This issue of the journal (together with the second issue of this volume) is dedicated to Professor Jack S. Damico. Just over a dozen years ago, Jack and I started this journal – with, of course, the most welcome help of Equinox Publishing. What Jack had seen was that the move toward qualitative research in communication, research that tries to describe how people communicate in real-world situations, had also progressed far enough in the study of communication disorders to deserve its own forum of debate. To mark Jack’s groundbreaking work in the field of interactional research in communication disorders, we have dedicated both issues of this volume to him. Indeed, the main authors of the articles in this volume are all former doctoral students of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (UL) at a time when Jack was one of the leading teachers and researchers in the department, and several of the co-authors are former departmental colleagues of his at UL. (As Jack was the main mentor of some of the authors, his name naturally appears among the authors; needless to say, he was unaware that the articles were intended for this special issue.)

Jack’s wide interests within the field of communication disorders are illustrated by the range of topics presented in this volume of the journal. In this issue, articles are included that deal with childhood communication disorders, and in the second issue there will be articles on adult disorders. Thus, the articles in this issue cover language disorders in children, children with autism, children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and the sociopsychological cost of expecting children to code-switch from African American English to Standard American English.

The five articles also illustrate several different qualitative research methods. Clark, Arrington, Nelson, Damico, and Damico utilize a variety of
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conversational analytic procedures to investigate children's and their parents' reminiscing. Kaniamattam and Oxley investigate the use of conversation books with children with complex communication needs and use applied thematic analysis. Maxwell, Nelson, Damico, and Weill employ ethnographic methods to examine writing in children with autism, while Maxwell and Damico adopt interactional analysis (a hybrid approach to conversation analysis) to investigate the use of well in writing interactions of a child with autism spectrum disorder. Finally, Kroll and Townsend use an interactional approach to outline the problem of code-switching in African American speakers and propose a research agenda in this area.

Professor Damico’s contribution to the study of communication disorders is huge, and he is one of the leading scholars in the field. This issue in his honor (and the forthcoming second issue of this volume) are a small token of the esteem in which he is held by his former students and colleagues.