This book is divided into three main parts: (1) parent–child coconstruction of narrative, which focuses on aspects of the social interaction that facilitate oral narrative development in Spanish-speaking children; (2) development of independent narration by Spanish-speaking children; and (3) narrative links between Latino children’s oral narration and their early literacy and other school achievements. Chapters address narration to and by Latino children aged 6 months to 11 years old and in low, middle, and upper socioeconomic groups. Nationalities of speakers include Costa Rican, Dominican, Ecuadorian, Mexican, Peruvian, Puerto Rican, Venezuelan, and Spanish–English bilingual children who are citizens or residents of the United States. Narratives studied include those in conversations, personal and fictional stories, and those prompted by wordless picture books or videos. Thus, the current project makes central diversity in nationality, socioeconomic background, and genre of narrative.

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Spanish-Language Narration and Literacy

CULTURE, COGNITION, AND EMOTION

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**Allyssa McCabe** is Professor of Psychology at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell. She founded and coedits the journal *Narrative Inquiry* and has researched how narrative develops with age, the way parents can encourage narration, and cultural differences in narration, as well as interrelationships among the developments of narrative, vocabulary, and phonological awareness. Her most recent work concerns a theoretical approach to early literacy called the Comprehensive Language Approach, which looks at ways that the various strands of oral and written language (e.g., vocabulary, phonological awareness, and print knowledge) affect each other in the acquisition of full literacy. A key concern is with assessment of preschool-aged children, especially preventing misdiagnosis of cultural differences in oral narration as deficits. Allyn & Bacon Publishers recently published Dr. McCabe’s *Patterns of Narrative Discourse: A Multicultural Lifespan Approach*, coauthored by Lynn Bliss.

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development programs throughout the United States and directs a longitudinal research project in Costa Rica. The purpose of the Costa Rican Child Development Project is to identify early interactions and home environmental conditions that may be linked to school success. The cohort has been followed from birth to the present (10 years). His research is both qualitative and quantitative in exploring the impact of culture on child-rearing practices and how those tacit day-to-day interactive strategies influence developmental trajectories of children beginning at the earliest ages.

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The initial idea for this book was simple: Alison suggested an edited volume that would recognize the impact Allyssa McCabe has had on two generations of researchers focusing on the study of narrative development. From the start, it seemed critical that Allyssa should be part of the editorial process – who better to make the book a strong contribution to the field? The extension of much of the pioneering work of Allyssa and her colleagues in the 1980s to populations of preschool and school-age children who do not have English as a first language made the choice of Spanish-language narration a natural one. Many of Allyssa’s former students were concentrating on both the formal and informal contexts of narrative development in children from diverse backgrounds outside the U.S. mainstream – indeed, some outside the United States entirely. Contacting them and others who have been influenced by Allyssa’s work to contribute chapters to the proposed volume set the book in motion.

AUDIENCE: FOR WHOM IS THIS BOOK WRITTEN?

We see a number of audiences for this book: students of language development in speech-language pathology, linguistics, and psychology, as well as those involved in literacy acquisition in preschool and elementary education. The book could readily serve as the main text of a graduate-level seminar devoted to the study of narrative development in Spanish-speaking children, as well as function as an auxiliary text in a course on narrative development or language development more broadly written.

Preschool and elementary schoolteachers and the staff who support them (i.e., principals and school psychologists) in the United States and elsewhere should find the descriptions of narrative diversity presented in the chapters critical to their own understanding of the stories told to them by the Spanish-speaking children they educate. The text can play a key role in the preparation
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of preservice teachers who will be working with Spanish-speaking children who hail from all over the Americas, as well as be a catalyst for comparison and discussion during the continued professional development of more experienced teachers.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, we thank all the chapter writers for their excellent contributions to the volume. Their dedication to the project has meant that we have kept everyone we initially invited and we have managed to stay on publication schedule. On everyone’s behalf, we also want to say a special “gracias” and “thank you” to the children, parents, and teachers all across the Americas whose narrative skills and experiences are at the very heart of this book.

Storytelling through its various media – oral, written, and visual – has a long-standing tradition across the Spanish-speaking Americas. In this book, we honor the unique ways in which oral stories are woven and shared by and with children. In choosing the cover for our book, we also wanted to honor the cultural heritage of visual storytelling; therefore, we chose to present an arpillera, a contemporary form of textile art created by Latin American women. The arpilleras, sometimes called cuadros parlantes (talking portraits) are three-dimensional sewn cloths that portray scenes of everyday life, much like personal narratives of everyday experience. The arpilleras began as a form of underground communication and political protest in the Chile of Pinochet, most notably as a way in which mothers protested without words the disappearance of their sons and daughters. Since then, this form of art has traveled north to give voice to the hands of other Latin American women. The arpillera on the cover is the work of Doña Julia Rosa Huaranga Vilchez from Lima, Peru, who was gracious enough to weave for us this tale of children playing in the streets of an Andean city. We thank her for her talent and generosity. We would also like to thank Carlos Fernández Loayza for helping us photograph Doña Julia Rosa’s work.

At Cambridge University Press, we wish to thank Eric Schwartz, April Potenciano, and Ken Karpinski, who handled the creation of this volume so skillfully and painlessly from start to finish.

Finally, we gratefully thank our families and all of our friends for their continued support. Alison thanks Frank, Nick, and Will Ziolkowski for their love
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and abiding interest in absolutely everything. Gigliana gives heartfelt gracias to Jaime for his unconditional support and dedicates her work in this book to the memory of her sister, Cecilia, con mucho amor, estés donde estés. Allyssa thanks Charlie, Nick, and Jessamyn for many reasons.