

# FOR LECTURERS

The Routledge English Language Introductions are flexible texts that you can use to suit your own style of study. You may prefer to get a general overview of the subject and then delve more deeply into the areas that particularly interest you. Or, you may prefer to cover one area in depth before moving on to the next. Like the other books in this series, *Child Language* is divided into four sections which are structured both vertically and horizontally to facilitate both study styles:

**A Introduction** – the eight numbered units in this section introduce you to key concepts in the study of children’s language development. The first unit provides an overview of the current approaches to language acquisition research and the theoretical perspectives that inform them. The next six focus on specific aspects of children’s language development ranging from the acquisition of the sound system of their language to the development of reading and writing. The final unit focuses on the bilingual child.

**B Development** – the units in this section consolidate and extend to your knowledge by giving you guided practice in analysing children’s language in each of the eight areas introduced in Section A.

**C Exploration** – the units in this section provide you with data for your own analysis, describe research projects that you can carry out for yourself (not all of which require access to children) and direct you to more advanced or specialised literature in each area.

**D Extension** – the units in this section provide eight key readings with questions that will help you to engage with the material as you read. These readings have been chosen to acquaint you with the range of methods for studying children’s language development and a variety of theoretical perspectives.

If you read vertically through Section A, you will soon start to link together the different areas of children’s language development. You can then use the numbers for each area to follow a theme horizontally through the book.

For example, Unit A.2 introduces you to key aspects of children’s phonological development, and the basic concepts used to describe and study it. The ‘Further Introductory Reading’ section at the end of this unit provides suggestions for introductory texts on child phonology.

Unit B.2 develops your understanding further by applying the concepts introduced in Unit A.2 to a guided analysis of data from children in the process of learning the sound system of their language.

Unit C.2 presents you with child phonology data sets for your own analysis and describes three simple investigations for you to try: ‘Children’s awareness of their own pronunciations’, ‘Baby-talk and nicknames’ and ‘First words’. At the end of this unit, you will find suggestions for more specialised reading in areas which could not be covered in this book but are well worth exploring, such as speech development in hearing impaired children.

Finally, to complete your understanding of this strand, Unit D.2 offers a reading by Neil Smith on children’s mental representations of speech sounds.

The same pattern is followed for each of the other seven areas of language development covered in this book.

The book can be used as an accompanying course text, or as the primary text on a Language Acquisition course or for those courses which have a significant child language component, such as ones on Cognitive development, Psycholinguistics or Child Development. The key terms and concepts introduced in sections A and B can be set as lecture-support summaries, or as quick preparatory reading in advance of lectures, enabling you to develop a specialist area or detailed argument without having to prepare the elementary ground yourself. The examples,

excerpts and data collected in section C can be used as the basis for seminar material. Questions here are open-ended, allowing you an opportunity for developing the discussion as you wish, and adding your own material and particular interests. This section also has suggestions for student projects which can be used for assessment. Finally, the readings in section D can be used as initial basic follow-up. Alternatively, you might want to set these readings in advance of teaching, so that they form the basis for seminar discussion. The references and suggestions for Further Reading at the ends of Sections A and C will help your students move on from this textbook to more advanced study.