

## The Onset of Language

*The Onset of Language* outlines an approach to the development of expressive and communicative behavior from early infancy to the onset of single-word utterances. Nobuo Masataka's research is rooted in ethology and dynamic action theory. He argues that expressive and communicative actions are organized as a complex and cooperative system with other elements of the infant's physiology, behavior and the social environments. Overall, humans are provided with a finite set of specific behavior patterns, each of which is phylogenetically inherited as a primate species. However, the patterns are uniquely organized during ontogeny and a coordinated structure emerges which eventually leads us to acquire language. This fascinating book offers exciting new insights into the precursors of speech and will be of interest to researchers and students of psychology, linguistics and animal behavior biology.

NOBUO MASATAKA is Professor at the Primate Research Institute, Kyoto University, Japan. He has published numerous articles in journals such as *Developmental Psychology*, *Child Development* and *Journal of Child Language*.

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Nobuo Masataka

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These experiences led to my fascination with questions such as why is our species the only one to have developed language? What are the species differences that make language possible? Why does language take the form it does, and not other forms? How does language emerge in infants? The outcome of my research in tackling these themes is summarized here. Several years ago the late George Butterworth became interested in my work and encouraged me to write this book. I am deeply indebted to him.

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