

# INTRODUCTION

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We must change the world while constantly reinterpreting it; as much as change itself, the reinterpretation of the world is a collective endeavor. (de Sousa Santos, 2018, p. viii)

## Changes affecting the higher education landscape

When considering the title of this book, we, as its editors, had to reflect on the notion of change. Change is constant and inevitable, but fundamental changes do not happen overnight. Such changes result from actions and measures that address deep, complex and interrelated systemic issues, and thus require a shift in mindset. Fifty years ago, Gregory Bateson (1972/2000), an early advocate for ecological thinking, warned that solving the challenges facing society requires a re-examination of the ideas that have dominated thought since the industrial revolution. For Bateson, ecological thinking meant more than adding an environmental perspective and implied the need to revisit the core values and principles that form the basis of societies. Similarly, in the field of education, as Selby (2000) has argued, ecological thinking involves a shift to a more holistic worldview and an awareness of the interconnections and interdependencies of issues of culture, development, environmental and social justice, equity, health, and peace, as well as the interplay between our outer and inner worlds and between different disciplinary epistemologies.

These ideas have special significance in the dynamic landscape of contemporary higher education, which faces complex challenges and often unforeseen and/or unpredictable changes and events, such as shifts in government policy or the COVID-19 pandemic. The constantly evolving changes necessitate strategic, future-oriented planning and decision-making in addressing the most critical questions relevant to universities today: the provision of education that is accessible and equitable to all and that meets the changing needs of economies and societies; internationalisation and the growing linguistic and cultural diversity at universities alongside the increasing dominance of English in academia; financial sustainability and the increasing competition for funding; technological advancements; and the well-being of both students and staff. These questions are linked to larger social, economic, geopolitical, technological, ideological, and environmental changes, which directly or indirectly influence higher education, such as intensifying global migration, deepening social inequalities, escalating armed and cyber conflicts and threats, increasing political/ideological polarisation,

the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation that diminishes trust in science, ethical issues surrounding AI, and the impending environmental crisis. On a more practical level, interest and investment in learning languages other than English is diminishing. These challenges are relevant in the Finnish higher education context, too, and they require flexibility and continuous adjustments not only in institutional strategies and frameworks but also in mindsets, pedagogical practices, and working cultures.

## **Movi's diverse roles and responsibilities**

The Centre for Multilingual Academic Communication (Movi), an independent unit within the University of Jyväskylä with which the contributors to this book are affiliated, is particularly affected by these changes since its focus area and core activities revolve around language and communication. As language and communication are foundational to every aspect of life, including learning, social interaction, academic knowledge construction, and science communication, Movi's sphere of operation has a wide-reaching influence. This requires an awareness of emerging changes in both the immediate and broader environment, including an understanding of their impact not only on Movi's operations but also on students' lives and experiences. But these changes also call for a proactive approach and concrete actions instead of merely adapting to recent developments and uncritically accepting new ideas. Movi's staff strives to embrace change in all its complexity and unpredictability and move in the desired direction by taking forward-looking steps. In doing so, Movi hopes to contribute to gradual but meaningful changes. This volume provides a forum to share ideas and increase the visibility of Movi's pedagogical approaches and practices. The challenges identified above are a shared concern that require joint effort and collaborative development of new ways forward. The nine contributions in this volume demonstrate how engaging in pedagogical inquiry and/or in creative explorations shapes Movi teachers' thinking and professional identities, develops their expertise, and makes them reflect on their pedagogical practices, with the overall goal of enhancing and enriching students' learning experiences. The ideas discussed in the chapters are intended to inspire readers to reflect on their current practices and develop the field further.

As part of the establishment of the network of language centres in Finland in the middle of the 1970s, a national centre for these units was established at the University of Jyväskylä (JYU). The main objective of this national centre was to develop and coordinate university language education at the national level, develop discipline-specific curricula as well as teaching materials, and to offer professional development training for language centre teachers. In 1977, an independent language centre was also established at JYU to offer degree-specific academic language and communication courses for all students. As the language centres around the country gradually became more autonomous, the national centre in Jyväskylä shifted its focus from coordination and development to research in the area of applied linguistics. In 1996, the centre was renamed the Centre for Applied Language Studies (CALS). Today, CALS, which is part of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, has a strong research focus on individual, community, and societal language phenomena and plays a pivotal national role in identifying challenges and providing research-based solutions. Because applied linguistics has been, and remains, a prominent field of research at JYU, the Language Centre staff has had excellent opportunities to participate in innovative research projects and be a member

of a vibrant research community. Over the years, the activities of the Language Centre gradually expanded as a response to the emerging real-world developments and theoretical advancements. The change in name from the Language Centre to the Centre of Multilingual Academic Communication (Movi) in 2018, nearly 40 years after its establishment, indicates the broadening of responsibilities as well as a qualitative shift in its vision and connection to contemporary theories, research, and pedagogical practices.

Movi's primary task today is to provide support for the learning of languages and academic/research communication for students and staff, but its broader mission is to promote multilingualism, critical language awareness, and the development of intercultural competence across all disciplines. Movi's wide-ranging operations, centred around language and communication, are closely linked with the overall functioning of the university from three key perspectives: as an educational and research institution, as a workplace, and as a societal agent. These three core functions are explicitly mentioned in the latest version of the official language policy of the University of Jyväskylä (2015), originally published in 2003 as one of the first of its kind in Europe. In addition to the specific tasks assigned to it, Movi is responsible for the general implementation of the principles and values set out in the language policy.

Over the years, we have developed into a dynamic, multilingual, and multicultural professional learning community with a working culture that emphasises collaboration, mutual support, knowledge sharing, and a collective orientation to action. Thus, multilingualism is viewed not only as a phenomenon and as a set of skills to be developed, but also as an operating culture, as "ways of thinking, working and co-constructing" (Jalkanen & Nikula, 2020, p. 117). While teacher collaboration and team-teaching may bring their own challenges, resolving tensions contributes to both professional and personal growth (e.g., Dang et al., 2022). From the perspective of management, in curriculum development work it is crucial to support collaboration and agency rather than adopting a top-down approach for implementation with an excessive focus on control and monitoring (e.g., Englund & Price, 2018; Hökkä et al., 2019). It therefore becomes crucial to consider and respect teachers' individual ideas, approaches, and solutions as well as the perspectives of students. In addition, the current context of higher education, characterised as it is by evolving changes and a "culture of speed" (Berg & Seeber, 2016), requires us to maintain a positive outlook and see the opportunities in the constantly arising challenges as well as to be mindful of our own and others' well-being and cherish what we have achieved together as a community. As Martela (2014) put it, "We . . . need work communities that are communities in the true meaning of the word recognizing us also on the affective and relational levels" (p. 106).

Movi plays a central role in promoting the values and implementing the goals set out in the university strategy and language policy. With a staff of about 100, Movi offers nearly 600 language and communication courses in 14 different languages, in a variety of modes. A wide range of courses are available for students across all levels, along with courses and professional development programmes for university staff, focusing on various aspects of language, communication, and pedagogical competence. Movi's primary responsibility, however, remains implementing the mandatory communication and language studies in Finnish, Swedish, and English, and in some cases in other languages, as part of the bachelor's and master's degree requirements at the national level.

About a decade ago, as theoretical advancements were made in the conceptualisations of language and language learning, Movi started to redesign the mandatory language and

communication studies at the undergraduate level, also prompted by the evolving needs of students. The guiding principle was to more closely integrate these studies with students' subject studies and offer them in a more timely manner. Such integration would enable the progressive development of academic and disciplinary literacies through different languages. Thus, rather than viewing the development of these literacies in isolation, they were to be seen as mutually supportive multilingual processes. The restructured system of integrated, multilingual, and discipline-specific language and communication studies has been the largest development project in the history of Movi. The work started in 2013, and by 2020 it had encompassed all undergraduate degree programmes. The new structure is often referred to by the acronym UVK, which stands for "uusiutuvat kieli- ja viestintäopinnot" in Finnish. The mandatory courses now span the entire duration of undergraduate studies, and their content is tailored to specific degree programmes. Designed in collaboration with the faculties and departments, they address the unique needs and disciplinary requirements of each programme (Jalkanen et al., 2016). At the same time, the system retains the core element of flexibility and is continuously reviewed, which helps teachers identify the most effective practices. Our approach has been influenced not only by the growing prevalence of multilingualism at the individual and societal level, but also by the changing views of language and of the role of languages and multilingualism in the development of academic expertise. (For a comprehensive overview of the theoretical underpinnings of the UVK studies, see Jalkanen and Nikula, 2020.)

The design, implementation, and continuous development of the new studies requires a very different pedagogical culture and a shift in teachers' mindsets. As educational expert Michael Fullan (2001, 2008) has pointed out, the restructuring process must go hand in hand with reculturing, an effort to change the way we do things: a type of reculturing "that activates and deepens moral purpose through collaborative work cultures that respect differences and constantly build and test knowledge against measurable results" (Fullan, 2001, p. 44). Teachers needed to accept that their own ideas (the ones most natural and familiar to them) represent just one approach, and other teachers may adopt, modify, or even reject these. Being open to, reflecting on, and acting upon feedback is a basic social skill, and also part of teachers' professional competence. Thus, the restructuring process has held a huge potential for professional development. It not only enables the integration of individual expertise but also helps teachers directly experience how group dynamics and social competence work in practice. One of the most important changes for teachers has been to adapt to new ways of thinking and working and look beyond the perspective of teaching (in) a particular language. Traditionally, colleagues, even within the same language group, may not have been aware of each other's pedagogical approaches and teaching practices, but in the new system, everything is done in collaboration: the team members and teams exchange ideas and solutions while making plans and decisions together and also share the responsibility, which leads to a new level of transparency.

In addition, it is essential to acknowledge and understand the students' perspective. In 2017, Movi initiated a longitudinal research project (AAKE) in collaboration with the Finnish Institute for Educational Research on the development of academic expertise in the restructured mandatory language and communication studies at the bachelor's level. One aim was to systematically follow the development of students' academic expertise during the three-year bachelor's study path through regular surveys and interviews. Another aim was to investigate what kind of pedagogy best supports the development of students'

academic expertise. Expertise is considered holistically, taking into account generic working life competencies, including social skills (Virtanen & Tynjälä, 2019, 2022), academic literacies (Kiili et al., 2013; Li, 2022; Wingate, 2018), communication competence (seen as effective and appropriate behaviour in a given context, see Spitzberg, 2013), multilingual and intercultural communication competence (see Kokkonen & Natri, 2024 in this volume), and the dimension of wisdom (see Kallio et al., 2024; Tynjälä et al., 2020). It encompasses cognitive, behavioural, emotional, motivational, and ethical aspects with an interplay between intrapersonal, interpersonal, and contextual factors. The surveys are administered at the beginning of the first academic year and at the end of the first, second, and third academic year. The results, which are to be published in a forthcoming article (Tynjälä et al., 2024), are used not only as a self-assessment tool for students but also for the pedagogical development of the bachelor's level language and communication studies.

Recent research has revealed several benefits of the collaboration between content and language specialists (see Li, 2020). Subject specialists often develop expertise implicitly through membership in discourse communities, which means that their knowledge of academic and disciplinary literacies is often tacit, and they may not be aware of or be able to articulate their values and expectations (McGrath et al., 2019, 2023). On the other hand, academic language and literacies experts may not have as deep and extensive knowledge about specific disciplinary discourses as content teachers do, and they often have a lower status and professional recognition within the institution and may even be perceived as marginalised and isolated service providers who operate in a “third space” (e.g., Ding & Bruce, 2017; MacDonald, 2016). Thus, deeper collaboration between content teachers and teachers of academic language and literacies is beneficial not only for students but also for staff (Li, 2020; Wingate, 2018). Such a collaboration not only facilitates reflection but also fosters professional development through a culture of collaboration, respect, and mutual responsibility. A disciplinary approach to language and communication blurs the line between teaching content and language and provides opportunities for language and communication experts to reflect on their professional identities and pedagogical practices (Jalkanen & Nikula, 2020). The topic of professional identity has been further explored in recent studies, where a broad spectrum of expertise and roles are identified alongside a complex interplay of contextual constraints and affordances that results in multilayered professional identities and varying degrees of agency (e.g., Fenton-Smith & Gurney, 2022; Ilieva et al., 2019). From an even broader perspective, a multilingual approach to disciplinary literacy pedagogies considers learning as multilingual practice, where languages are seen as integrated (rather than separate) resources. It highlights the significance of multilingual and multimodal repertoires and multilingual competence in the development of academic expertise, while also bringing to the fore the different status, role, and functions that specific languages have in academic communication in the Finnish context (Jalkanen & Nikula, 2020).

In applied linguistics, the multilingual turn (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014) or the multi/plural turn, as Kubota (2016) refers to it, signifies a shift in our understanding of language, language use, and language learning (see Meier, 2027), with an emphasis on plurality, multiplicity, hybridity, and fluidity (Kubota, 2016). Following these theoretical developments, multilingual approaches to language learning and teaching (including assessment, see Gorter and Cenoz, 2017), which draw on the concept of multicompetence (Cook, 2013), have challenged the traditional monolingual paradigm and its dominant linguistic norms and ideologies, while also bringing the social, historical, and ideological dimensions of language use

and language learning to the forefront (e.g., Kramsch, 2008, 2022; Kubota, 2016; Pennycook, 2022). These multilingual and holistic approaches do not see languages as isolated entities with fixed boundaries, owned by native speakers, but rather as deterritorialised, translocal resources used in interaction with others (Meier, 2017). Moreover, they consider language as part of a multimodal (linguistic, semiotic, and spatial) repertoire and as a multilingual social practice situated in time and space (see, e.g., Canagarajah, 2018). The multilingual turn has also directed attention towards the learners, who are seen as emergent bi/multilinguals living in a multilingual world (a multilingual ecosystem), each with individual, complex, and dynamic identities (Meier, 2017). Movi recognises the importance of supporting students in learning languages and “becoming multilingual”, while also emphasising “being multilingual”, that is, multilingual practices and the way multilingual speakers navigate between languages linked to their multilayered identities within and outside of the classroom (Cenoz & Gorter, 2015, p. 6). The dimensions of both becoming and being multilingual are particularly important in academic knowledge construction, research communication, and academic interaction. Moreover, as Meier (2017) has pointed out, the multilingual turn is part of a larger critical and transdisciplinary shift in education. Multilingual pedagogies do not simply promote multilingualism and focus on the benefits it brings to individuals (such as a competitive advantage in the labour market) or societies but also foster linguistic and epistemological diversity. In contemporary academia, it is particularly crucial to value and incorporate insights in multiple languages (other than English) and from different disciplines, intellectual traditions, and cultural contexts (e.g., de Sousa Santos, 2018; Molinari, 2022). From an even broader societal perspective, multilingual pedagogical approaches that address existing language-related challenges in society, such as inequalities, exclusion, or power dynamics, have the potential to raise critical language awareness (e.g., Shapiro, 2022), cultural sensitivity, and overall consciousness and, thus, play a vital role in fostering social cohesion and positive change in society (Kubota, 2016; Meier, 2017).

Another major influence on Movi’s work is the process known as internationalisation, which is a central dimension of the university strategy. Internationalisation is most directly noticeable through the presence of students and faculty from countries other than Finland and in the growing number of international partnerships and collaborative projects. However, rather than being a measurable goal and an end in itself, internationalisation should be seen as a means to foster an attitude of openness, respectful communication, mutual learning, and meaningful contributions to the broader community or society as a whole (e.g., de Wit, 2020; Latorre et al., 2024). These goals are captured by the concept of internationalising the curriculum (e.g., Leask, 2013), with its focus on developing the intercultural competence of both students and staff (e.g., Deardorff & Jones, 2012, 2022). It has been suggested that university policymakers need a more qualitative and long-term approach that highlights ethical and social responsibility (Knight, 2023; Latorre et al., 2024). Such an approach is believed to help prevent the perpetuation of inequalities and biases and direct attention to larger societal issues. It is important to emphasise that making surface-level changes are not enough: this development work requires deeper transformations in underlying structures, everyday discourses, and pedagogical practices.

Within the framework of a recent development project, Movi has worked closely with faculties and departments to actively support these internationalisation goals. The internationalisation of the curriculum is particularly important, and Movi has promoted the inclusion of intercultural learning goals in the curriculum, alongside the use of personal study

plans. More specifically, Movi offers guidance and support for students in making personal plans and for faculties in formulating and implementing departmental-level strategies related to intercultural competence. Movi's overall mission is to support students in becoming effective, confident, and ethical language users, ones who can make informed and strategic decisions when communicating and interacting with people from diverse backgrounds while relying on multiple languages in their repertoire. These aspects are crucial during their studies but also in their future work when they engage in expert activities in their chosen field. As the themes of language, identity, and equity are increasingly important in public discussions and academic research, Movi also encourages a deeper and more critical reflection on the role and impact of languages, as well as on the value and challenges of multilingualism and intercultural communication in students' professional and personal lives, not to mention in society in general. In line with the specific internationalisation goals put forward in the university strategy, developing multilingual and intercultural competence is seen as an integral part of university studies, starting from the bachelor's level.

In addition to providing the mandatory language and communication studies at the bachelor's level, Movi offers support courses for students experiencing high social anxiety and low communication self-efficacy. Recent studies show a considerable increase in social anxiety worldwide following the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Batista et al., 2021; World Health Organization, 2022), but studies conducted in the Finnish context indicate similar trends among adolescents from 2013 to 2021, particularly among girls (Ranta et al., 2024). During their studies, students experience social anxiety and communication challenges, especially when they need to use a language that is not part of their everyday lives and/or when they interact with strangers. Since these challenges directly impact learning, teachers need to identify them and offer support. Movi was the first unit within the university to recognise the importance of considering students' academic study ability from a holistic perspective when offering structured support, and today it has a central role in this endeavour at the university level. The Academic Study Ability Team works closely with various stakeholders within the university to provide versatile support for students. One concrete result of their work is a website that provides guidelines and tips for students related to academic reading and writing, argumentation, feedback interaction, technology-mediated collaboration, language learning and multilingual communication. In collaboration with the JYU Student Life programme, the Student Union of the University of Jyväskylä, and the Finnish Kennel Club, Movi has brought Care and Reading Dogs to the campus to enhance students' well-being and support their learning, while also promoting new pedagogical methods.

The Flexible Pedagogy Team is responsible for developing and promoting flexible pedagogical approaches and learning solutions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they provided valuable support for Movi and JYU teachers when transitioning to online teaching. Recently, the team's focus has been on the ethical and pedagogically informed use of AI in teaching and learning as well as on assessment practices. Their activity is linked to the university-wide collaborative pedagogical development initiative JYULearn, which aims at improving teaching practices at the university.

Movi is in charge of INTEGRA, a one-year training programme for highly educated immigrants (those with a higher education degree or partially completed higher education studies from outside of Finland) who want to continue their studies in a Finnish degree programme or find employment in Finland within their own field. The pedagogical model developed for INTEGRA is unique in that it integrates subject studies, language and

communication courses in both Finnish and English, and study guidance. The model has been adapted to various English-medium degree programmes at JYU to support international students in learning Finnish, which is important if they plan on staying in Finland.

Movi also provides support for the professional development of JYU staff members who teach academic content through English to culturally and linguistically diverse student groups. The programme is currently being updated and integrated into the newly developed university pedagogy programme, the underlying philosophy of which is informed by multilingual and multicultural approaches. The new programme will be launched in the fall of 2024 and Movi is responsible for developing, coordinating, and partly teaching the modules. In addition to updating the content and ensuring a solid theoretical grounding, the renewed studies will have a modular structure to enable more flexibility and more linkage to current issues and changes in the working environment. Participants will more easily be able to customise their learning experience and tailor their pedagogical studies to their specific needs and objectives.

Within the framework of Academic Readiness Screening (ACRES), specific support is offered to departments in assessing the language and academic readiness of applicants to some of the English-medium master's degree and doctoral programmes.

For doctoral students, Movi offers research communication courses in Finnish and English, which can be taken at different stages of their studies. The courses encompass various aspects of research communication, along with specific genres that students will encounter during their doctoral journey and beyond. From 2024 to 2027, JYU is participating in a doctoral education pilot project that aims to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of doctoral training and meet the growing need for experts who can provide evidence-based solutions for complex problems. Movi's role in this project is crucial. It is essential that doctoral students possess strong language and communication skills when communicating their research results, collaborating with others, and engaging with policymakers, industry professionals, practitioners, and the general public with the purpose of achieving both scientific and societal impact. In addition to these pragmatic goals, doctoral students need to be aware of and reflect on broader issues in global academia at the intersection of language, power, and identity (e.g., Habibie & Flowerdew, 2023; Kubota, 2016; Shapiro, 2022), consider their interconnectedness with impact (Ennser-Kananen et al., 2022), and, overall, develop a sense of agency as researchers (Károly, 2022).

Finally, university staff members can choose from a range of courses, in both Finnish and English, that focus on various aspects of language and communication at different levels. Moreover, a wide range of traditional language courses in a number of languages are part of Movi's course offerings for language learners at different levels.

## Contributions

This volume comprises nine chapters, each presenting a study that is linked to one or more of the changes outlined above. The book is divided into three parts, starting from studies that explore broader themes and gradually moving to investigations of more specific topics.

The first part consists of three studies linked to broader changes that directly impact on higher education and diversify the learning and teaching context. As mentioned earlier, Movi is taking an active role in implementing the university's internationalisation strategy and goals. In their contribution, Kokkonen and Natri offer a conceptual framework for multilingual



and intercultural communication competence (MICC), which is seen as an integral part of academic expertise. Their framework serves as a valuable pedagogical tool that aids students in articulating, self-assessing, and reflecting on their multilingual and intercultural communication competence and their individual goals. Drawing on this framework, Brauer focuses on students' motivations and ideal international selves by examining their personal internationalisation goals. As a concrete example of pedagogical experimentation, Károly looks into the pedagogical value of translation from the broader perspective of intercultural learning within the context of a recently developed elective course. She considers translation not merely as the practical activity of meaning transfer but also as a theoretical topic and a subject for critical discussion with complex cultural, social, ethical, and ideological dimensions.

The second part of this volume contains three studies that are linked to the importance of interaction, reflection, and collaboration. They show how change affects inter- and intrapersonal dynamics: Movi's workplace interactions, pedagogical priorities, and students' beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions. As explained above, Movi is at the forefront of pedagogical collaboration in the design, development, and implementation of teaching. In their contribution, Ahonen and Ylönen focus on team teaching, an essential part of the working culture at Movi. They analyse peer feedback received in teacher teams to examine perceptions of feedback and ways to improve feedback practices within collaborative teams. Gerlander and Alanne focus on a course that provides support for students in developing their academic study ability by examining the phenomenon of oral communication apprehension. They highlight the importance of understanding personal perceptions and establishing a supportive and collaborative learning environment to develop students' communication confidence and call for a holistic approach in the design and evaluation of such support courses. Students may experience discomfort in intercultural communication situations when interacting with people from different cultures. Combining visual and verbal data, Kelly and Imamura zoom in on the experiences of Japanese university exchange students in Finland who participated in English-medium courses on academic language and communication offered for international students. The courses seem to provide transformative learning experiences for these students as they encounter international students from diverse cultural backgrounds who use English as a shared language.

The last part of this book contains three studies that focus on academic literacies, more specifically on learning and teaching academic reading and writing. At Movi, it is important to be aware of and understand the experiences of students who are new to the world of academic reading and writing. In this area, change manifests in the form of novel pedagogical solutions, curricular shifts, and increased pedagogical awareness and support. Orszag focuses on an online academic reading module to examine how teaching presence is influenced by certain pedagogical factors, such as embedded support, the design of the learning environment, and teacher feedback, while also considering other factors, such as students' confidence in their academic and English abilities and their working mode preferences. Jokinen, Kuitunen, and Torvelainen seek to identify the changes in how academic writing was conceptualised in the writing curriculum between 2010 and 2020. They discuss how the comprehensive reassessment of pedagogical goals and content led to a new approach that reflects a broader understanding of writing and better takes into account cognitive processes and the sociocultural context. Finally, Riikonen and Kotilainen delve into the challenges of learning academic writing in the transition to university study and explore students' individual perspectives and experiences as they relate to three particular aspects of writing identity.

## Acknowledgements

First of all, we want to express our gratitude to all the authors for their invaluable contributions to this book. We deeply appreciate the time and effort they dedicated to this project.

We are also indebted to the peer reviewers who generously shared their time and expertise to review the manuscripts included in this book. Their thoughtful and constructive feedback has greatly enhanced the quality and rigour of the content.

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Finally, we would also like to extend a warm thank you to Movi's Language Services, whose translation and copyediting work were instrumental in shaping the final form of the manuscripts.

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