

Linguistic Theory and Language Acquisition

Mission. The Linguistic Theory and Language Acquisition group investigates language acquisition against the background of the formal and functional structure of natural languages. We study different acquisitional settings, as well as comparisons of these settings, including first language acquisition in monolingual children, language development of children who grow up in bilingual or multilingual homes, (early) second language acquisition in children, and language development in children with developmental disorders. All these settings are relevant for taking a broader perspective on the process of language acquisition, aiming at studying the relevance of various factors: input factors such as multilingual exposure, maturational factors such as age and cognitive development, and processing factors such as transfer and disorders. In order to disentangle the roles of innate learning mechanisms ('biases') and language-specific input factors in acquisition processes, a cross-linguistic and/or cross-population perspective is crucial.

Research interests. Our research on language acquisition is informed by insights into the properties of natural languages, and the formal representations of linguistic theory. Core areas of interest include word and sentence prosody, the syntax-semantics and syntax-pragmatics interfaces, and discourse phenomena, which we study typically and increasingly by adopting a cross-linguistic and/or typological perspective. Topics reflecting our current research interests include:

First language acquisition

- infants' acquisition of word-prosody and sentence-prosody
- word learning in infants as a function of infant-directed speech
- prosodic focus and topic marking in children
- scalar implicature calculation in young children
- acquisition of adjectives and degree modifiers in pre-school children
- word learning strategies as a function of speaker certainty in children
- children's interpretation of distributive universal quantification

Bilingual language acquisition

- the development of speech perception in bilingual infants
- the development of discourse coherence in bilingual children
- specific indefinite objects in bilingual acquisition

Second language acquisition

- information status and L2 prosody
- the acquisition of Spanish subject-verb inversion by Dutch speakers
- aspectual properties in Spanish L2
- Impaired language acquisition and impaired populations
- the development of discourse coherence in children with specific language impairment
- the acquisition of adjectives in children with cochlear implants
- the use of prosody and information structure in adults with autism

Our research on first language acquisition is driven by the 'logical problem of language acquisition': what explains the seemingly effortless way in which children acquire their native language, given the complex nature of the input they receive? What learning mechanisms and innate biases lead infants and young children to detect cues in the input that allow them to build complex knowledge of their native language? One possible answer to these outstanding questions is that children are born with (innate) knowledge of the blueprint which underlies all human languages. This answer would imply that acquiring a native language is fundamentally different from other forms of learning. This would also imply that studying the earliest stages of language development can tell us about the "universal blueprint" for language. Another theoretically informed way to address the above questions is by investigating the role of children's input (for example, infant-directed speech) and domain-general learning mechanisms (for example, statistical learning) in native language acquisition. Researchers in our group address the 'nature-versus-nurture' theme from different theoretical angles. UiL OTS is rather exceptional among linguistic research institutes in that both views (nativist and emergentist) are actually represented in the faculty, and we consider it beneficial to take advantage of this.

Techniques. We combine experimental work with computational modelling, as well as corpus-based studies, and interviews and observations. For investigating language acquisition in infants, children and adults, we use a range of experimental techniques, including the Headturn Preference Procedure (HPP), audiovisual habituation (e.g. switch procedure), eye tracking (visual world paradigm, preferential looking paradigm), Event Related Potentials (ERP), Frequency Following Responses (FFR), Artificial Language Learning (ALL), Truth Value Judgment tasks, etc.

Societal impact

Insights from our research, as well as research methods that we develop, have societal impact related to various societal issues. Parents, educators, and (para)medical professionals have a growing need for (scientifically grounded) knowledge about multilingual language acquisition settings. Based on our work on multilingual acquisition, we are involved in several projects with societal partners that aim at advising parents on their children's language education; assisting educators in primary and secondary schools (teachers, policy makers and administrators) when stating language teaching policies for multilingual schools; and advising city councils, schools and teachers about the intake and reception of non-native migrants and refugees. Research instruments developed for fundamental research may be extended for testing language proficiency of children in a school setting and for diagnostic use in clinical settings.

We actively transfer our knowledge of language acquisition to communities and stakeholders outside university by means of various activities, including developing diagnostic tools for professionals; providing support to municipalities, schools and teachers; organizing and participating in workshops on raising bilingual children; setting up websites for multilingual families; publishing about multilingualism aimed at schools and educators; participating in interdisciplinary European projects.

We are most active in knowledge utilization in our central area of expertise: *Multilingualism*, while creating links with two other areas, that of *Language education* and *Atypical language acquisition*.

Multilingualism. Our research into language acquisition can contribute towards a better understanding of ongoing societal processes that are related to increasing multiculturalism and multilingualism, and caused by international mobility, migration, and refugee streams. Language acquisition researchers at UiL OTS contribute to a better understanding by investigating the factors that facilitate or hinder the societal integration of non-native newcomers, as well as consequences of increasing cultural pluriformity on the language landscape, for language policies adopted by national and local governments, and civil organizations and institutions. Currently we are providing support to municipalities, schools and teachers in the reception and the integration into the school system of newly arrived migrant pupils. We are also active in bringing together policy makers, schools and researchers from different cities and countries.

Language education. Our potential contribution to insights into language education is considerable, given the great need for knowledge about the process of language acquisition in parents, teachers and educational policy makers. Currently we are working on the development of diagnostic tools for language assessment in bilingual children, and we are developing vocabulary tests and language comprehension tests for non-Dutch speaking children.

Atypical language acquisition. We develop scientifically validated tools for an early recognition of Specific Language Impairment (SLI), aiming at supporting professionals working with bilingual children, who are faced with the challenge of attributing language problems to different factors (e.g. language exposure, which is differentiated in bilingual settings, or to individual cognitive factors, including language disorders). These tools are primarily intended for teachers, but hold potential relevance for speech therapists.

In these interconnected areas, we have ongoing collaborations with researchers in other groups at UiL OTS, in particular group 4 *Language Processing and Language Pathology* and group 5 *Language and Education*.

Scientific results, 2012-2017

Large-scale research grants

Eight large-scale research grants started or were completed, funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO; *VENI, VIDI, Free Competition, Gravitation*), the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts & Sciences (KNAW; *China Exchange Program*), and the European Commission (*Marie Curie*).

- 2010-2014 *The Early Acquisition of Speech Prosody: A comparative study of Dutch and Chinese.*
Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, China Exchange Programme (CEP) scheme (KNAW grant 11-CDP-004; €92,815).
Principal Investigators: René Kager & Aijun Li (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Institute of Linguistics, Beijing). Postdoctoral researcher: Ao Chen.]
This project was ended successfully in 2014.
https://www.knaw.nl/nl/actueel/publicaties/based-on-science-built-on-trust/@@download/pdf_file/20121023.pdf
- 2010-2014 *The Emergence of Scales: Acquisition of relative adjectives in a cross-linguistic perspective.*
Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, VENI Innovational Research Incentives Scheme (NWO grant 275-70-029; €250,000).
Principal Investigator: Elena Tribushinina.]
This project was ended successfully in 2014.
<https://www.nwo.nl/en/research-and-results/research-projects/i/97/5197.html>
- 2010-2015 *Parsing and Metrical Structure: Where phonology meets processing.*
Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, Vrije Competitie grant (NWO grant 360-89; €600,000).
Principal Investigators: René Kager & Wim Zonneveld. Postdoctoral researchers: Anna Kijak, Tom Lentz. PhD students: Brigitta Keij, Sandrien van Ommen.
This project was ended successfully in 2015. Two dissertations were defended in 2016 (Sandrien van Ommen) and 2017 (Brigitta Keij).
<https://www.nwo.nl/onderzoek-en-resultaten/onderzoeksprojecten/i/40/6440.html>
- 2011-2016 *Get the Focus Right: A cross-linguistic study on prosodic encoding of focus in children.*
Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, VIDI Innovational Research Incentives Scheme (NWO grant 276-89-001; €800,000).
Principal Investigator: Aoju Chen. PhD students: Anna-Sara Romøren, Anqi Yang.
This project was ended successfully in 2016. Two dissertations were defended in 2016 (Anna Sara Romøren) and 2017 (Anqi Yang).
<https://www.nwo.nl/onderzoek-en-resultaten/onderzoeksprojecten/i/44/6544.html>

- 2012-2015 *Discourse Coherence in Bilingualism and SLI*.
European Commission, Community Research and Development Information Service (CORDIS; grant 269173; €205,200).
Participating institutions: Utrecht University; ZAS Berlin; Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, Saint Petersburg.
Principal Investigator and Consortium Coordinator: Elena Tribushinina.
This project ended successfully in 2015, leading to conferences, workshops and the BISLA database in CHILDES containing transcriptions of narratives from Russian-Dutch bilinguals, SLI children and monolinguals.
http://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/99714_en.html
- 2013-2015 *Modeling the acquisition of phonotactics* (European Commission, Marie Curie Actions Intra-European Fellowships project; grant 301938; €191,675).
Principal Investigator: Giorgio Magri. Supervisor at hosting site (UU): René Kager.
This collaboration between Giorgio Magri (CNRS) and René Kager ended in 2015.
http://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/105514_en.html
- 2015-2019 *Annotation of Corpora (AnnCor)*
UU Research Facilities grant (€558,000).
Principal Investigators: Jan Odijk, Marjo van Koppen, Paul Leseman, Elena Tribushinina, Ted Sanders.
This project is still ongoing, aiming at the development of repository with richly annotated text corpora.
https://dspace.library.uu.nl/bitstream/1874/356078/1/AnnCor_Annotation_2017_05_1_1_2017_05_11.pdf
- 2016-2017 *Coloring Book: A new test and research method for language comprehension* (Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research; NWO Alfa Meerwaarde scheme; grant 325-70-004), involving a co-operation with Boom Test Publishers.
Principal Investigators: Manuela Pinto & Shalom Zuckerman.
This research and development project was successfully finished in 2017.
<https://www.nwo.nl/onderzoek-en-resultaten/onderzoeksprojecten/i/44/14244.html>
- 2017-2022 *Individual Development: Why some children thrive and others don't*.
Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, Zwaartekracht ('Gravitation') scheme (NWO grant 024.001.003; amount awarded to René Kager: €270,000).
René Kager is one of twenty Principal Investigators in the consortium.
A new PhD project and post-doctoral project will be set up in 2018.
<https://individualdevelopment.nl/>

Completed PhD projects

Twelve PhD projects were successfully completed with dissertations.

- 2012 Rianne Schippers. *The acquisition of particle verbs in Dutch*. LOT Dissertation Series, 245. Promotor: Peter Coopmans.
Natalie Boll-Avetisyan. *Phonotactics and its acquisition, representation, and use*. LOT Dissertation Series, 298. Promotor: René Kager.
Marie-Elise van der Ziel. *The acquisition of scope interpretation in dative constructions: Explaining children's non-targetlike performance*. LOT Dissertation Series, 292. Promotor: Peter Coopmans. Co-promotor: Andrea Gualmini.
- 2013 Ao Chen. *Universal biases in the perception of Mandarin tones: From infancy to adulthood*. LOT Dissertation Series, 315. Promotor: René Kager.

- Loes Koring. *Seemingly similar: Subjects and displacement in grammar, processing, and acquisition*. LOT Dissertation Series, 322. Promotor: Eric Reuland. Co-promotors: Pim Mak & Sergio Baauw.
- 2014 Liquan Liu. *The effects of bilingualism on infant language development: The acquisition of sounds and words*. LOT Dissertation Series, 346. Promotor: René Kager.
- 2015 Marko Simonović. *Lexicon immigration service: Prolegomena to a theory of loanword integration*. (280 p.). LOT Dissertation Series, 393. Promotors: René Kager & Wim Zonneveld.
- 2016 Sandrien van Ommen. *Listen to the beat: A cross-linguistic perspective on the use of stress in segmentation*. LOT Dissertation Series, 420. Promotors: René Kager & Wim Zonneveld.
- Anna Sara Romøren. *Hunting highs and lows: The acquisition of prosodic focus marking in Swedish and Dutch*. LOT Dissertation Series, 426. Promotors: René Kager & Wim Zonneveld. Co-promotor: Aaju Chen.
- 2017 Brigitta Keij. *Rhythm & cues: Rhythmic structure and segmentation in early language acquisition*. LOT Dissertation Series, 451. Promotors: René Kager & Wim Zonneveld.
- Anqi Yang. *The acquisition of prosodic focus-marking in Mandarin Chinese and in Seoul Korean-speaking children*. LOT Dissertation Series, 473. Promotors: René Kager & Wim Zonneveld. Co-promotor: Aaju Chen.
- Zenghui Liu. *The development of prosodic focus-marking in early bilinguals' L2: A study of Bai-Mandarin early bilinguals' Mandarin*. LOT Dissertation Series, 481. Promotor: René Kager. Co-promotors: Aaju Chen & Hans Van de Velde (Fryske Akademy).

Our PhD graduates occupy positions in international research universities

- Natalie Boll-Avetisyan: Post-doctoral researcher at University of Potsdam.
- Ao Chen: Associate Professor at Beijing Language and Culture University and Post-doctoral researcher at Utrecht University.
- Loes Koring: Policy maker research at Leiden University.
- Liquan Liu: Post-doctoral researcher at Western Sydney University.
- Zenghui Liu: Assistant Professor at Yunnan University, China.
- Anna Sara Romøren: Associate Professor at Oslo Metropolitan University.
- Marko Simonović. Post-doctoral researcher at University of Nova Gorica.
- Sandrien van Ommen: Post-doctoral researcher at Université Paris Descartes.
- Anqi Yang: Assistant Professor at Tianjin University, China.

Others have tenured positions at high-profile professional institutions

- Rianne Schippers: Docent lerarenopleiding Nederlands, Hogeschool Rotterdam.
- Marie-Elise van der Ziel: Lecturer, Hogeschool van Arnhem en Nijmegen.
- Brigitta Keij: Senior researcher at Royal Auris Group, The Netherlands.

Ongoing PhD projects

Six PhD projects are still ongoing.

- 2013- Mengru Han. *The role of prosody on word learning in Chinese and Dutch toddlers*. Funded by China Scholarship Council (CSC). Promotor: René Kager. Co-promotor: Nivja de Jong (Leiden University).
- 2013- Xin Li. *A cross-linguistic study on the perception of sandhi tones in the Nanjing dialect: When does the role of naturalness emerge in light of the phonological*

- nativeness?* Funded by China Scholarship Council (CSC). Promotor: René Kager. Co-promotor: Willemijn Heeren (Leiden University).
- 2013- Luying Hou. *The role of prosody in ambiguous pronoun production and resolution: A contrastive study of English and Mandarin*. Funded by China Scholarship Council (CSC). Promotor: René Kager. Co-promotors: Bert Le Bruyn & Ao Chen.
- 2014- Carien Mol. *Comparative linguistics of birdsong and child language acquisition: Focus on prosody*. Funded by Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research 'Zwaartekracht' (*Gravity*) scheme. Promotors: Johan Bolhuis (Social Sciences, UU) & René Kager.
- 2015- Shuangshuang Hu. *Dimensions of pitch processing: A cross-linguistic study on the perception of lexical tones*. Funded by China Scholarship Council (CSC). Promotor: René Kager. Co-supervisor: Ao Chen.
- 2016- Marlisa Hommel. *Perception training in the EFL classroom*. Funded by Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO *Promotiebeurs voor Leraren* scheme; grant 023.007.008). Promotor: René Kager. Co-promotor: Willemijn Heeren (Leiden University).

International collaborations

- 2014- *The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) – Utrecht University (UU) Joint Centre for Language, Mind and Brain*. Aojun Chen and René Kager collaborate with Patrick Wong (CUHK), investigating the biological basis of language development in cognitive neuroscience. René Kager is co-supervisor of two PhD projects:
 Akshay Maggu. *The treatment of children with phonological disorders using a complexity based framework*. (Defense: March, 2018.)
 Luchang Wang. *The interplay between pitch modifications of intonation and lexical tones in Cantonese infant-directed speech and their associations with infant language development: A trade-off and transition hypothesis*.
<http://language.cuhk.edu.hk/>
- 2015- *Comparative Linguistics of Birdsong and Child Language Acquisition: Focus on prosody*. René Kager and Martin Everaert collaborate with Johan Bolhuis, Gabriël Beckers, Sita ter Haar and Carien Mol (at Cognitive Neurobiology and Helmholtz Institute, Utrecht University). René Kager is co-supervisor of Carien Mol's PhD project (see above).
<https://www.uu.nl/en/news/what-birdsong-has-to-teach-us-about-how-we-learn-to-talk>
- 2015- *Cross-Linguistic Validation of Artificial Grammar Learning Paradigms (CLAGL)*. Collaboration between researchers from University College London (Andrew Nevins, James White), Laboratoire de Sciences Cognitives et Psycholinguistique in Paris (Tal Linzen, Alexander Martin, Sharon Peperkamp), Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf (Ruben van de Vijver), Utrecht University (Frans Adriaans, René Kager), Hungarian Academy of Sciences Budapest (Krisztina Polgárdi) and Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Giorgos Markopoulos, Nina Topintzi). A workshop was held to prepare an Innovative Network Training (ITN) grant proposal.

Local collaborations

- 2013- Within UU, we participate in the *Dynamics of Youth* (DoY) strategic research theme. Aojun Chen, together with Susan Branje (Social Sciences), coordinates the DoY pillar *Belonging*, a multidisciplinary research initiative on the development of personal and social identity, involving researchers from social sciences, humanities and medicine. The goal is to develop large-scale project proposals and to attract external funding to conduct collaborative research on this theme.
<https://www.uu.nl/en/research/dynamics-of-youth/belonging>
- 2016- Within the Department of Languages, Literature and Communication, Luisa Meroni and Matteo Brera received funding for a project crossing the borders of linguistics and culture *L'Italiano di carta. Testimonies of Cultural and Linguistic Hybridization in the American Mid- and Deep South (1900-1945)*.
<https://www.uu.nl/en/news/new-study-of-italian-emigrants-periodical-press-in-north-america>

Publications, 2012-2017

A full overview of our publications can be found here ([click](#)). Summed results:

Refereed journal articles. We published a total of 74 refereed journal articles, mostly in top journals in cognitive science and (developmental) linguistics, e.g., *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*; *Cognition* (2x); *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*; *Cognitive Science* (2x); *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*; *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* (3x); *Applied Linguistics*; *Language Learning and Development*; *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*; *Frontiers in Psychology* (4x); *Language, Cognition and Neuroscience*; *Second Language Research*; *Journal of Pragmatics*; *Language Acquisition*; *First Language* (4x); *Applied Psycholinguistics*; *Language and Speech* (3x); *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*; *Journal of Child Language* (2x); *Phonology* (2x); *Infant Behavior and Development*; *Infant and Child Development*; *Lingua* (5x); *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*; *International Journal of Bilingualism* (2x).

Refereed book chapters. Another 34 articles were published as refereed book chapters, mostly with prominent publishers such as Cambridge University Press (3x); Oxford University Press (4x); De Gruyter Mouton (5x); John Benjamins (11x).

Proceedings. We published a further 39 articles in proceedings volumes of international conferences, e.g. *Boston University Conference in Language Development* (10x); *International Conference on Speech Prosody* (7x); *International Congress of Phonetic Sciences* (5x); *International Symposium on Tonal Aspects of Languages* (7x); *Interspeech*; *Tokyo Conference on Psycholinguistics*; *North East Linguistic Society*; *Generative Approaches to Language Acquisition*.

Editorships of edited volumes. We were editors of 6 volumes of articles, for major publishers, e.g. Oxford University Press, Mouton de Gruyter, John Benjamins.

Dissertations. We produced 12 PhD dissertations, a steady output of two dissertations annually.

Monographs. Luisa Meroni's 2005 PhD dissertation *Putting Children in Context* was published by Lambert Academic Publishing in 2013.

Citations. Our research findings were well recognized in the literature; our collective publications from the period 2012-2017 were cited a total of 918 times, with 10 articles receiving more than 20 citations (*Google Scholar*, consulted 16 January, 2018).

Other achievements, 2012-2017

A full overview of our other achievements can be found here ([click](#)). Summed results:

Invited lectures. Researchers from our group gave invited lectures and keynote addresses at major international conferences, such as *Speech Prosody 2016*, *Generative Approaches to Language Acquisition (GALA) 2015*, and *Annual Meeting on Phonology (AMP) 2014*. They gave colloquia at linguistics research centers around the globe, e.g. Laboratoire Psychologie de la Perception, Paris; Ludwig-Maximilian-Universität, München; Nanjing Normal University; New York University; Stockholm University; University of Aix en Provence; University of Amsterdam; University of Lausanne; University of Sussex; University of Tromsø.

Editorial responsibilities. Researchers from our group held Associate Editorships of major journals (*Laboratory Phonology*; *Phonology*) and memberships of editorial boards (*Journal of Phonetics*; *Journal of the International Phonetic Association*; *Journal of Comparative Germanic Linguistics*; *Language: Phonological Analysis*; *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*).

Conference and workshop organization. *6th international Conference on Tone and Intonation in Europe (TIE 6)*, Utrecht University, 10-12 September, 2014; *Conceptual Salience and Early Child Morphology* (part of International Morphology Meeting), Vienna, 11-12 February, 2012; *Acquisition of Adjectives Across Languages*, Utrecht University, 28-29 November, 2013; *Acquisition of Discourse Phenomena Across Languages and Populations*, Center for General Linguistics (ZAS) Berlin, 16-17 October, 2015.

Scientific board memberships. Executive Committee of the International Association for the Study of Child Language (IASCL); Belgian-Dutch Cognitive Linguistics Association; Degree Programme Advisory Board, Faculty of Humanities, VU Amsterdam; Linguistics Association of the Netherlands (AVT); Chair of the Linguistics Association of the Netherlands (AVT).

Societal results, 2012-2017

We were active in developing designs for professional users (teachers); giving lectures and master classes for a professional audience.

Participation in projects in cooperation with societal parties

We participated in two four-year educational projects in cooperation with societal parties.

2009-2012 *TRAM - Transitie en meertaligheid: Omgaan met meertaligheid op de kleuterschool en in het basisonderwijs. Transitions and Multilingualism* (funded by the European Commission, 'Comenius' scheme), aims at developing a teacher training curriculum for multilingual settings for continuous professional development, working with parent associations and inspecting authorities, collaborating with partners from four countries.

Researchers: Sergio Baauw and Emmanuelle le Pichon (UIL group 5).

From the first newsletter: "October 2009 eight partners from Germany, Romania, Latvia, Sweden and the Netherlands representing parent associations, universities, research institutes and inspecting authorities have established the project TRAM – Transitions and multilingualism that will run until September 2012. As the project title implies TRAM focuses on two major topics: transitions of children from pre-school to school and the multilingual background of these children. The core of the project is the development of a teacher training curriculum for Continuous Professional Development (CPD)."

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313405584_Transitie_en_meertaligheid_Omgaan_met_meertaligheid_op_de_kleuterschool_en_in_het_basisonderwijs

2015-2018 *Education of Internationally Newly Arrived migrant pupils* (EDINA; funded by European Commission, 'Erasmus+' scheme), provides support to professional parties such as municipalities, schools, and teachers; this involves an interdisciplinary team of school teachers, school boards, municipalities, and researchers from a range of disciplines and collaborating with partners from Finland (Helsinki), Belgium (Ghent), and the Netherlands (Rotterdam and Utrecht).

Researchers: Sergio Baauw and Emmanuelle le Pichon (UIL group 5); with R. Pulinx, J. de Mets, F. Dervin.

From the project website: "This project brings together policy makers, schools and researchers from Finland (Helsinki), Belgium (Ghent) and The Netherlands (Rotterdam and Utrecht). The main objective is to provide support to municipalities, schools and teachers in the reception and the integration into the school system of Newly Arrived Migrant pupils (NAMS). [...] "A particular strength of EDINA is that it will be developed by an interdisciplinary team including schoolteachers, school boards, municipalities, and researchers from pedagogy, didactic, intercultural communication and second language acquisition and is to be used by teachers, schools, municipalities and policy makers. It is based on a thorough qualitative analysis of the situation of NAMS (age 6-18) in the educational system of the three countries involved. The goals are (1) to reduce disparities preventing under or over referral to specialized care, proposing adequate strategies and activities to help teachers, schools and municipalities to support these children, (2) to increase the efficiency of investment in the education of NAMS supporting the development of management programmes for this group at city level and, (3) to strengthen education and training paths of school staff fostering the collaboration between schools, municipalities, and researchers nationally and internationally. With this programme, we aim to ensure that NAMS may access the level of education that corresponds to their cognitive possibilities in order to reduce early school leaving and to support excellent schooling attainment."

<https://edinaplatform.eu/the-project/>

Designs for professional users

Manuela Pinto and Shalom Zuckerman developed and presented tools for testing vocabulary and language comprehension for non-Dutch speaking children.

The outcome of Elena Tribushinina's NWO-VENI project (see above): knowledge of how relative adjectives are interpreted by normally developing children – will contribute to the revision of screening tools for language delays by promoting the design of new adequate tasks for testing adjective comprehension and production.

Lectures and master classes for a professional audience

Baauw, S. (2012). "Taal en taalverwerving". Seminar for teachers on language and multilingualism at Stichting Openbaar Primair Onderwijs (SPO), Utrecht. 14 January.

Baauw, S. (2012). "Transitie en meertaligheid". Workshop for teachers at Stichting Openbaar Primair Onderwijs (SPO), Utrecht. 4 June.

Baauw, S. (2012). "Transitie en meertaligheid". Workshop TRAM, Stichting Protestants-Christelijk Onderwijs (PCOU), Utrecht. 23 October.

Baauw, S. (2012). "Transitions and multilingualism". Languages in Urban Communities - Integration and Diversity for Europe (LUCIDE) first international seminar *The Multilingual City*, Utrecht. 30 November.

Baauw, S. (2013). "De interpretatie van benadrukte en niet-benadrukte persoonlijk voornaamwoorden". Invited talk at *Programma Aphasia Clinics 2013: Tekstbegrip in afasietherapie*, Erasmus Medical Centre, Rotterdam. 19 April. (with S. Avrutin, T.J.M. Sanders.)

- Baauw, S. (2015). “Clinic Multilingualism Project”. *I Love Linguistics* conference, Utrecht institute of Linguistics. 14 February. (with E. Le Pichon).
- Baauw, S. (2016). “Recente migrantenkinderen en de overgang naar het reguliere onderwijs”. Invited talk at *HSN Conferentie Onderwijs Nederlands Gent*. 19 November. (with E. Le Pichon.)
- Baauw, S. (2016). School development of young newly arrived migrant pupils at primary school level. [XXX] (with E. Le Pichon.)
- Pinto, M. (2015). “XXX”. Workshop on bilingual education. 9 May.
- Tribushinina, E. (2018). “The sooner the better? Foreign language teaching to children with (S)LI”. Invited talk at conference *Variations in Language Proficiency: Assessment and Interventions*, Amsterdam. January 20.

Articles in professional journals for non-academic readers

- Le Pichon, E.M.M. & Baauw, S. (2017). Meertaligheid als sleutel tot inclusief onderwijs voor nieuwkomers. *Meertaligheid en Onderwijs - Nederlands Plus*. Amsterdam: Boom uitgeverij.
- Tribushinina, E. (2013). Kennis van bijvoeglijk naamwoorden: Goede indicator van taalachterstanden en beter ontwikkelde grammatica. *Tijdschrift voor Remedial Teaching*, 21 (4).

Outreach activities

We undertook a range of outreach activities, such as giving lectures, workshops and seminars for a general audience (e.g. presentations at the annual *Drongo Festival* on multilingualism); maintaining a website *Growing up bilingual* with information for parents in bilingual families; writing contributions to newspapers and general audience journals focusing on bilingual education.

Membership of civil society bodies

We participate in civil society bodies, chairing a national steering group for *Teaching Methodology for the Humanities*.

Preview and future aims

The research group has a medium size, with 3 full Professors, 6 Assistant Professors, 8 PhD students. In spite of the reduction of opportunities for national research grant funding, the number of PhD students is still at a satisfactory level due to international sources of funding, mainly from the Chinese Scholarship Council. For the immediate future, we expect that three PhD students from our group will finish their degrees in 2018. From 2018 onwards, the situation becomes less clear. Sources of PhD funding to which we will turn after 2018 include the new NWO Open Programme, NWO Innovational Research Incentives Scheme (VENI, VIDI, VICI), ERC Consolidator and ERC Advanced. We regret that our valuable research time is still under substantial pressure due to high teaching loads; hence, in order to keep our levels of output satisfactory in the near future, we will become even more dependent on successful grant applications.

Regarding thematic orientation, we note that a central theme in the language acquisition literature is the nature/nurture debate. Despite the fact that many researchers address this theme from different theoretical angles, the discussion tends to be polarized and researchers often end up preaching to themselves: for instance, nativists do not read or publish in the same journals of constructionists, and it is rare to find a department where both views are taught to the same degree. UIL OTS is quite exceptional in that both views are actually represented in the faculty, and we consider it beneficial to take advantage of this. Further integration within our group may also be achieved by researchers working on prosody (in discourse) and semantics/pragmatics, for example by investigating the role of context and prosody in ambiguity resolution.

Finally, we aim at strengthening existing collaborations and opening new ones with researchers in other UIL OTS groups, in particular (but not exclusively) group 4 “Language Processing and Language Pathology” (a quality monitoring system featuring research proposal meetings; joint research on atypical language development) and group 5 “Language and Education” (concerning second language acquisition).