

## Learning through Language

Learning language and using language to learn are at the core of any educational activity. Bringing together a globally representative team of experts, this volume presents an innovative and empirically robust collection of studies that examine the role of language in education, with a particular emphasis on features of school-relevant language in middle childhood and adolescence and its precursors in early childhood. It addresses issues like how children's linguistic and literacy experiences at home prepare them for school, how the classroom functions as a language-mediated learning environment and how schools can support bilingual students in academic attainment. Each of its three parts – early childhood, middle childhood and adolescence and learning in multilingual contexts – features a discussion from experts in the field to stimulate conversation and further routes for research. Its structure will make it useful for anyone interested in ongoing efforts towards building a pedagogically relevant theory of language learning.

VIBEKE GRØVER is Professor of Education at the University of Oslo, Norway.

PAOLA UCCELLI is Professor of Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, USA.

MEREDITH L. ROWE is Professor of Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, USA.

ELENA LIEVEN is Professor of Psychology at the University of Manchester, UK.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-16935-7 – Learning through Language

Edited by Vibeke Grøver , Paola Uccelli , Meredith Rowe , Elena Lieven

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

---

# Learning through Language

## *Towards an Educationally Informed Theory of Language Learning*

---

*Edited by*

**Vibeke Grøver**

*University of Oslo*

**Paola Uccelli**

*Harvard University*

**Meredith L. Rowe**

*Harvard University*

**Elena Lieven**

*University of Manchester*



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-16935-7 — Learning through Language  
Edited by Vibeke Grøver , Paola Uccelli , Meredith Rowe , Elena Lieven  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

## CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,  
New Delhi – 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107169357](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107169357)

DOI: 10.1017/9781316718537

© Cambridge University Press 2019

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2019

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Names: Grøver, Vibeke, editor. | Uccelli, Paola, editor. | Rowe, Meredith L., editor. | Lieven, Elena V. M., editor.

Title: Learning through language : towards an educationally informed theory of language learning / edited by Vibeke Grøver, Paola Uccelli, Meredith Rowe, Elena Lieven.

Description: New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, [2019]

Identifiers: LCCN 2018048869 | ISBN 9781107169357

Subjects: LCSH: Language awareness. | Language and education.

Classification: LCC P120.L34 L435 2019 | DDC 418.0071–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2018048869>

ISBN 978-1-107-16935-7 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

## Contents

---

<i>List of Figures</i>	page viii
<i>List of Tables</i>	x
<i>List of Contributors</i>	xii
<i>Foreword</i>	xxi
NONIE K. LESAUX	
1 Learning through Language	1
VIBEKE GRØVER, PAOLA UCCELLI, MEREDITH L. ROWE, AND ELENA LIEVEN	
<b>Part I Learning through Language during the Preschool and Early Elementary School Years</b>	
2 Input, Interaction, and Learning in Early Language Development	19
ELENA LIEVEN	
3 Infants Want Input	31
PAUL L. HARRIS	
4 Learning More than Language through Language during Early Childhood	40
MEREDITH L. ROWE	
5 Food for Thought: Turning Everyday Family Practices into Opportunities to Develop Rich Language and Literacy Abilities in Latino Children	52
DIANA LEYVA AND LAUREN SKORB	
6 Theory- and Evidence-Based Language Learning and Teaching for Young Children: Promoting Interactive Talk in the Classroom	64
YOUNG-SUK GRACE KIM AND JOONMO YUN	

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
7	The Relationship between Early Childhood Development and Later Elementary School Performance in Chile	74
	ANDREA ROLLA, MACARENA ALVARADO, BERNARDO ATUESTA, MARCELA MARZOLO, ERNESTO TREVIÑO, HIROKAZU YOSHIKAWA, AND MARYCATHERINE ARBOUR	
	Discussion: Reflections on Learning through Language from Infancy to Preschool and Early Elementary School Years	84
	AGELIKI NICOLOPOULOU	
	<b>Part II Learning through Language during the Middle School and Early Adolescent Years</b>	93
8	Learning the Language for School Literacy: Research Insights and a Vision for a Cross-Linguistic Research Program	95
	PAOLA UCCELLI	
9	Observational Research on Vocabulary and Comprehension in Upper Elementary School Classrooms	110
	REBECCA D. SILVERMAN AND ANNA M. HARTRANFT	
10	Improving Struggling Readers' Literacy Skills through Talk about Text	123
	LOWRY E. HEMPHILL, JAMES KIM, AND MARGARET TROYER	
11	Classroom Conversations as Support for Vocabulary Learning: Examining Teacher Talk as Input for Student Learning	135
	EVELYN FORD-CONNORS AND CATHERINE O'CONNOR	
12	Measurement of Reading Comprehension, Processing, and Growth	147
	GINA BIANCAROSA	
	Discussion 1: Time, Complexity, and the Enduring Importance of Words: Key Themes in Language Learning in the Middle Years	159
	P. DAVID PEARSON	
	Discussion 2: The Road – via Education – to Humane Social Relationships Is Driven by Language (and Literacy)	170
	ROBERT L. SELMAN	
	<b>Part III Learning through More than One Language</b>	177
13	Young Bilinguals' Extended Discourse Skills: The Role of Perspective Taking	179
	VIBEKE GRØVER	

<i>Contents</i>	vii
14 How Does Vocabulary Instruction in Reading Help Chinese Young Minority Children Learn Vocabulary in Two Languages? SI CHEN	192
15 Young Monolingual and Bilingual Children’s Exposure to Academic Language as Related to Language Development and School Achievement: The DASH Project PAUL P. M. LESEMAN, LOTTE F. HENRICHS, ELMA BLOM, AND JOSJE VERHAGEN	205
16 Cross-Linguistic Relations among Bilingual and Biliterate Learners C. PATRICK PROCTOR AND QIANQIAN ZHANG-WU	218
17 Pushing the Limits: Dual-Language Proficiency and Reading Development in the United States and Canada YUUKO UCHIKOSHI AND STEFKA H. MARINOVA-TODD	235
Discussion 1: Bilingualism as Action SARA RUTHERFORD-QUACH AND KENJI HAKUTA	247
Discussion 2: Multilingualism and Socioeconomic Development ROBERT A. LEVINE	254
Afterword: So Much Progress, So Much Left to Do CATHERINE E. SNOW	257
<i>References</i>	262
<i>Index</i>	309

## Figures

---

4.1	Proportion of children's utterances (bars represent standard error) containing future tense, past tense, and personal pronouns across conditions.	<i>page 49</i>
4.2	Estimated marginal means (bars represent standard errors) of planning explanation and mental time travel correct item selected across conditions.	50
6.1	Direct and indirect effect model of text comprehension (DIET), illustrating the mappings between mental representations (situation model, text base, and surface code) and language and cognitive skills.	66
8.1	A cross-linguistic research program to study language and literacy relations.	101
8.2	Proportion of students by CALS percentile levels and grade.	103
8.3	Scatterplot of academic language proficiency (CALS) and reading comprehension (GISA).	104
8.4	Distribution of students by CALS percentile levels and SES (eligibility for free/reduced-price lunch).	105
12.1	Within- and across-year growth in oral reading fluency by assessment occasion from grades 1 to 8.	152
12.2	Oral reading fluency (ORF) by passage within-period and reading comprehension (RC) scores by time period across grades 7 and 8.	154
12.3	Oral reading fluency (ORF) and reading comprehension (RC) scores by time period across grades 3 and 4.	155



	<i>List of Figures</i>	ix
12.4	A sample MOCCA item with answer choice types labeled in italics.	156
DC.II.1.1	Visual depiction of the various contexts in which a student should meet a word in order to gain control of its meaning.	168
14.1	Average fitted growth trajectories for Uyghur children in low government ranking (Excellent = 0) and high government ranking (Excellent = 1) kindergartens that describe the effect of Xinjiang Project intervention and entry age cohort on the change in the Chinese receptive vocabulary.	201
14.2	Average fitted growth trajectories for Uyghur children describing the effect of Xinjiang Project intervention and entry age cohort on the change in Uyghur expressive vocabulary.	202
15.1	Development of reading comprehension and mathematical achievement from first to fifth grade of elementary school, based on latent growth modelling.	214

## Tables

---

4.1	Partial Correlations between Father Input and Child Outcome Variables, Controlling for Fathers' Years of Education	<i>page</i> 46
6.1	Definition and Application of E <sup>5</sup> Principle Components	71
8.1	Correlations between Child Seventh-Grade CALS and Video-Based Measures at Child Age Thirty Months	106
9.1	Vocabulary Codes	117
9.2	Comprehension Codes	118
9.3	Summary of Findings	119
10.1	STARI Core Instructional Practices	129
10.2	Teacher Practices That Promote Talk about Text	130
10.3	Student Text Talk Behavior	130
DC.II.1.1	Summary of Key Findings from the Later Learner Chapters	163
13.1	Descriptive Statistics and Correlations	188
15.1	Developmental Relations between L1 and L2 Exposure and Vocabulary Development from Age Three to Age Six Based on Multi-group Latent Growth Models	212
15.2	Academic Language Skills in Dutch and L1 Predicting the Intercept and Slope of Reading Comprehension and Mathematical Achievement through Elementary School (Standardized Regression Coefficients)	215
16.1	Summary of Studies	220
16.2	Overview of Sample	228
16.3	Descriptive Statistics and Correlations	229

<i>List of Tables</i>	xi
16.4 English Reading Model: Grade-Controlled Spanish Language and Literacy Predicting English Reading, with and without Covariates	231
16.5 Spanish Reading Model: Grade-Controlled English Language and Literacy Predicting Spanish Reading, with and without Covariates	232

## Contributors

---

**Macarena Alvarado, Servicio Nacional de Capacitación y Empleo (SENCE), Chile**

Macarena Alvarado has a master's degree in economics from the University of Chile and a master's degree in public policy and development from the Paris School of Economics, France, and is an external consultant for the Inter-American Development Bank and the Chilean government.

**MaryCatherine Arbour, Division of Global Health Equity, Brigham and Women's Hospital, USA**

MaryCatherine Arbour, MD MPH, is Associate Professor for Research at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Assistant Professor at Harvard Medical School. She implements and evaluates interventions to promote child development and reduce inequities in the USA and abroad, using a combination of experimental, ethnographic and quality improvement methodologies. She has particular interests in methods for adapting evidence-based practices across diverse contexts and populations, and at scale.

**Bernardo Atuesta, Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL), Chile**

Bernardo Atuesta is Consultant for CEPAL in Santiago, Chile. He is an economist with a master's degree in economics from Rosario University in Colombia and a master's degree in public policy and development from the Paris School of Economics, France.

**Gina Biancarosa, University of Oregon, USA**

Gina Biancarosa is Associate Professor and Ann Swindells Chair in Education at the University of Oregon. She earned her EdD in language and literacy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Her research interests centre primarily on measuring and tracking growth in reading comprehension and on adolescent literacy, as well as meta-representational skills more broadly.

**Elma Blom, Utrecht University, the Netherlands**

Elma Blom is Professor in Language Development and Multilingualism in family and educational contexts in the Department of Education and Pedagogy at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. She studies the parallel development of multiple languages in children, linguistic and cognitive effects of bilingualism, predictors of language development and the distinction between language delay and language impairment, and she works on the improvement of diagnostic instruments for multilingual children.

**Si Chen, Harvard Graduate School of Education, USA**

Si Chen, PhD, is a post-doctoral fellow at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Her research is primarily concerned with the ways in which language/literacy learning curriculums and environments for young children – in and out of school, monolingual and bilingual – can be designed to support children's development. Much of Chen's research focuses on detecting the effectiveness of randomized literacy interventions in China.

**Evelyn Ford-Connors, Boston University, USA**

Evelyn Ford-Connors, EdD, is a senior lecturer in the literacy programme at Boston University's Wheelock School of Education and Human Development and the Co-director of the Donald D. Durrell Reading and Writing Clinic. Her dissertation research examined middle school teachers' talk during their classroom-based vocabulary instruction, and she continues to pursue this line of inquiry through research and coaching focused on teachers' talk during literacy instruction.

**Vibeke Grøver, University of Oslo, Norway**

Vibeke Grøver is Professor of Education at the University of Oslo, Department of Education. She has conducted research on children's peer play, on children's language use in a cross-cultural perspective and on longitudinal relations between language exposure and vocabulary learning in language-minority children. Currently she is undertaking an intervention study of dual language learners and their language learning and text comprehension in urban, multi-ethnic preschools in Norway.

**Kenji Hakuta, Stanford University, USA**

Kenji Hakuta is the Lee L. Jacks Professor of Education, Emeritus, at Stanford University. His publications are in the areas of theory, policy and practice in the education of English learners.

**Paul L. Harris, Harvard Graduate School of Education, USA**

Paul L. Harris is the Victor S. Thomas Professor of Education at Harvard University. He obtained a DPhil in experimental psychology from Oxford University. He studies the development of emotion, imagination and cognition in early childhood.

**Anna M. Hartranft, University of Maryland, USA**

Anna M. Hartranft is a faculty research associate at the University of Maryland, College Park. Her research focuses on reading and writing difficulties for children with or at risk for disabilities. She has conducted research on the development and instruction of comprehension and has recently completed her dissertation, focused on the role of executive functioning in the comprehension of upper elementary students from linguistically diverse backgrounds and/or with disabilities.

**Lowry E. Hemphill, Boston University, USA**

Lowry E. Hemphill is Clinical Associate Professor at Boston University. She received her doctorate from Harvard Graduate School of Education with a focus on language and literacy learning. Her main research interests are literacy development among low-income children and adolescents and oral language contributions to reading comprehension. She is the main developer of the Strategic Adolescent Reading Intervention (STARI) and helps lead a large-scale clinical trial into its efficacy.

**Lotte F. Henrichs, Utrecht University, the Netherlands**

Lotte F. Henrichs is a researcher and educational consultant at the Department of Educational Consultancy and Professional Development, Utrecht University. She obtained a PhD in linguistics from the University of Amsterdam, with a focus on academic language development in early childhood. She currently teaches on the topic of teaching diverse classrooms in the Utrecht University Teacher Education Program for primary education. She collaborates with teachers in various practice-oriented research projects.

**James Kim, Harvard Graduate School of Education, USA**

James Kim is Professor of Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He studies the effectiveness of literacy reforms and interventions in improving student outcomes.

**Young-Suk Grace Kim, University of California, Irvine, USA**

Young-Suk Grace Kim is Professor at the University of California, Irvine. She received her EdD from Harvard University in human development and

psychology with a concentration in language and literacy and a minor concentration in quantitative policy analysis in education. Her primary research areas include development and difficulties in language, cognition and reading and writing skills across languages and writing systems.

**Nonie K. Lesaux**

Nonie K. Lesaux is Academic Dean and Juliana W. and William Foss Thompson Professor of Education and Society at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Her research focuses on promoting the language and literacy skills of today's children from diverse linguistic, cultural and economic backgrounds, and is conducted largely in urban and semi-urban cities and school districts.

**Paul P. M. Leseman, Utrecht University, the Netherlands**

Paul Leseman is Professor of Education in the Department of Education and Pedagogics. He studies language and cognitive development in children with a low socioeconomic status or a migration background. He is involved in intervention programmes to close the early education gap between children from different backgrounds and is currently leading a large cross-national study into the mechanisms of educational inequality and exclusion in Europe.

**Robert A. LeVine, Harvard Graduate School of Education, USA**

Robert A. LeVine is Roy E. Larsen Professor of Education and Human Development, Emeritus, at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. His research concerns cultural aspects of parenthood and child development in African, Asian, Latin American and other societies. His most recent research finds that across these contexts, much of the effects of maternal schooling on child health and development are due to the language and literacy skills that the mothers learned in school.

**Diana Leyva, Davidson College, USA**

Diana Leyva is Assistant Professor of Psychology at Davidson College, USA. Her research focuses on how parents support the development of children's school readiness skills in minority communities in the USA and Latin America. She received her PhD from Clark University, was a lecturer in education and a post-doctoral fellow at Harvard University and was project director of *Un Buen Comienzo* (A Good Start), an initiative to improve early childhood education in Chile through a teacher professional development programme.

**Elena Lieven, University of Manchester, England**

Elena Lieven is Professor of Psychology at the University of Manchester. Her research involves usage-based approaches to language development; the

xvi *List of Contributors*

emergence and construction of grammar; the relationship between input characteristics and the process of language development; and variation in children's communicative environments, cross-linguistically and cross-culturally. She is Co-Director of the ESRC International Centre for Language and Communicative Development (LuCiD: [www.lucid.ac.uk](http://www.lucid.ac.uk)) at the Universities of Manchester, Liverpool and Lancaster. She is an elected Fellow of the Cognitive Science Society and of the British Academy.

**Stefka H. Marinova-Todd, University of British Columbia, Canada**

Stefka H. Marinova-Todd is Associate Professor in the School of Audiology and Speech Sciences at the University of British Columbia, Canada. She holds an EdD in human development and psychology from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Dr Marinova-Todd investigates the language, literacy and cognitive development of bilingual children, both typically developing and with autism.

**Marcela Marzolo, Fundación Educacional Oportunidad, Chile**

Marcela Marzolo is Executive Director of Fundación Educacional Oportunidad in Chile, which implements *Un Buen Comienzo*, a programme that seeks to improve the quality of early childhood education for at-risk Chilean children. She is an early childhood educator from the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. She is a specialist in learning disabilities from the same university and a specialist in children's attachment and mental health from the Universidad del Desarrollo in Chile.

**Ageliki Nicolopoulou, Lehigh University, USA**

Ageliki Nicolopoulou is Professor of Psychology at Lehigh University. She is a socio-cultural developmental psychologist whose research interests include the role of narrative in development, socialization and education; the influence of the peer group and peer culture as social contexts for children's cognitive and socio-emotional development; the relationship between play and narrative; the foundations of emergent literacy; and the developmental interplay between the construction of reality and the formation of (gender) identity.

**Catherine O'Connor, Boston University, USA**

Catherine O'Connor is Professor of Education and Linguistics at Boston University in the Wheelock College of Education and Human Development. She received her PhD in linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley with a focus on language documentation of Northern Pomo, a dormant indigenous language of northern California. Her research in education centres on language use in school settings, including classroom



discourse and discussion and its role in literacy development and mathematics learning, and how teachers learn to orchestrate productive classroom discussion.

**P. David Pearson, University of California, Berkeley, USA**

P. David Pearson is an Emeritus faculty member in the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Berkeley, where he served as Dean from 2001 to 2010. His current research focuses on literacy history and policy. He also holds an appointment as Professor of the Graduate School and is the Evelyn Lois Corey Emeritus Chair in Instructional Science.

**C. Patrick Proctor, Boston College, USA**

C. Patrick Proctor is Associate Professor of Literacy and Bilingualism at the Lynch School of Education, Boston College. His research interests include cognitive and sociolinguistic explorations of bilingualism in elementary and middle school-aged children, language and literacy development among linguistically diverse learners, collaborative partnerships with teachers in multilingual classrooms and the intersections between technology and literacy development in urban school settings.

**Andrea Rolla, David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, Harvard University, Chile**

Andrea Rolla is a post-doctoral researcher at Harvard University and an advisor to the *Un Buen Comienzo* project in Chile, an interdisciplinary partnership with Fundación Educacional Oportunidad. Previously, she worked for four years as Senior Advisor at the Chilean Ministry of Education as well as at the US Department of Education, the UK National Foundation for Education Research and the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile and as a consultant in Costa Rica, Chile, El Salvador, Colombia, Ecuador and the USA. Andrea holds a BA in literature as well as an elementary school teacher certification from Princeton University, a master's degree in educational research from the University of Oxford and a doctorate in education from Harvard University, having specialized in language and literacy development.

**Meredith L. Rowe, Harvard Graduate School of Education, USA**

Meredith L. Rowe is Professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where she teaches courses on language and literacy development. Her research focuses on uncovering features of parent communication with children that contribute to children's language and cognitive development across early childhood and on translating these findings into intervention programmes for parents.

xviii *List of Contributors*

**Sara Rutherford-Quach, Stanford University, USA**

Sara Rutherford-Quach is Director of Academic Programs and Research for Understanding Language at the Stanford Graduate School of Education. She received her PhD in linguistic anthropology of education from Stanford University. Her interests include language development, classroom discourse and instructional practice and with respect to bilingual students and their educators.

**Robert L. Selman, Harvard Graduate School of Education, USA**

Robert L. Selman is the Roy E. Larsen Professor of Human Development and Education and Professor of Psychology in Psychiatry at Harvard University. Currently, he studies the developmental and cultural antecedents of the capacity to form and maintain positive social relationships, as well as ways to prevent negative educational, social, and health outcomes in youth.

**Rebecca D. Silverman, Stanford Graduate School of Education, USA**

Rebecca D. Silverman is Associate Professor of Early Literacy at the Stanford Graduate School of Education. Her research focuses on language and literacy development and instruction of children in early childhood and elementary school. She has focused especially on vocabulary and comprehension for children from socioeconomically disadvantaged and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

**Lauren Skorb, Davidson College, USA**

Lauren Skorb graduated from Davidson College, where she worked with Diana Leyva in the Food for Thought programme. After graduating, she worked for two years as a manager of the Language Learning Lab at Boston College, with Joshua Hartshorne. She will start her graduate programme at Georgia Tech University in fall 2018.

**Catherine E. Snow, Harvard Graduate School of Education, USA**

Catherine E. Snow is the Patricia Albjerg Graham Professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She teaches courses and conducts research on language and literacy development, with learners from preschool through adolescence, and with special attention to learners facing elevated risk of academic failure.

**Ernesto Treviño, Facultad de Educación, Pontificia Universidad Católica, Chile**

Ernesto Treviño is Professor and a researcher of the Facultad de Educación, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. He was the director of the Centro

de Políticas Comparadas, Universidad Diego Portales, in Chile, between 2011 and 2016. He has been Senior Advisor to the Latin American Laboratory of Evaluation of the Quality of Education of UNESCO-OREALC since 2013. He is an economist from the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey and holds a doctorate in education from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

**Margaret Troyer, Strategic Education Research Partnership Institute, USA**

Margaret Troyer is currently Project Director at the Strategic Adolescent Research Partnership, and she recently earned her EdD from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Her research interests focus on adolescent struggling readers, reading motivation and teachers' adaptations and implementation of curriculum.

**Paola Uccelli, Harvard Graduate School of Education, USA**

Paola Uccelli is Professor of Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Her research examines socio-cultural and individual differences in school-relevant language and literacy development in monolingual and bilingual learners. Her projects in the USA and abroad seek to inform research-based pedagogies that empower all learners' voices. Being a native of Peru, she is particularly interested in Latin America, where she collaborates with local schools and organizations to conduct pedagogically relevant research.

**Yuuko Uchikoshi, University of California, Davis School of Education, USA**

Yuuko Uchikoshi is Associate Professor in the School of Education at the University of California, Davis. She holds an EdD in human development and psychology from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Dr Uchikoshi's research focuses on the language and literacy development of young children from linguistically, culturally and economically diverse backgrounds.

**Josje Verhagen, Utrecht University, the Netherlands**

Josje Verhagen is a post-doctoral researcher at Utrecht University and the University of Amsterdam. She studies language development in young children, with a strong focus on bilingual children. In previous studies, she investigated the relationships between phonological memory and language learning in monolingual and bilingual children. More recently, she examined effects of bilingualism on statistical learning and on children's reliance on non-verbal communicative behaviours, such as pointing.

**Hirokazu Yoshikawa, New York University, USA**

Hirokazu Yoshikawa is the Courtney Sale Ross Professor of Globalization and Education and University Professor in the Department of Applied Psychology, New York University. He co-directs the Global TIES for Children Center at NYU and serves on the advisory boards of the Open Society Foundations Early Childhood Program and the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report.

**Joonmo Yun, Florida State University, USA**

Joonmo Yun received his PhD in education at Florida State University. His research interest is in students who struggle with literacy acquisition.

**Qianqian Zhang-Wu, Boston College, USA**

Qianqian Zhang-Wu is a PhD candidate in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the Lynch School of Education, Boston College. Her major research interests lie in the areas of bilingualism, bilingual education, teacher education and literacy development in K–20 settings. Prior to her doctoral studies, Qianqian received her MEd in educational linguistics (TESOL) from the Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania.

## Foreword

---

For decades, research on child language acquisition followed a tradition of looking to work conducted in the lab, often with homogeneous samples of children and families, to address questions about typical and atypical patterns and processes of development. Less common was work motivated by questions about the context of language learning – questions about language use and exposure, questions about the influence of specific inputs at home and school on trajectories of learning and questions about the role of second language acquisition. An exception to this trend is the work of Catherine Snow – a scholar who articulated the link between children’s early language interactions, whether at the family dinner table or while engaged in joint storybook reading with a parent or caregiver, and their later language and literacy behaviours. Within her expansive and innovative programme of research, Snow has paid special attention to identifying those high-lever interactions – the questions, the types of utterances and the kinds of texts – that are linked with children’s vocabulary and language growth.

Tracking with the increasing diversity of the school-age population, including linguistic diversity tied to immigration and globalization, the widening income-achievement gap and a press for policy and practice-based solutions to these challenges for education, Snow’s early work, mostly conducted in homes and with young children, was followed by almost two decades of work that has been foundational to a next generation of research focused on examining and describing solutions to the dire need for richer classroom language-learning environments. This body of research ranges from large-scale intervention work in US classrooms serving high numbers of linguistically diverse learners to preschool classrooms in Latin America serving academically vulnerable children.

Fittingly, then, we have before us an unparalleled volume – one that focuses on building a pedagogically relevant theory of language learning. This book is based on the idea that developing an educationally relevant approach to language demands an investigation of language and literacy learning in its diverse cultural contexts, as evidenced by chapters that focus on learning and development in China, Chile, the Netherlands, Norway, Canada and the USA.

xxii      *Foreword*

Combining methodological rigour and a sophisticated lens on development with both ecological validity and practical relevance, the chapters address how language exposure and language use in early childhood at home and in school are precursors to academic language use and literacy in the school years. The volume goes further to address how academic language and its precursors can be supported through instruction and specific discourse practices at home and in classrooms.

The volume solidifies a new era of research – research that is at once robust methodologically and substantively but equally attentive to issues of context and pressing problems of policy and practice. Today’s policy makers and education leaders need guidance on how to improve the forms of language practices to which children and adolescents are exposed at home and in school. And at the same time, much more discussion among researchers is needed about the qualities of language use and competency that prepare all children, recognizing multilingualism as a feature of today’s population, to become language and text users in modern societies. The volume, and the trailblazing work on which it is based, is therefore inspirational and much needed; it showcases the fundamental developmental ideas and understandings that have had a profound influence on language and literacy research and practice initiatives taking place in many parts of the world and will serve as a guide for such work in decades to come.

Nonie K. Lesaux