Preface

Humans are tool users and sign users. This book is about both. It is about using tools to learn to use signs, using technology to learn language. This hybrid topic encompasses various disciplines, and the book is aimed at fostering collaboration across these disciplines. One reason I have set my hand to creating a book for this purpose is that my own research has been enriched by such collaborations. Over the past several years I have worked in an environment where I was free to pursue in my own circuitous way the diverse topics covered here and was able to interact with researchers and graduate students from my own field of linguistics as well as the fields of cognitive psychology, information science, and education. Among the scholars I have worked with, I would especially like to acknowledge Chin-Hwa Kuo of Tamkang University and Meng Chang Chen of the Institute of Information Science at the Academia Sinica, my colleagues in developing the IWiLL language learning platform, where so many of the ideas in this book found their genesis. Others who, through our collaborations, have contributed substantially to the evolution of my thinking on the topics covered here are Professor Hwawei Ko of National Central University, Professor Michael Hoe of National Taiwan University, Dr. Wen-Lian Hsu of the Institute of Information Science at the Academia Sinica, Professor Marlene Scardamalia of the University of Toronto, and Professor Jo Anne Kleifgen of Teachers College at Columbia University. I owe thanks to Professor Yuang shan Chuang for carefully reading a penultimate draft of the book at the publisher's request and giving supportive and helpful comments on short notice. I would also like to thank my collaborators from Taipei First Girls Senior High School Barbara Pai, Ruth Yeh, Jill Tsuei, Lillian Ning, and Wei-Wei Chiu. For digitalizing Ana's artwork for the book cover, I want to thank Alice Shyy for her time and expertise.

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