

The Handbook of **Bilingualism and** **Multilingualism**

Second Edition



Edited by

Tej K. Bhatia and William C. Ritchie

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Editorial Offices

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The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

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*To the memory of the thirty-five Syracuse University students who lost their lives
in the terror bombing of Pan American Airways flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland,
on December 21, 1988, and to all other innocent victims of terrorism.*

Contents

Acknowledgments	xi
Contributors	xii
Introduction	xxi
TEJ K. BHATIA AND WILLIAM C. RITCHIE	
Part I Overview and Foundations	1
Introduction	3
TEJ K. BHATIA	
1 Bilingualism and Multilingualism: Some Central Concepts	5
JOHN EDWARDS	
2 Conceptual and Methodological Issues in Bilingualism and Multilingualism Research	26
LI WEI	
Part II Neurological and Psychological Aspects of Bilingualism and Multilingualism	53
Introduction	55
WILLIAM C. RITCHIE	
The Neurology of Bilingualism and Multilingualism	59
3 Bilingual Aphasia: Theoretical and Clinical Considerations	61
ELIZABETH IJALBA, LORAIN K. OBLER, AND SHYAMALA CHENGAPPA	
Approaches to Bilingualism, Multilingualism, and Second-Language Acquisition	85
4 The Bilingual Child	87
LUDOVICA SERRATRICE	
5 Bilingualism/Multilingualism and Second-Language Acquisition	109
YUKO GOTO BUTLER	
6 Multilingualism: New Perspectives on Syntactic Development	137
ÉVA BERKES AND SUZANNE FLYNN	

7	Bilingualism and the Heritage Language Speaker SILVINA MONTRUL	168
	Bilingual and Multilingual Language Use: Knowledge, Comprehension, and Production	191
8	Two Linguistic Systems in Contact: Grammar, Phonology, and Lexicon PIETER MUYSKEN	193
9	The Comprehension of Words and Sentences in Two Languages JUDITH F. KROLL AND PAOLA E. DUSSIAS	216
10	An Appraisal of the Bilingual Language Production System: Quantitatively or Qualitatively Different from Monolinguals? ELIN RUNNQVIST, IAN FITZPATRICK, KRISTOF STRIJKERS, AND ALBERT COSTA	244
	Bilingualism and Multilingualism: Memory, Cognition, and Emotion	267
11	Bilingual Memory ROBERTO R. HEREDIA AND JEFFREY M. BROWN	269
12	Bilingualism and Emotion: Implications for Mental Health INES MARTINOVIC AND JEANETTE ALTARRIBA	292
	The Bilingual's and Multilingual's Repertoire: Code-Mixing, Code-Switching, and Communication Accommodation	321
13	Code-Switching and Grammatical Theory JEFF MACSWAN	323
14	Sign Language–Spoken Language Bilingualism and the Derivation of Bimodally Mixed Sentences GERALD P. BERENT	351
15	Social and Psychological Factors in Language Mixing WILLIAM C. RITCHIE AND TEJ K. BHATIA	375
16	Accommodating Multilinguality ITESH SACHDEV, HOWARD GILES, AND ANNE PAUWELS	391
17	Bilingualism and Gesture MARIANNE GULLBERG	417
	Part III Societal Bilingualism/Multilingualism and its Effects	439
	Introduction TEJ K. BHATIA	441
	Language Contact, Maintenance, and Endangerment	443
18	The Bilingual and Multilingual Community SUZANNE ROMAINE	445

19	Language Maintenance, Language Shift, and Reversing Language Shift JOSHUA A. FISHMAN	466
20	Linguistic Imperialism and Endangered Languages ROBERT PHILLIPSON AND TOVE SKUTNABB-KANGAS	495
21	Multilingualism, Indigenization, and Creolization JEFF SIEGEL	517
22	Multilingualism and Family Welfare XIAO-LEI WANG	542
	Bilingualism and Multilingualism: The Media, Education, Literacy, and the Law	563
23	Bilingualism and Multilingualism in the Global Media and Advertising TEJ K. BHATIA AND WILLIAM C. RITCHIE	565
24	Bilingual Education WAYNE E. WRIGHT	598
25	The Impact of Bilingualism on Language and Literacy Development ELLEN BIALYSTOK	624
26	Bilingualism and Writing Systems BENEDETTA BASSETTI	649
27	Multilingualism and Forensic Linguistics TEJ K. BHATIA AND WILLIAM C. RITCHIE	671
	Part IV Global Perspectives and Challenges: Case Studies	701
	Introduction WILLIAM C. RITCHIE	703
28	Bilingualism and Multilingualism in North America WILLIAM F. MACKEY	707
29	Bilingualism in Latin America ANNA MARÍA ESCOBAR	725
30	Bilingualism in Europe ANDRÉE TABOURET-KELLER	745
31	Turkish as an Immigrant Language in Europe AD BACKUS	770
32	Multilingualism in Southern Africa NKONKO M. KAMWANGAMALU	791
33	Multilingualism in Greater China and the Chinese Language Diaspora SHERMAN LEE AND DAVID C. S. LI	813
34	Bilingualism and Multilingualism in South Asia TEJ K. BHATIA AND WILLIAM C. RITCHIE	843
35	Multilingualism and Language Renewal in Ex-Soviet Central Asia BIRGIT N. SCHLYTER	871

36	Bilingualism/Multilingualism in the Middle East and North Africa: A Focus on Cross-National and Diglossic Bilingualism/Multilingualism JUDITH ROSENHOUSE	899
	Index	920

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Contributors

Jeanette Altarriba is a Professor of Psychology at the University at Albany, State University of New York where she directs the Cognition and Language Laboratory. Her research interests include bilingualism, second-language acquisition, emotion, and the interaction between language, perception, and memory. She has published numerous scientific research articles and books on these topics and is currently co-editing a volume on bilingual memory and language. Currently, she also serves as Chair of the Department of Communication, at the University at Albany.

Ad Backus studied Linguistics at Tilburg University in Holland, where he received his Ph.D. in 1996. He has held research fellowships from the Netherlands Science Foundation and the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences and is now an Associate Professor at Tilburg University. His work is mostly on Turkish, language contact, and cognitive linguistics.

Benedetta Bassetti is a Lecturer at the University of York. She is interested in bilingualism and biliteracy, including second-language reading and the effects of orthography on meta-linguistic awareness and phonology in second-language learners and bilinguals. She co-edited the volume *Second Language Writing Systems* (with Vivian Cook, 2005) and is founding co-editor of the journal *Writing Systems Research*.

Gerald P. Berent is a Professor at the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester Institute of Technology, New York. He conducts second-language research on deaf learners' acquisition of spoken-language grammatical, lexical, and semantic-pragmatic knowledge. He also conducts research on acquisitional parallels between deaf learners and hearing second-language learners of English, on bimodal bilingualism, and on English language teaching methodologies.

Éva Berkes studied theoretical linguistics and language acquisition at the Ortega y Gasset Graduate Institute (Madrid) and received her Ph.D. from the Complutense University of Madrid in 2002. She is currently a Lecturer at the University of Applied Sciences Burgenland, Austria. Her research interests concern multilingualism, syntactic development, and representation focusing on Hungarian, English, and German.

Tej K. Bhatia is Professor of Linguistics and Director of South Asian Languages at Syracuse University. He is a recipient of the Chancellor's Citation Award for Excellence in Research.

He has published a number of books, articles and book chapters in the areas of bilingualism, multiculturalism, media discourse, socio- and psycholinguistics, and the structure and typology of English and South Asian languages. Publications include *Colloquial Urdu: The Complete Course for Beginners* (2000), *Colloquial Hindi: The Complete Course for Beginners, 2nd Edition* (2007), *Advertising and Marketing in Rural India, 2nd Edition* (2007), and *The New Handbook of Second Language Acquisition* (co-edited with William C. Ritchie, 2009).

Ellen Bialystok is Distinguished Research Professor of Psychology at York University. Her research investigates language and cognitive development in children and cognitive change across the lifespan focusing on the effect of bilingualism on these developments. Her recent work has extended to patient studies and neuroimaging methods to understand how bilingualism modifies cognitive behavior. She has published numerous research articles, book chapters, and books, and is the recipient of several major awards, including the 2010 Killam Prize for Outstanding Contribution to the Social Sciences.

Jeffrey M. Brown received his Ph.D. in Psychology from Texas A&M International University (TAMU) in 1996. He is a tenured Associate Professor of Psychology and currently serves as the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research at TAMU. He currently oversees over 25 different graduate programs in four colleges, with a total graduate enrolment of over 1,000 students. He also oversees the Lamar Bruni Vergara Education Fund, which annually distributes over \$1,000,000 in scholarship and assistantship funds to support graduate education at TAMU. Additionally, he supervises the operation of the Office Research and Sponsored Projects, a support unit that assists administrators, faculty, and staff. He has also published in the areas of eyewitness memory, bilingual language processing, and the tip-of-the-tongue phenomena, to name a few.

Yuko Goto Butler is an Associate Professor of Educational Linguistics in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania, where she is also Director of the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Program. Her research interests include language assessment and second and bilingual language learning among children.

Shyamala Chengappa is a Professor of Language Pathology and Head of the Department of Speech-Language Pathology at the All India Institute of Speech and Hearing, Mysore. Her areas of interest are child and adult language disorders and bi-/multilingualism with larger work on autism spectrum disorders and aphasia in multilinguals. Her books include *Simultaneous Acquisition of Two Languages* (1988, with M.S. Thirumalai), *Language Disorders in Children* (2010), *Bilingual Aphasia* (editor, 2010) and *An Introductory Handbook on Autism* (2011).

Albert Costa attended the Ph.D. program 'Cognitive Science and Language' at the Universitat de Barcelona where he received his Ph.D. in Psychology in 1997. From 1998 to 1999 he was a postdoctoral fellow at the Brain and Cognitive Sciences department, MIT. From 1999 to 2000, he was a postdoctoral researcher at the Cognitive Neuropsychology Laboratory, Harvard University. In 2001, he moved to the Cognitive Neuroscience department at the International School for Advanced Studies in Trieste. From 2002 to 2005 he was a research fellow at the University of Barcelona where he became an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology in 2006. Since 2008 he has been a Research Professor at ICREA-Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona. His research is focused on the cognitive

mechanisms and representations involved in the production of speech, both in monolingual and bilingual contexts.

Paola E. Dussias is Associate Professor of Spanish, Linguistics, and Psychology and Associate Director of the Center for Language Science at Pennsylvania State University. Her research takes a cross-disciplinary approach to bilingual sentence processing. Using a variety of behavioral methods, ranging from off-line questionnaires to eye-tracking methods during reading and spoken language comprehension, she examines the way in which second-language readers and listeners negotiate the presence of two languages in a single mind. Her work, which has been supported by grants from the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health, has appeared in journals such as *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, the *International Journal of Bilingualism*, *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *Second Language Research*, as well as in a number of edited volumes. Together with Janet van Hell, Ping Li, and Judith Kroll, Dussias is a co-PI on a PIRE grant (Partnerships for International Research and Education) from the National Science Foundation to develop an international research network and program of training to enable language scientists at all levels (undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral) and early career faculty to pursue research abroad on the science of bilingualism.

John Edwards received a Ph.D. (in Psychology) from McGill University in 1974. After working as a Research Fellow at the Educational Research Centre, St Patrick's College, Dublin (now affiliated with Dublin City University), he moved to Nova Scotia, where he is Professor of Psychology at St. Francis Xavier University. His research interests are in language, identity, and the many ramifications of their relationship. He is on the editorial boards of a dozen international language journals, and is editor of the *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* and the *Multilingual Matters* book series, which now comprises about 150 titles. He has authored nine books and a tenth, *Sociolinguistics* (Oxford University Press), is forthcoming. He is a member of several psychological and linguistic societies, as well as scholarly organizations for the study of ethnicity and nationalism. He is a fellow of the British Psychological Society, the Canadian Psychological Association, and the Royal Society of Canada.

Anna María Escobar works at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her areas of research, publication, and teaching are on contact linguistics and bilingualism, with a focus on Spanish–Quechua contact and Andean sociolinguistics, and on language variation and change, with a focus on grammaticalization and semantic change in Spanish.

Joshua A. Fishman is Distinguished University Research Professor of Social Sciences, Emeritus at Yeshiva University, Albert Einstein College of Medicine. He is credited with being the founder of the field of sociology of language or macrosociolinguistics, and has made significant contributions to the fields of language and ethnicity, language planning, bilingualism and bilingual education, Yiddish, and medical anthropology. He is a prolific author with over 1,000 publications that include over 85 books and over 900 articles and chapters in books. Among his seminal contributions are: *Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity* (Vols. I and II); *Do Not Leave Your Language Alone* (2006); *Can Threatened Languages be Saved?* (2001); and *Bilingual Education: An International Sociological Perspective* (1976). He has been honored many times around the world and in 2004 received the Linguapax Prize.

Ian FitzPatrick conducted his Ph.D. research on lexical interactions in nonnative speech comprehension at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics and Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition and Behaviour. From January 2010 to June 2011 FitzPatrick worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Technology and Information of the University Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona. As of July 2011, FitzPatrick is working as a postdoctoral researcher at the Heinrich Heine University in Düsseldorf in collaboration with the Donders Institute.

Suzanne Flynn is a Professor of Linguistics and Language Acquisition at MIT. Her research focuses on the acquisition of syntax by both children and adults in bilingual, second-, and third-language acquisition contexts. More recently, her work has focused on the neural representation of the multilingual brain. She also conducts research on language impairment and early onset of Alzheimer's disease.

Howard Giles is Professor of Communication at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He is founding editor and co-editor of the *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* and the *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*. He was past President of the International Communication Association and the International Association of Language and Social Psychology. His research interests encompass intergroup communication in intergenerational, police-civilian, and other settings.

Marianne Gullberg is Professor of Psycholinguistics and Director of the Humanities Laboratory at Lund University. Her research targets adult second-language acquisition and bilingualism, and the production and comprehension of gestures. She led a research group on multilingual and multimodal language processing at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, the Netherlands, 2002–9, applying linguistic, psycholinguistic, and neuro-cognitive perspectives, and also founded the Nijmegen Gesture Centre. She has published extensively on second-language acquisition, bilingualism and gestures, and has also edited a series of special issues and volumes on these topics including a volume of the *Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics* (2012). She also serves as an editor for three international journals – as associate editor for both *Language Learning* and *Language, Interaction, and Acquisition*, and as information editor for *Gesture* – and has served as Vice-President of the European Association of Second Language Research (EUROSLA).

Roberto R. Heredia is Professor of Psychology in the Department of Psychology and Communication at Texas A&M International University (TAMIU), and founder of the Cognitive Science Laboratory, and Cognitive Science Research Group. Roberto's major interests are in bilingual lexical access at the sentence level and figurative language processing. He served as Chair of the Department of Behavioral Sciences for two years. He is currently Director and Principal Investigator of the Graduate Retention Enhancement at the TAMIU (GREAT) Program, funded by a multi-million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Education Title V Promoting Postbaccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans. He is currently collaborating on three projects: *Understanding Bilingual Memory: Theory and Applications* (Springer); *Bilingual Figurative Language Processing* (Cambridge University Press); and *Methods in Bilingual Reading Comprehension Research* (Springer).

Elizabeth Ijalba is an Assistant Professor in Linguistics and Communication Disorders at Queens College, CUNY. She teaches courses on language acquisition with a focus on bilingualism. Her research interests are on reading difficulties and their relationship to

second-language learning. Her current research focuses on training parents who speak a language other than English to develop early literacy in the home-language with their children with language impairment. She has presented widely at national and international venues on topics associated with bilingualism, dyslexia, and aphasia.

Nkonko M. Kamwangamalu is Professor of Linguistics in the Department of English at Howard University, Washington, DC. He is polity editor for the series 'Current Issues in Language Planning'; author of the monograph *The Language Planning Situation in South Africa*; and of numerous refereed articles on topics in language planning, code-switching, multilingualism, World Englishes, and African linguistics.

Judith F. Kroll is Distinguished Professor of Psychology, Linguistics, and Women's Studies and Director of the Center for Language Science at Pennsylvania State University. Together with Annette de Groot, she co-edited *Tutorials in Bilingualism: Psycholinguistic Perspectives* (1997) and the *Handbook of Bilingualism: Psycholinguistic Approaches* (2005). The research that she and her students conduct concerns the acquisition, comprehension, and production of two languages during second-language learning and in proficient bilingual performance. Their work, using behavioral and neurocognitive methods, is supported by grants from the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health. She was one of the founding organizers of *Women in Cognitive Science*, a group developed to promote the advancement of women in the cognitive sciences and supported by the National Science Foundation. Together with Janet van Hell, Ping Li, and Paola Dussias, Kroll is a co-PI on a PIRE grant (Partnerships for International Research and Education) from the National Science Foundation to develop an international research network and program of training to enable language scientists at all levels (undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral) and early career faculty to pursue research abroad on the science of bilingualism.

Sherman Lee is an Assistant Professor at Hong Kong Shue Yan University. She obtained her Ph.D. in Hong Kong for research examining language shift among the Hakka population, and her B.A. (Manchester) and M.Phil. (Cambridge) from the UK in the fields of linguistics and computer speech. Her research and teaching interests include sociolinguistics, bilingualism, discourse analysis, English for academic purposes (EAP), and research methods.

David C. S. Li obtained his B.A. in Hong Kong, M.A. in France, and Ph.D. in Germany. Being a native speaker of Cantonese, he developed a keen interest in foreign language learning from a very young age. His research interests are mainly related to social aspects of language use in multilingual settings. He has published in *World Englishes* on 'Hong Kong English', code-switching in Hong Kong and Taiwan, and EFL learners' learning difficulties and error correction strategies.

William F. Mackey is the author of 20 books and some 200 articles on bilingualism, language education, geolinguistics, and language policy. He was Senior Lecturer (1948–51) at the University of London Institute of Education and the Founding Director of the International Centre for Research on Bilingualism in Laval University (Canada), where he is currently Emeritus Professor.

Jeff MacSwan is a Professor of Education and Linguistics (by courtesy) at the University of Maryland. His research focuses on the linguistic study of bilingualism and code-switch-

ing, on the role of language in theories of academic achievement differences among language minority students, and on education policy related to English language learners in U.S. schools. He is editor of the *International Multilingual Research Journal*, and currently serves on several editorial boards. He is the author of over 50 publications. Examples of his work appear in *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, *Lingua*, *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, *Teachers College Record*, *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, and in edited collections. He has served as a visiting scholar at UCLA, MIT, UC Santa Barbara, and the University of Hamburg.

Ines Martinovic received her Bachelor of Science degree in Physics in 2009 from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. She is currently pursuing her master's and doctoral degrees in Cognitive Psychology at the University at Albany, State University of New York. She is interested in emotion, bilingualism, and memory and is currently investigating how survival-based processing affects memory in bilingual populations.

Silvina Montrul is Professor and Head of the Department of Spanish, Italian and Portuguese and Professor of Linguistics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she is also Director of the University Language Academy for Children and of the Second Language Acquisition and Bilingualism Laboratory. She is co-editor of the journal *Second Language Research*. Her research focuses on linguistic and psycholinguistic approaches to adult second-language acquisition and bilingualism, in particular syntax, semantics, and morphology. She has expertise in language loss and retention in minority language-speaking bilinguals, or heritage speakers. She is author of *The Acquisition of Spanish* (2004), *Incomplete Acquisition in Bilingualism* (2008), and *El Bilingüismo en el mundo hispanohablante* [Bilingualism in the Spanish-Speaking World] (2012).

Pieter Muysken is Academy Professor of Linguistics at Radboud University Nijmegen (the Netherlands), having previously taught at Amsterdam and Leiden. He has carried out research and fieldwork in the Andes, Curacao, and the Netherlands. Recent books include *Bilingual Speech: A Typology of Code-mixing* (2000), *The Languages of the Andes* (with Wilhelm Adelaar, 2004), *Functional Categories* (2008), and *Lenguas de Bolivia I–IV* (with E. I. Crevels, 2009–11). His current research is concentrated in the Languages in Contact Group in the Centre for Language Studies, Radboud University Nijmegen, where he is studying the effect of language contact at four time scales. He is also collaborating with Marianne Gullberg on the interaction of linguistic and processing models for code-switching.

Loraine K. Obler is a Distinguished Professor in the Ph.D. Programs in Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences and Linguistics at the City University of New York Graduate Center. Her research has focused on bilingual aphasia, cross-language study of agrammatism, language changes in healthy aging, and talented and challenged second-language learning. Her books include *The Bilingual Brain: Neuropsychological and Neurolinguistic Aspects of Bilingualism* (with Martin Albert) and *Language and the Brain* (with Kris Gjerlow).

Anne Pauwels is Professor of Sociolinguistics and Dean of the Faculty of Languages and Cultures at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Her research deals with the social and sociolinguistic aspects of language and communication, with particular attention to multilingual and transnational settings. Her research foci include multilingualism, language maintenance/shift, language policy in relation to language learning in schools and universities, as well as various aspects of the relationship between

gender and language. Her most recent book publications include *Language and Communication: Diversity and Change* (2007), *Maintaining Minority Languages in a Transnational Context* (2007) and *Boys and Language Learning* (2008).

Robert Phillipson is British, with degrees from Cambridge, Leeds, and Amsterdam. He worked in four countries for the British Council before emigrating to Denmark in 1973. His current research interests are the use of English worldwide, and multilingualism at university level. He is a Professor Emeritus at Copenhagen Business School.

William C. Ritchie is Associate Professor of Linguistics at Syracuse University, where he teaches courses in general linguistics and second-language acquisition. His publications include an edited volume entitled *Second Language Acquisition Research: Issues and Implications* (1978). He has co-edited four handbooks with Tej K. Bhatia, including the *Handbook of Child Language Acquisition* (1999).

Suzanne Romaine has been Merton Professor of English Language at the University of Oxford since 1984. She has published numerous books and articles on linguistic diversity, multilingualism, language death, language revitalization, language change and contact. She was a member of the UNESCO Expert Group that produced its position paper on *Education in a Multilingual World* (2003), and also wrote the background paper on Languages and Cultural Identities for UNESCO's report *Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue* (2009).

Judith Rosenhouse specializes in Arabic dialectology but has also worked in many other linguistic fields (e.g., phonetics). She has published over 100 scientific articles on Arabic, Hebrew, and other languages. Her books include *The Bedouin Arabic Dialects: General Problems and a Close Analysis of North Israel Bedouin Dialects* (1984), and *Medical Communication in Colloquial Arabic* (1989), which won the New Israel Fund Prize. She was awarded the Svend Smith Award for Applied Phonetics by ISPhS (2004). After retirement (2005) from the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology as Head of Department, she has been pursuing her research interests and working with SWANTECH (Sound Waves Analysis and Technologies Ltd.) in linguistic consultancy.

Elin Runnqvist is currently finishing her Ph.D. research on bilingual language control and bilingual speech production disadvantages within the program 'Cognitive Science and Language' at the Universitat de Barcelona.

Itesh Sachdev was born and brought up in Kenya, completed secondary and undergraduate education in the UK (Psychology, University of Bristol), and doctoral training in Social Psychology in Canada (McMaster University, Ontario). He then taught in Applied Linguistics at Birkbeck College, University of London, and is now Professor of Language and Communication at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS, University of London), where he has also been Director of the SOAS-UCL Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning 'Languages of the Wider World'. He has served as President of the British Association for Canadian Studies, and is the current President of the International Association for Language and Social Psychology. He has published widely in the social psychology of language and intergroup relations, having conducted research with various ethnolinguistic groups including those in/ from Bolivia, Canada, France, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, Tunisia, and the UK.

Birgit N. Schlyter is Associate Professor and Head of Forum for Central Asian Studies at the University of Stockholm. She is a Lecturer in Turkish, Uzbek, Central Asian Linguistics, and Central Asian Cultural History. She has published works on modern Turkish and is at present conducting research on language development and language policies in the Central Asian region. Her works include *Case Marking Semantics in Turkish* (Ph.D. dissertation), Stockholm, 1985, 'Turkish semantics revisited', in H. Boeschoten and L. Verhoeven (eds.), *Turkish Linguistics Today* (1991); *Return to the Silk Routes: Current Scandinavian Research on Central Asia* (co-edited, 1999); and an article on the language situation in Turkey and Turkish language research in *An International Handbook of the Science of Language and Society* (2006).

Ludovica Serratrice's research interests are in the acquisition of syntax, pragmatics, and semantics in monolingual and bilingual children. Her work investigates children's understanding and use of referential expressions in pre-school and school-aged children and the role of priming in the acquisition of subordinate clauses.

Jeff Siegel is Adjunct Professor in Linguistics at the University of New England in Australia. His main areas of research concern the processes involved in the development of contact languages, and the use of such languages in formal education. He has worked specifically on Melanesian Pidgin, Hawai'i Creole, Pidgin Fijian, and Pidgin Hindustani. His most recent books are *The Emergence of Pidgin and Creole Languages* (2008) and *Second Dialect Acquisition* (2010).

Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, bilingual from birth, is Finnish, with doctoral degrees from Helsinki and Roskilde. Her research interests are multilingual mother-tongue-based education, genocide and crimes against humanity in education, linguistic human rights, and the relationship between biodiversity and linguistic and cultural diversity.

Kristof Strijkers conducted his Ph.D. research on the time course of lexical selection in object naming within the program 'Cognitive Science and Language' at the Universitat de Barcelona. Currently he is a Marie Curie postdoctoral fellow at the CNRS-Laboratoire de Psychologie Cognitive, Université de Aix-Marseille.

At the time of the original publication of her Chapter 30 in 2004/2006, **Andrée Tabouret-Keller** was Professor Emeritus, University Louis Pasteur, Strasbourg II, Editor of *Education et sociétés plurilingues/Educazione e società plurilingue* (Aosta, Italy), and President of Centre d'information sur l'éducation bilingue et plurilingue (Aosta, Italy). In addition, she was responsible for the *Seminare 'Comment lier épistémologie et politique'*, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris and a member of *Groupe d'étude du plurilinguisme en Europe* (University Marc Bloch, Strasbourg). Her interests at that time were contemporary language contact phenomena, language and psychoanalysis.

Xiao-Lei Wang, Ph.D., is a Professor in the School of Education at Pace University. Her research covers a wide range of topics such as cultural parenting styles, nonverbal communication, multilingual acquisition and development, and moral development. Her recent books *Growing up with Three Languages* and *Learning to Read and Write in the Multilingual Family* focus on the challenges and strategies of raising multilingual children.

Li Wei is Professor of Applied Linguistics, Pro-Vice-Master for Research of Birkbeck College, University of London, and Director of the Birkbeck Graduate Research School,

University of London. He is Principal Editor of the *International Journal of Bilingualism* and author and editor of many publications including the *Blackwell Guide to Research Methods in Bilingualism and Multilingualism* (with Melissa Moyer, 2008), which won the 2009 British Association for Applied Linguistics Book Prize.

Wayne E. Wright is an Associate Professor in the Department of Bicultural-Bilingual Studies at the University of Texas at San Antonio. He is editor of the *Journal of Southeast Asian American Education and Advancement* and is the book review editor for the *International Multilingual Research Journal*. His research related to language and educational policies and programs for language minority students has been published widely in books and leading academic journals. He is the author of *Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners: Theory, Research, Policy, Practice* (2010). He has many years of experience teaching in bilingual (Khmer–English) and ESL classrooms with students from kindergarten to adults, and was a Fulbright Scholar in Cambodia at the Royal University of Phnom Penh.

Introduction

TEJ K. BHATIA AND WILLIAM C. RITCHIE

In addressing issues in the study of bilingualism and multilingualism, one immediately encounters a terminological issue. The terms bilingualism and multilingualism have come to be used, respectively, to refer to the knowledge and use of two languages and the knowledge and use of three or more languages. Hence, a term is needed to refer to the full range of phenomena including both bilingualism and multilingualism in these senses. Rather than repeat the awkward 'bi-/multilingualism' in this introduction and the other introductions in this volume, we will use the term plurilingualism to refer to both bilingualism and multilingualism, as Mackey (chapter 28, this volume) and others have proposed.

Whatever the terminology, there is no doubt that plurilingualism constitutes a major fact of life in the world today. Plurilingualism is not such a rare phenomenon; there are, in fact, more bilingual/multilingual speakers in the world than there are monolinguals. The *Ethnologue* (2009) estimates more than 7,000 languages (7,358) are spoken in the 194 countries of the world, or approximately 38 languages per country. According to the *Ethnologue*, 94% of the world's population employs approximately 5% of the world's languages. Furthermore, many languages such as Hindi, Chinese, Arabic, Bengali, Punjabi, Spanish, Portuguese, and, of course, English are spoken in many countries around the globe. Such a linguistic situation necessitates that many people live with plurilingualism.

In fact, David Crystal (2003: 69) estimates that two-thirds of the world's children grow up in a plurilingual environment. Considering only bilingualism involving English, the statistics that Crystal has gathered indicate that, of the approximately 750 million people worldwide who speak English, over 41% or 235 million are plurilingual in English and some other language(s). The processes of globalization now in progress can only increase the extent and character of plurilingualism, as people the world over continue to recognize the advantage of adding a world language to their verbal repertoires. One must conclude that, far from being exceptional, as many laymen believe, plurilingualism (which, of course, goes hand-in-hand with multiculturalism in many cases) is currently the rule throughout the world and will become increasingly so in the future.

Perhaps not surprisingly, research on plurilingualism, whether theory-driven or practically-oriented, has grown dramatically in quantity, quality, and breadth in recent years – in particular, since the publication of the first edition of the current work. These developments have resulted in the founding of three major journals for the publication of basic research in the field since 1990s – *The International Journal of Bilingualism* (1997–), *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* (1998–), and the *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* (1998–). Two notable journals prior to 1990s were the: *Bilingual Research Journal* (1975–) and *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* (1980–). The International Symposium on Bilingualism (ISB) held its first meeting in 1997 and has met biennially since then; the eighth meeting, held in Norway at the University of Oslo in summer 2011, attracted over 600 abstracts (Elizabeth Lanza, personal communication). In addition to international conferences like the ISB, many more national and regional conferences on the topic of plurilingualism are held on every continent.

This *Handbook* – the second edition of a work published by the same publisher and co-editors in 2004 (hardcover) and 2006 (paperback) under the title *The Handbook of Bilingualism* – is intended to contribute to these vital trends with 36 chapters presenting state-of-the-art reviews of developments in both theoretical and practical research areas ranging from the study of the bi-/multilingual brain to bilingual education and literacy to the state of plurilingualism in a number of critical regions of the world. The addition of ‘Multilingualism’ to the title reflects the dramatic development over the last eight years of research on the knowledge and use of three or more languages – research that was just getting under way at the time of the compilation of the first edition. These developments have been recognized generally in a number of ways. To cite just one example, beginning in 2013 the international symposium referred to above will be called the ‘International Symposium on Bilingualism and Multilingualism.’

As was true of the first edition, the contributors to this volume – each one a top, internationally known scholar in his or her field – have been given full rein to develop their chapters in the way that seems most fitting to their areas of expertise. The volume is fully revised and updated from the first edition. There are new chapters by new authors, new chapters by many of the authors who contributed to the first edition, and updated and revised chapters from others. In fact, this edition is sufficiently different from the first edition that it should properly be thought of as a companion to the first edition rather than a replacement of it. Since the contributors represent fields as diverse as linguistic theory, neurolinguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, speech and hearing, experimental psychology, developmental psychology, clinical psychology, social psychology, sociology, anthropology, language education, deaf education, and area studies, the *Handbook* is not only an exhaustive area-by-area treatment of the field, but a mosaic of different approaches to the study of plurilingualism as well.

The new *Handbook* is divided into four Parts, each addressing one aspect of plurilingualism, with each Part introduced by one of the editors. Part I provides a general orientation in the study of plurilingualism; Part II addresses questions

concerning the plurilingual individual; Part III surveys the role of plurilingualism in society in general; and Part IV consists of case studies of plurilingualism in eight different areas of the world.

In bringing the work of the field together in one place for the advanced student and the researcher in plurilingualism as well as those who apply such research, we hope to have contributed to the deepening and broadening of our understanding not only of the many facets of plurilingualism, but also of the human mind/brain in general.

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Part I Overview and Foundations

Introduction

TEJ K. BHATIA

The investigation of plurilingualism is a broad and complex field, which includes the study of the nature of the individual plurilingual's knowledge and use of two (or more) languages as well as the broader social and cultural consequences of the widespread use of more than one language in a given society. The two chapters that make up Part I provide a general orientation to this complex field.

In Chapter 1 – 'Bilingualism and Multilingualism: Some Central Concepts' – John Edwards provides a bird's-eye view of the field by examining a wide range of issues that are addressed in greater depth in later, more specialized chapters of the book. Edwards opens his chapter with a description of ways in which individual and societal plurilingualism differ and how societal plurilingualism arises. He then proposes a framework for classifying instances of societal plurilingualism and discusses a number of ways in which these cases of plurilingualism have been dealt with in these societies. Edwards then addresses issues in the study of individual plurilingualism, including popular questions about the capacity to acquire more than one language, ways in which degree of bilingualism has been measured, the relationship of bilingualism to general intelligence and cognitive development, and the process of becoming bilingual (that is, second-language acquisition). Finally, Edwards discusses the relationship between language and social identity in instances of plurilingualism.

Li Wei's Chapter 2, 'Conceptual and Methodological Issues in Bilingualism and Multilingualism Research,' opens with the presentation of three presuppositions required for the coexistence of more than one language in a given society: that there are different languages in the world at large; that speakers of different languages (and the languages themselves) come into contact in a particular sense; and that the usual consequence of this contact is plurilingualism both in

individual speakers and in the society in which they interact. He then moves on to discussions of three different approaches to the study of plurilingualism and their accompanying methods – the psycholinguistic, linguistic, and sociolinguistic approaches – and calls for the development of a combined transdisciplinary approach to the study of plurilingualism in the future. (It should be noted that this chapter is intended to complement – rather than replace – François Grosjean’s Chapter 2 in the first edition.)