

Associate Professor at the Department of Brain and Behavioural Science, University of Pavia
E: slecce@unipv.it
T: +39 0382 986485

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Serena Lecce directs the LASC (Laboratory for Social Cognition). She is interested in individual differences in socio-cognitive understanding in a life span perspective. Her work focused on: i) understanding causes and consequences of individual differences in socio-cognitive understanding both in the social and cognitive domain, and ii) designing targeted interventions to promote socio-cognitive understanding.

COLLABORATORS

In the last few years, her research activity led her to work in collaboration with different research groups.

National collaborators

Prof. Valentina Bambini, University School of Advanced Studies, Pavia, IT

Prof. Elena Cavallini, Department of Brain and Behavioral Sciences, University of Pavia

Federica Bianco, PhD, University of Bergamo

International collaborators

Dr. Rory Devine School of Psychology, University of Birmingham, UK;

Prof. Claire Hughes, Centre for Family Research, University of Cambridge, UK;

Prof. Robin Banerjee, University of Sussex, UK;

Prof. Ted Ruffman, University of Otago, NZ;

Prof. Xin Zhang, University of Peking, CHN;

Dr. Ai Mizokawa, Meiji Gakuin University, Tokyo, JP

QUALIFICATIONS

- 2014-ongoing: Member of the scientific committee of the doctorate school in Psychology, Neuroscience and Data Science, University of Pavia
- 2011-2014: Researcher, Department of Brain and Behavioral Studies, University of Pavia
- 2011: professional psychologist
- 2006-2008: Post-doc, "ToM and internal state talk", University of Pavia
- 2005: PhD in Developmental Psychology; Dissertation: "Children's social relationships: an analysis of the links between social relationships"

AWARDS

- 2005: special Mention from the Italian Association of Developmental Psychology for the Best Italian PhD thesis in Developmental Psychology
- 2004: annual award from the University School of Advanced Studies, IUSS Pavia
- 2002: best Young Researcher award from the Italian Association of Developmental Psychology to "Talking about emotions and cognitions referred to the self and to the others; a study of conversation with siblings and friends"
- 2002: annual award from the University School of Advanced Studies, IUSS Pavia.

SUPERVISIONS

Supervisor of 6 doctoral students and of more than 70 master students

Current PhD supervision

- Chiara Basile (1st supervisor), Theory of Mind and synchronization
- Paola Del Sette (1st supervisor), Theory of mind and pragmatics in children

Completed PhD supervision

- Luca Ronchi (1st supervisor; 2018), Theory of Mind and peer relationships in middle childhood: The role of social behaviour and social anxiety
- Federica Bianco (1st supervisor; 2014), Becoming good at reading minds: A training approach in middle childhood,
- Marta Nola (2nd supervisor, 2014), What accounts for children's development of prosocial behavior? Socio-cognitive and moral mechanisms?
- Irene Ceccato (1st supervisor; 2016), ToM performance in normal aging: the role of motivation
- Patrizia DeMicheli (1st supervisor; 2012), The role of theory of mind in the development of preschoolers' metamemory"
- Marcella Caputi (2nd supervisor; 2011), Sociocognitive consequences of early theory of mind: a longitudinal study

GRANTS

- 2017-2020: "The interpretative brain: Understanding and promoting pragmatic abilities across lifespan and in mental illness"; PRIN 2015, Responsible of local unit (€ 109765)
- since 2017: coordinator of the BE-STudent crowdfunding campaign (about € 11000 at the moment of the present application)
- 2015: Invitation Fellowship for Research in Japan, Principal Investigator (€ 3200).
- 2012: "Simplify Lombardy", Region Lombardy; Grant to the Laboratory of Learning Psychology (€ 60.000)
- 2011: Erasmus Staff Training Mobility Grant to spend a period of 1 month at the Centre for Family Research, University di Cambridge, Principal Investigator
- 2007: "Children's socio-cognitive understanding in action and context"; travel grant to spend a period of 3 weeks at the School of Psychology, University of Sydney, Principal Investigator
- 2003/04: "Talk about mental states with friends and siblings: a study with hard-to-manage children", Short Term Mobility grant to spend a period of 3 weeks at the Centre for Family Research, University di Cambridge, Principal Investigator
- 2002/03: "Representing sibling relationships in fraternal and identical twins"; Young Researcher grant at University of Pavia, Principal Investigator (€ 3.011)

SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

Books

- Lecce, S., & Devine, R. (Eds.) (in prep). Theory of Mind in Middle Childhood and Adolescence: Integrating Multiple Perspectives. Psychology Press
- Lecce, S., Cavallini, E., & Ceccato, I. (2019). Promuovere la Teoria della Mente nell'anziano. Un programma di intervento per la comprensione dell'altro [Promoting theory of mind in elderly people. An intervention program. Milano, Franco Angeli.

- Lecce, S., & Bianco, F. (2018). *Mettiti nei miei panni. Programma per promuovere l'empatia e le relazioni sociali con la teoria della mente - scuola primaria [Put yourself in my shoes. An intervention program to promote theory of mind in primary school]*. Trento, Erickson
- Lecce, S., Cavallini, E., & Pagnin, A. (2010). *La teoria della mente nell'arco di vita [Theory of mind across life span]*. Bologna, Il Mulino.
- Lecce, S., & Pagnin, A. (2007). *Il lessico psicologico: la teoria della mente nella vita quotidiana [Mental state talk: theory of mind in real life]*. Bologna, Il Mulino

Scientific Articles

- Lecce, S., Bianco, F., & Ronchi, L. (in press). Executive Function in the school context: the role of peer relationships. *Infant and Child Development, Special Issue on Executive Functions in Context*. doi: 10.1002/icd.2151
- Ronchi, L., Banerjee, R., & Lecce, S. (2019). ToM and peer relationships: the role of social anxiety. *Social Development*. doi:10.1111/sode.12417
- Bianco, F., Lombardi, E., Massaro, D., Castelli, I., Valle, A., Marchetti, A., & Lecce, S. (2019). Enhancing advanced ToM skills in primary school: A training study with 7- to 8-year olds. *Infant and Child Development*. doi:10.1002/icd.2155
- Bischetti, L., Ceccato, I., Lecce, S., Cavallini, E., & Bambini, V. (2019). Pragmatics and Theory of Mind in older adults' humor comprehension. *Current Psychology*, 1-17. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-019-00295-w>
- Rosi, A., Nola, M., Cavallini, E., & Lecce, S. (2019). Prosocial behavior in aging: which factors can explain age-related differences in the social economic decision-making? *International Psychogeriatrics*, 20, 1-11. doi: 10.1017/S1041610219000061
- Lecce, S., Ronchi, L., Del Sette, P., Bischetti, L., & Bambini, V. (2019). Interpreting Physical and Mental Metaphors: Is Theory of Mind associated with pragmatics in middle childhood? *Journal of Child Language*, 46, 393-407. doi:10.1017/S030500091800048X
- Lecce, S. & Bianco, F. (2019) The role of false-belief understanding in preschoolers' development of metamemory: A training study. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 16, 697-711. doi: 10.1080/17405629.2018.1496908
- Lecce, S., Ceccato, I., Rosi, A., Bianco, F., Bottiroli, S., & Cavallini, E. (2019). Theory of Mind plasticity in aging: the role of baseline, verbal knowledge, and executive functions. *Neuropsychological Rehabilitation*, 29, 440-455. doi:10.1080/09602011.2017.1308871
- Lecce, S., Ceccato, I., & Cavallini E. (2019): Investigating ToM in aging with the MASC: from accuracy to error type. *Aging, Neuropsychology, and Cognition*, 26, 541-557. doi: 10.1080/13825585.2018.1500996
- Ceccato, I., Lecce, S., Cavallini, E., van Vugt, F.T., Ruffman, T. (2019) Motivation and social-cognitive abilities in older adults: Convergent evidence from self-report measures and cardiovascular reactivity. *PLOS ONE* 14: e0218785. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0218785>
- Lecce, S., Ceccato, I., & Cavallini, E. (2019). Theory of Mind, Mental State Talk and Social Relationships in Aging: The Case of Friendship. *Aging and Mental Health*, 23, 1105-1112. doi: 10.1080/13607863.2018.1479832
- Zhang, X., Lecce, S., Ceccato, I., Cavallini, E., Zhang, L., & Tianyong, C. (2018). Plasticity in Older Adults' Theory of Mind Performance: The Impact of Motivation. *Aging and Mental Health*, 22, 1592-1599. doi: 10.1080/13607863.2017.1376313v
- Lecce, S. & Bianco, F. (2018). Working memory predicts children's theory of mind development during middle childhood: A training study. *Cognitive Development*, 47, 71-81. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cogdev.2018.04.002>

- Lecce, S., Ceccato, I., Bianco, F., Rosi, A., Bottiroli, S., & Cavallini, E. (2017). Theory of mind and social relationships in older adults: the role of social motivation. *Aging and Mental Health*, 21, 253-258. doi: 10.1080/13607863.2015.1114586
- Caputi, M., Lecce, S., & Pagnin, A. (2017). The role of mother-child and teacher-child relationship on academic achievement. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 14, 141-158. doi: 10.1080/17405629.2016.1173538
- Mizokawa, A., & Lecce, S. (2017). Sensitivity to criticism and theory of mind: A cross cultural study on Japanese and Italian children. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 14, 159-171. doi:10.1080/17405629.2016.1180970
- Lecce, S. (2017). Examining mind-reading in the life span: from longitudinal to training studies. *Front. Psychol. Conference Abstract: XPRAG.it Behavioral and Neural Evidence on Pragmatic Processing*. doi: 10.3389/conf.fpsyg.2017.71.00005
- Lecce, S., Bianco, F., Devine, R., & Hughes, C. (2017). Relations between ToM and EF in middle childhood: a short-term longitudinal study. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 163, 69-86. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2017.06.011>
- Lecce, S., Caputi, M., Pagnin, A., & Banerjee, R. (2017). Theory of Mind and school achievement: the mediating role of social competence. *Cognitive Development*, 44, 85-97. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cogdev.2017.08.0107>
- Rosi, A., Cavallini, E., Bottiroli, S., Bianco, F., & Lecce, S. (2016). Promoting ToM in older adults: does age play a role? *Aging and Mental Health*, 20, 22-8. doi: 10.1080/13607863.2015.1049118.
- Bottiroli, S., Cavallini, E., Ceccato, I., Vecchi, T., & Lecce, S. (2016). Theory of Mind in aging: Comparing cognitive and affective components in the faux pas test. *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics*, 62, 152-162. doi: 10.1016/j.archger.2015.09.009
- Bianco, F., Lecce, S., & Banerjee, R. (2016). Conversations about Mental States and Theory of Mind Development in Middle Childhood: A Training Study. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 149, 41-61 doi: 10.1016/j.jecp.2015.11.006
- Bianco, F., & Lecce, S. (2016). Translating Child Development Research Into Practice: Can Teachers Foster Theory of Mind in Primary School? *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 86, 592-605. doi:10.1111/bjep.12125
- Lecce, S., Bottiroli, S., Bianco, F., Rosi, A., & Cavallini, E. (2015). Training older adults on Theory of Mind: Transfer on Metamemory. *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics*, 60, 217-226. doi: 10.1016/j.archger.2014.10.001
- Lecce, S., Caputi, M., Pagnin, A. (2015). False-belief understanding at age 5 predicts beliefs about learning in Year 3 of primary school. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 12, 40-53. doi: 10.1080/17405629.2014.949665
- Lecce, S., Demicheli, P., Zocchi, S., & Palladino, P. (2015). The origins of children's metamemory: The role of theory of mind. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 131, 56-72. doi: 10.1016/j.jecp.2014.11.005
- Cavallini, E., Bianco, F., Bottiroli, S., Rosi, A., & Lecce, S. (2015). Training for generalization in ToM: a study with older adults. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6:1123. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01123
- Hughes, C., Devine, R., Ensor, R., Koyasu, M., Misokawa, A., & Lecce, S. (2014). Lost in Translation? Comparing British, Japanese and Italian Children's Theory of Mind Performance. *Child Development Research Manuscript*. Article ID 893492, 10 pages, 2014. doi:10.1155/2014/893492.
- Lecce, S., Caputi, M., & Pagnin, A. (2014). Long-term effect of theory of mind on school achievement: the role of sensitivity to criticism. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 11, 305-318. doi: 10.1080/17405629.2013.821944

- Lecce, S., Bianco, F., Devine, R., Hughes, C., & Banerjee, R. (2014). Promoting theory of mind in middle childhood: a training study. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 126, 52-67. doi: 10.1016/j.jecp.2014.03.002
- Lecce, S., Bianco, F., Demicheli, P., & Cavallini, E. (2014). Training Preschoolers on 1st-Order-False-Belief Understanding: Transfer on Advanced ToM Skills and Metamemory. *Child Development*, 85, 2404-2418. doi: 10.1111/cdev.12267
- Cavallini, E., Lecce, S., Bottiroli, S., Palladino, P., & Pagnin, A. (2013). Beyond False Belief: Theory of Mind in Young, Young Old, and Old-old Adults. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 76, 181-198. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.2190/AG.76.3.a
- Caputi, M., Lecce, S., Pagnin, A., & Banerjee, R. (2012). Longitudinal effects of theory of mind on later peer relations: The role of prosocial behaviour. *Developmental Psychology*, 48, 257-270. doi: 10.1037/a0025402
- Lecce, S., de Bernart, D., Vezzani, C., Pinto, G., & Primi, C. (2011). Measuring sibling relationship's quality during middle childhood: psychometric properties of Sibling Relationship Inventory. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 8, 423-436. doi: 10.1080/17405629.2010.530033
- Lecce, S., Caputi, M., & Hughes, C. (2011). Does Sensitivity to Criticism Mediate the Relationship Between Theory of Mind and Academic Competence? *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 110, 313-331. doi: 10.1016/j.jecp.2011.04.011
- Lecce, S., & Hughes, C. (2010). "The Italian Job"? Comparing theory of mind performance in British and Italian children. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 28, 747-766. doi: 10.1348/026151009X479006
- Hughes, C., Marks, A., Ensor, R., & Lecce, S. (2010). A Longitudinal Study of Conflict and Inner State Talk in Children's Conversations with Mothers and Younger Siblings. *Social Development*, 19, 822-837. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9507.2009.00561.x
- Lecce, S., Zocchi, S., Pagnin, A., Palladino, P., & Taumoepeau, M. (2010). Reading minds: The relation between children's mental state knowledge and their metaknowledge about reading. *Child Development*, 81, 1876-1893. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01516.x
- Lecce, S., Pagnin, A., & Pinto, G. (2009). Agreement in children's evaluations of their relationships with siblings and friends. *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 6, 153-169. doi: 10.1080/17405620701795536
- Lecce, S., Caputi, M., & Pagnin, A. (2009). "I know what you mean": a study of individual differences in internal state talk in relation to school competence. *Journal of Applied Psycholinguistic*, IX, 84-98.
- Hughes, C., Lecce, S., & Wilson, C. (2007). "Do you know what I want?" Preschoolers' talk about desires, thoughts and feelings in their conversations with sibs and friends. *Cognition and Emotion*, 21, 330-350. doi: 10.1080/02699930600551691
- Hughes, C., Fujisawa, K. K., Ensor, R., Lecce, S., & Marfleet, R. (2006). Cooperation and Conversations about the Mind: A Study of Individual Differences in 2-year-olds and their Siblings. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 24, 53-72. doi:10.1348/026151005X82893

Book Chapter

- Lecce, S. & Devine, R. (in press). Social interaction in early and middle childhood: The Role of Theory of Mind. In H. J. Ferguson, V. Brunson, & E. Bradford (Eds.), *The Cognitive Basis of Social Interaction across the Lifespan*. Oxford University Press
- Lecce, S., & Bianco, F. (2016). Training of theory of mind in school aged children: The effect of intervention. In *Theory of mind as the basis of development: Understanding education, childcare, and autism*, pp.143-159. Mineruva Shobo. [in Japanese]

- Pinto, G., & Lecce, S. (2012). Essere fratelli, vedersi fratelli [Being siblings, see each other as siblings]. In Mori C. (Eds.), *Scenari dei legami fraterni*. Le Lettere, pp. 97-117.
- Hughes, C., & Lecce, S. (2010). Early social cognition. In: Tremblay R.E., Barr R.G., Peters R. De V., Boivin M., (Eds.), *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development* [online]. Montreal, Quebec: Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development; 2010:1-6. <http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/documents/Hughes-LecceANGxp.pdf>
- Lecce, S., Caputi, M., & Pagnin, A. (2010). La ToM come risorsa per la socializzazione in classe [ToM as a resource for socializing in the classroom]. In E. Baumgartner (Eds.), *Gli Esordi della Competenza Emotiva. Strumenti di Studio e di Valutazione*. LED, pp. 105-128.
- Lecce, S., Zocchi, S., & Pagnin, A. (2008). Il TEC: un'indagine longitudinale [The TEC: a longitudinal study]. In O. Albanese e P. Molina (Eds.), *Lo sviluppo della comprensione delle emozioni e la sua valutazione. La standardizzazione italiana del Test di Comprensione delle Emozioni (TEC)*. Edizioni Unicopli, Torino, pp. 183-188.
- Pinto, G., Bombi, A. S., Cannoni, E., & Lecce, S. (2007). Psychometric bases. In A. S. Bombi, G. Pinto, & E. Cannoni. *Pictorial Assessment of Interpersonal Relationships (PAIR). An analytic system for understanding children's drawings*. Florence, Florence University Press, pp. 9-22.
- Lecce, S., Palladino, P., & Pagnin A. (2007). Theory of mind and metacomprehension: which relationship?. In O. Liverta Sempio, A. Marchetti e A. Valle (Eds.), *Intersubjectivity, Metacognition and Theory of Mind*. Pubblicazioni ISU Università Cattolica, Milano, pp. 147-149.

TEACHING ACTIVITIES (ongoing)

- Cognitive Development (language: English)

International Master Degree in Psychology, Neuroscience and Human Sciences
University of Pavia

- Developmental Psychology (language: Italian)

Undergraduate course in Psychology
University of Pavia

- Development of Cognition (language: Italian)

Master degree in Psychology
University of Pavia