & Chesnut, Hernandez-Martin & Skrandies chapters) offer their own unique pedagogical affordances. Indeed, even when we do not have direct access to the physical world of discourses-in-place, if we understand the "landscape" as not just material but a "*way of seeing* the external world" (Cosgrove 1984, p. 46; cited in Jaworski and Thurlow 2010, p. 3), then each chapter of this volume may help us to see multiple layers of pedagogical possibility, regardless of where we reside as teachers and students.

In this light, "Mobilizing pedagogy in the public space" stands as an invitation to consider how the linguistic landscape can enable the *learning mobilities* that epitomize the contemporary age—giving us impetus to reconsider the places of learning, possibilities for culturally and historically rich trajectories of apprenticeship, and

the actualization of new networks of learning and sociability (Leander et al. 2010). As we elaborate below, this volume dialogues with and builds upon many of the theoretical 'turns' that have given shape to research in language and literacy education in recent years, including the social turn in second language acquisition and use (e.g., Firth and Wagner 1997, 2007; Block 2003), which sees social action as the foundation and desired outcome of language learning; the multilingual turn, which "foreground[s] multilingualism, rather than monolingualism, as the new norm of applied linguistic and sociolinguistic analysis" (May 2014, p. 1); the focus on multimodality in language and literacy education, where there is widespread acknowledgement that "human language is done in placed, material contexts of use, and performed and interpreted across many different, often non-linear, timescales that differ to those of speech and written words" (Mills 2016, p. 71); and, unsurprisingly, a mobilities paradigm that employs new theoretical and analytic lenses in order to go "beyond the imagery of 'terrains' as spatially fixed geographical containers for social processes" (Sheller and Urry 2006, p. 209), urging us to understand unequal patterns of concentration, connectivity, dispersion, and exclusion as they exist in the world: in flux.

As Stroud and Mpendukana (2009) note in their groundbreaking study of changing discourses of economy and self in the South African township of Khayelitsha, landscape is "a resource for the study of social circulations of meaning in society, [where] signage is one form of linguistic recontextualization in a chain/network of resemiotizations across (economically differentiated) technologies, artifacts and spaces" (p. 380). Their material ethnographic approach points to a growing opportunity for language teaching and learning in the linguistic landscape that mirrors two additional 'turns' in recent social theory and applied linguistics research: that is, the opportunity to explicitly engage with *spatiality* and *materiality* in discourse. Where Scollon and Scollon (2003, p. 160) observed that "any sign whatsoever continues to give a significant portion of its meaning through the ways in which it indexes the world in which it is placed," Pennycook and Otsuji's (2015) notion of metrolingualism and Canagarajah's (2018a, 2018b) translingual practice as spatial and material repertoires are further articulations of the ultimate inseparability of language from its places, times, and material conditions of use. In practical terms, this means that linguistic landscape, despite the apparent fixity of its signs, is not a static object whose meanings are transparently available to all who see it. Rather, public and semi-public spaces such as markets, movie theaters, and street corners "[have] a different linguistic landscape at different times of day" (Pennycook and Otsuji 2015, p. 53). They must be interpreted dynamically and self-reflexively by students who attend as much to the *where, when*, *how*, and *why* of what they observe as to the *what*—questions that encourage a hybridization of classroom methodologies that might include, as in Ivković's *Linguascaping Toronto* project, "autoethnography, discourse and thematic analysis, corpus-based analysis, semiotic and multimodal analysis, psychogeography and narrative analysis, and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)" (Ivković 2019, p. 5). The linguistic landscape, then, forms an occasion for second language teachers to cultivate students' *spatial literacies* by attending to situated practices of text-making and interpretation that

take place differentially across time and place (cf. Leander et al. 2010; Taylor 2017; Mills 2016), as well as *material literacies* that account for the histories and agency of the sign-making 'stuff' of the world (Kern 2015; Mills 2016; Pahl and Rowsell 2010).

On one level, then, "mobilizing pedagogy" means that fundamental notions and processes of language teaching and learning must be reevaluated in light of their situatedness in local geographic and historical realities. As Canagarajah (2018b) argues from a material orientation (e.g., Barad 2007), prevailing conceptions of competence in language learning overemphasize individual agency and cognition apart from the environment; "emplacement" may be a more apt organizing concept for characterizing learners' accomplishments in that it understands communication as "a qualified, responsive, negotiated, and ongoing activity in which people engage with rhizomatic networks for possible outcomes" (p. 18). However, on another level altogether, this volume encourages its readers to consider language and literacy pedagogy as "mobilized" to the extent that it orients itself toward the social and political struggles that take place in the public spaces of the linguistic landscape (cf. Ortega 2019 on the imperative for Second Language Acquisition research to an equitable approach toward transdisciplinarity and multilingualism in SLA). As "a powerful policy mechanism and an arena where language battles and negotiations and reaffirmations can take place" (Shohamy 2006, p. 125), the linguistic landscape invites educational approaches that pursue questions of social justice and equity in representation of diverse language users, as many existing studies have demonstrated. Dagenais et al. (2009), for instance, designed curricular interventions for elementary school children in Montreal and Vancouver to observe and discuss the linguistic diversity in their respective neighborhoods in order to challenge "the tokenism of liberal multicultural educational and universalist assumptions" (p. 257) characteristic of their schooling environments. Burwell and Lenters (2015) introduced multiliteracies-based lessons to high school youth in suburban Ontario, who analyzed their local multimodal texts in order to create place-based documentaries exposing popular stereotypes of their neighborhoods. Hancock (2012), meanwhile, demonstrated how the linguistic landscape can serve as a tool for teacher training, as students in a social justice-minded teacher education program documented and analyzed Polish, Chinese, and other visible community languages in the city of Edinburgh. As he asserted, "the very act of investigating LL can potentially alter students' world-views and the school environment in which they will teach" (Hancock 2012, p. 250). Indeed, this last statement, of the self- and world-changing potential of student-teachers' investigative work in the linguistic landscape, may be an apt characterization of the social transformations and political engagements possible when language pedagogies are reimagined through a paradigm of mobilization.

## 3   Volume Overview

This volume is comprised of three parts, each of which foregrounds pedagogical innovations at different locations, scales, and purposes in the ecology of second language teaching and learning.

Part I, "Transforming language curricula and learning spaces," features five chapters that leverage the linguistic landscape to enhance the second language learning potential in their respective educational settings. From their perspective as post-secondary Spanish instructors, Abraham, Lozano, and Jimenez Caicedo demonstrate how a multiliteracies pedagogy can be applied to project-based learning projects in the linguistic landscape of New York City in order both to generate meaningful engagement with the second language and to foster critical thinking about interculturality in spaces frequented by the learners on a daily basis. Whereas Lozano, Jiménez Caicedo, and Abraham explore the possibilities of incorporating projects outside the classroom into language studies, Chapelle's chapter examines materials used in the classroom in her analysis of the visual portrayal of Quebec in post-secondary elementary French language textbooks over a fifty-year period. Despite targeting a North American readership, the textbooks offer very few examples of the linguistic landscape of Quebec and even fewer instances of pedagogical engagement with the images. Similarly, Kim and Chesnut's chapter focuses on classroom materials by presenting language learning activities involving virtual landscapes accessible online. Heeding the 2007 call by the Modern Language Association to foster translingual and transcultural competence in post-secondary language studies, they outline specific guided exercises that facilitate learners' encounters with the heterogeneity of the manners and modes of expression in the linguistic landscape. Szabó and Dufva's chapter returns the reader to physical spaces outside the classroom in their presentation of tasks conducted with Finnish as a second language learners that explicitly engage learners with the linguistic resources in the linguistic landscape. Recognizing the linguistic affordances in the surrounding environment, they develop tasks that look to raise learners' awareness of the learning opportunities in the landscape. Concluding Part I, Seals' chapter examines the language learning possibilities in the multilingual schoolscape of an early childhood education center in New Zealand that actively promotes translanguaging in its public display of language. Through the explicit focus on translanguaging in the schoolscape, the school fosters an acceptance of multi-cultural and multi-ethnic spaces that support the school's overall focus on multilingualism and that dovetail more broadly with the heritage and realities of the world outside the school.

In Part II of the volume, "Fostering Critical Social Awareness," five chapters illustrate how the linguistic landscape can foster the development of teachers' and students' sociopolitical consciousness and agency in contexts of systemic inequities. Against a backdrop of colonial discourses about language and education in Saskatchewan, Canada, Sterzuk's chapter addresses the cultural and linguistic responsibilities of mostly monolingual and white teachers-in-training in public

elementary schools with diverse student bodies. Student and teacher reflections from a Bachelor of Education course demonstrate the potential of linguistic landscape activities to "provide key sites for language awareness-building in teacher education," though Sterzuk argues that substantive institutional support is needed as well. Richardson's chapter narrates a pedagogical dialogue between an LL analysis project in a German study abroad program and student activities in a U.S.-based German-as-a-foreign language classroom, where the target language is not prominent in the public space nearby. This gap occasions students' investigation of *ambiguity* ("the multiplicity and indeterminacy of meaning within and related to texts") and *silence* ("the absence of entire languages, dialects or translations, and thus the silencing of those people who are excluded from more active participation in sociopolitical realms") in the LL, a framework that promoted a goal of symbolic competence (Kramsch and Whiteside 2008; Vinall 2016) to challenge cultural myths and stereotypes. Also writing from a U.S.-based foreign language education setting, but highlighting the potential of heritage language and multilingual student backgrounds for community-based projects, Lee and Choi investigate applications of the LL in Korean as a Foreign Language classes in service of the "5 C" goal areas of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, Communities). Exploring the latter three areas in particular, the authors document how 50 first-year university students discover and debate notions such as cultural authenticity, regional knowledge, and identity construction. Focusing on the case of Israeli-Arabic EFL writing courses, Hayik's chapter presents an action research project inspired by Freirian critical literacy pedagogy (e.g., Freire 1970), in which the teacher aimed to challenge the "banking model" of education through critical literacy learning in the LL. Utilizing a participatory documentary photography tool, students observed and critiqued phenomena such as the Hebraization of names, grammatical and spelling mistakes, and the outright absence of Arabic in the LL, activities that the author contends cultivated students' awareness and affective responses to the politics of visibility of Arabic in Israeli public space. In the final chapter of Part II, Elola and Prada outline an inquiry-based pedagogy in which heritage and L2 learners of college-level Spanish conduct an ethnolinguistic project on linguistic and cultural dimensions of Spanish and English use in West Texas, U.S. With an eye to the possibilities of LL projects to help redefine instructed L2s as *local* languages, the authors chronicle students' photography, interviews, and collaborative data analysis as steps toward Critical Language Awareness (e.g., Leeman and Serafini 2016) and "more informed discussions about social justice, equality, diversity, and minorities, all of which require urgent attention in today's world."

As demonstrated in Elola and Prada's chapter, the goal of developing students' critical linguistic and political awareness through language study in the linguistic landscape may be well-served through the conscious introduction of ethnographic and other research methods into the language classroom. This is the common theme explored in chapters in Part III of the volume, "Language Students as Researchers and Linguistic Landscape." In the first chapter, Bruzos outlines U.S. university students' use of critical observational and interview techniques to expose

commoditized, touristic discourses in a short-term Spanish Study Abroad course. Participants compared and contrasted the LL in five neighborhoods of Madrid, Spain, interpreting their findings in the light of course readings on Spain and Spanishness drawn from multiple perspectives and time periods—a collaborative endeavor that, the author argues, resulted in "a dynamic and conflictual understanding of contemporary Spanish culture and society, very different from the essentialist and normative approach common to language teaching textbooks and tourism discourses." Hernández-Martín and Skrandies' chapter, set in the superdiverse neighborhoods of London, offers a case study of what Damen (1987) terms "pragmatic ethnography," in which language students carry out participant observation, interviews, document collection and analysis, and self-reflection in order to understand the local situatedness and relativity of cultural practices. As students developed contextualized knowledge of communities of Spanish speakers in *Loñdres* through interactions with the material landscape, the audible soundscape, and online, the authors argue that students were uniquely able to develop intercultural competence and sociolinguistic awareness while learning Spanish. Sayer's chapter further elaborates on the potential of adapting ethnographic principles and techniques to the language classroom through learning activities in the linguistic landscape. After a review of the literature on several models of constructivist and experiential models of language learning, Sayer outlines a five-part model for organizing "ethnographic language learning projects" (ELLP), illustrated with examples from the author's own EFL classroom experience in Mexico. In the final chapter of Part III, Lykke Nielsen, Rosendal, Järlehed and Kullenberg take up the potential of coordinated citizen science projects (cf. Purschke 2017; Svendsen 2018) to cultivate students' dispositions and skills in scientific thinking, while yielding large-scale, open-source databases of value to research communities. Their chapter documents a large federally funded project in Sweden wherein primary and secondary students from 46 different schools systematically documented language use on bulletin boards; as they reflect upon design considerations, implementation challenges, and practical outcomes, the authors assert that this collaborative project "was extremely motivating for both teachers and students and contributed significantly to students' general learning about communication."

Taken collectively, these contributions offer theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical frameworks to leverage the potential of linguistic landscape in language and culture education. They engage several key aspects of language pedagogy such as the educational environment (instructional materials, the schoolscape itself), establishing a meaningful bridge between the school context and the physical community around it, extending learning spaces to distant communities (e.g., study abroad, virtual landscapes), and exploring new roles for the learner (e.g., researcher, author, ethnographer). It is our hope that this volume will contribute to productive transformations in pedagogical practice and social action in language and culture classrooms.

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