Preface: *Continuing the development of the Multilingual Assessment Instrument for Narratives – New language adaptations and empirical investigations*

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Since its launch in 2012 (Gagarina et al., 2012) and subsequent revision in 2019 (Gagarina et al., 2019), the Multilingual Assessment Instrument for Narratives (MAIN) has become a cornerstone in the fields of multilingual language development and narrative assessment. Designed to evaluate narrative abilities in a theoretically grounded way that is as comparable as possible across languages and cultures, MAIN has grown into a robust international infrastructure with approximately 100 language versions from 66 countries and more than 4,500 registered users across 60 countries. The instrument serves as a valuable tool for researchers, clinicians, and educators working with monolingual and multilingual children, including both typical and atypical populations, and has been used in a large and continuously growing number of published studies to date (see Lindgren, Tselekidou & Gagarina, 2023 for an overview). This new volume with its 12 contributions reflects the ongoing growth of MAIN. Out of the contributions, six describe new language versions of MAIN, seven report empirical studies that apply MAIN to investigate children's narrative development in various sociolinguistic contexts, and one introduces the methodological extension of MAIN to dynamic assessment. Together, these papers show the adaptability of MAIN across typologically different languages and illustrate its applications in clinical, educational, and community-based research. In what follows, we briefly summarize the content of each of the contributions in this volume.

Alqahtani et al. present the adaptation of MAIN to Saudi Arabic, focusing on the Najdi, Hijazi, and southern dialects. The paper demonstrates adjustments needed for cultural appropriateness and highlights findings from a pilot study, including insights into the comprehension of emotional state questions and the usability of the parent questionnaire.

Bracker et al. outline the adaptation of MAIN to European Portuguese, highlighting linguistic differences from the Brazilian Portuguese version showing the importance of tailoring narrative assessments to specific varieties and cultural contexts within the same language.

Hnialum introduces the adaptation of MAIN to Mizo, a tonal language spoken in north-eastern India. The paper discusses typological differences and cultural considerations, illustrating how the Mizo MAIN addresses gaps in assessment for a vulnerable linguistic community.

The adaptation of MAIN to Faroese described in the contribution by *Rasmussen* broadens MAIN's reach into the North Germanic language family. She outlines the language's sociolinguistic background and describes ongoing and future applications of the Faroese MAIN for educational and clinical purposes.

Iefremenko and Alkhimchenkova document the Ukrainian adaptation of MAIN, which was used to assess Ukrainian-Russian bilingual children who had recently arrived in Germany. They examine the effect of both the specific language and of language dominance on narrative macrostructure, offering a unique lens on narrative development in bilingual populations, and valuable suggestions for how MAIN can be revised further in the future.

De Gaudio offers a partial adaptation of MAIN to *Coriglianese*, an Italian dialect, and presents a study involving bilingual children and adolescents. Results from 85 participants show that age and frequent usage of Coriglianese enhance the production of complex syntax in narrative retellings in both Coriglianese and Italian. The study highlights the importance of recognizing and preserving dialectal heritage within the context of contemporary bilingualism.

The contribution by *Augusto et al.* reports on the relationship between syntactic competence, inhibitory control, and narrative skills in Brazilian Portuguese-speaking children, both with typical language and at risk of Developmental Language Disorder (DLD). Their findings point to significant correlations between linguistic measures and narrative scores, confirming MAIN's diagnostic potential in identifying discourse-level difficulties.

Hilker et al. provide local reference data for Albanian-speaking children in Kosovo, addressing the current lack of standardized assessment tools in this context. By analyzing story structure and comprehension across different age groups, their community-based study contributes essential data for this population.

Hržica et al. explore the narrative macrostructure of Croatian-speaking children aged 5 to 7, focusing on the effects of age and receptive language skills on story structure and story complexity. Their conclusions emphasize the need for cross-linguistic, longitudinal research on narrative development that also takes a range of background factors into account.

Perugini explores referential strategies in the narratives of Mandarin-Italian bilingual children, revealing bilingual-specific patterns such as an increased use of demonstrative NPs and strategic word order choices. These findings mirror prior research and underscore the adaptive strategies bilingual children employ in complex narrative contexts.

Smith and Klop examine the narratives of young Afrikaans- and Xhosa-speaking children from low socio-economic status (SES) communities in South Africa. Their findings on macrostructural complexity provide insights into the developmental trajectories in

underrepresented populations and stress the importance of including diverse SES backgrounds in MAIN research.

Finally, *Meyer* describes how MAIN can be used for Dynamic Assessment (MAIN-DA). By applying a test-teach-retest format, MAIN-DA offers a responsive and culturally sensitive framework that evaluates a child's learning potential rather than their static performance, supporting more equitable language evaluation for different types of language learners.

Together, the 12 papers constitute a valuable and methodologically diverse set of contributions that represents the breadth of the research that is and can be conducted using MAIN. They extend the geographical and linguistic coverage of MAIN, and enrich our understanding of narrative development. We thank the authors for their commitment to adaptation and research. We hope that this volume will inspire further development and use of MAIN in underrepresented languages and communities and foster collaborative efforts toward more inclusive, comparative language research around the globe.[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).