Preface: *Multilingual Assessment Instrument for Narratives: Recent developments and new language adaptations*

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Since its initial launch in 2012, the Multilingual Assessment Instrument for Narratives (LITMUS MAIN, hereafter MAIN) has been revised in 2019, when five revised language versions (English, German, Swedish, Russian, and Turkish for the bilingual Turkish-speaking population in Sweden) were published as part of *ZAS Papers in Linguistics*, vol. 63 (Gagarina et al., 2019). Subsequently, in 2020, *ZAS Papers in Linguistics*, vol. 64 was published (Gagarina & Lindgren, 2020). The first part of this volume included "Introduction to MAIN–Revised, how to use the instrument and adapt it to further languages" (Bohnacker & Gagarina, 2020) as well as 33 papers describing the adaptation of MAIN to 39 different languages and providing summaries of previously published studies or pilot studies using these language versions. In the second part of the volume, revised and new language versions were published. Today, a bit more than 10 years after its initial publication, MAIN has developed into a sustainable infrastructure, with its own website (https://main.leibniz-zas.de/), and with regular scientific exchange in the form of the online Text & Tea with MAIN (T&T) meetings. MAIN encompasses a vivid community of interdisciplinary researchers and practitioners in over 60 countries. MAIN-versions exist for over 90 languages and more than 3,200 researchers are registered users of MAIN. Studies using MAIN provide naturalistic data on the narrative abilities of monolingual and bilingual children from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds, analysed within the same theoretical framework, the multidimensional model of narrative organization (see Gagarina et al., 2012). A large number of studies using MAIN to

investigate different aspects of narrative skills in various mono- and bilingual groups have already been published (for an overview, see Lindgren et al., this volume), and there are numerous ongoing research projects, which will continue to bear fruit in the coming years. The number of MAIN language versions is constantly growing and includes both well-studied majority languages, and less explored, minority ones. Each adaptation sheds light on the typological and cultural properties of the language. This of course holds promise both for the growing international MAIN network and for future research into children's narrative abilities more generally, but also poses a challenge in terms of maintaining the validity of MAIN so that it can continue to reflect the unique characteristics of the languages, while simultaneously retaining its common base. Descriptions of the adaptation processes for different language versions are one way to address this challenge. This formed the starting point for the current *ZAS Papers in Linguistics*, vol. 65.

This volume comprises ten papers. Out of these, eight describe a MAIN language version. Together, they cover language families spoken in various parts of the world, from Europe to Africa and Asia. Four papers cover languages spoken in Europe. The paper by *Dorbert and Nikitina* is on Chuvash, which is one of the largest minority languages in the European part of Russia and the only extant member of the Oghur (Bulgar) branch of the Turkic language family, whereas *Nováková Schöffelová et al.* describes the Czech MAIN and *Dabašinskienė and Kamandulytė-Merfeldienė* the Lithuanian one, both Indo-European languages which are majority languages in their respective countries, the Czech Republic and Lithuania. The paper by *Gatt and Borg Cutajar* elaborates on Maltese, a Semitic language, which together with English is the majority language of Malta. Two papers give information on Bantu languages spoken in Africa, the paper by *Ndlovu and Klop* on isiZulu, which is spoken in South Africa, and the paper by *Oriikiriza and Uziel* on Luganda, spoken in Uganda. The final papers describe two languages spoken in Asia. The paper by *Abinayaa et al.* describe the adaptation of MAIN to Tamil, a South Dravidian language spoken in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, but also in other parts of Asia (e.g., Malaysia, Singapore and Sri Lanka), and the paper by *Wang and Yang* is on Tibetan, an endangered language belonging to the Sino-Tibetan language family, which is spoken in different parts of China.

These eight papers describe the typological characteristics of the languages, provide information on the cultural context in which the languages are used, and the processes of translating and adapting MAIN, but also possible challenges that the authors encountered during the adaptation process. For example, adaptations to the MAIN pictorial stimuli are proposed in order for the stimuli to be culturally appropriate, e.g. by Wang and Yang, who state that the fish in the Cat story is not a common food in the culture of Tibetan speakers and should better be replaced with milk. Moreover, Ndlovu and Klop pose some concerns and challenges regarding the differences between aspects of traditional African storytelling and the MAIN assessment of story structure (e.g., the exclusion of settings and internal state terms in isiZulu storytelling). Last but not least, a number of the papers present pilot studies or summaries of already published studies conducted with monolingual and bilingual children, and in some cases with children with language developmental disorder (i.e., the papers by Nováková Schöffelová et al. and Dabašinskienė and Kamandulytė-Merfeldienė) as well as present methodological

issues. All available MAIN versions, including these languages, can be found on the MAIN website.

In addition to the eight papers describing MAIN versions, this volume also contains two additional papers, which report on research conducted using MAIN. The paper by *Karl* outlines how the MAIN procedure can be adapted for use with adults and in the context of remote instead of in-person elicitation. In this paper, important methodological considerations when using MAIN with adults, and when using different remote elicitation methods are described, and results from a pilot study are reported. Finally, the paper by *Lindgren, Tselekidou and Gagarina* gives a comprehensive overview of the research using MAIN that has been published to date, showing the wide range of studies that has been carried out. It summarizes the core results regarding age effects and development, comparisons of monolinguals and bilinguals, bilinguals' two languages and typically-developing (TD) children with children with developmental language disorder (DLD), as well as those investigating factors influencing bilinguals' narrative skills, task effects and the effects of elicitation mode (telling, retelling and model story).

The 65th volume of ZAS Papers in Linguistics is now ready and we are very happy to share it with you. We hope that the current volume will help researchers, educators and clinicians to assess children's narrative abilities adequately, thus assessing their linguistic skills in a contextualized and culturally appropriate manner. We also hope that the content of this volume will encourage other researchers to adapt MAIN to their languages, so that as many languages as possible, from every corner of the world, will eventually be represented in the MAIN family. We thank the authors for their valuable contribution to this journey.[1]

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[1] The papers in this volume have not undergone a process of double-blind peer review. We therefore want to emphasize that each author is responsible for the quality of their respective paper. As editors, we have read all contributions carefully and provided feedback and suggestions for improvements, both regarding the content and the coherence and clarity of the writing, but the final responsibility lies with the authors. The individual authors also vouch for the quality of the MAIN language version described in the papers, and they were all required to follow the same rigorous criteria for translation and adaptation (described in Gagarina et al., 2012, and further revised in Bohnacker & Gagarina, 2020). All existing language versions of MAIN–Revised can be accessed here (after registration).

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