Preface

The authors of this volume came together on June 3rd 2021 in an online pre-conference workshop for the 4th Diversity Linguistics conference, organised by the University of Bremen. The topic of the workshop was “number categories” and we heard ten presentations about it altogether, five of which formed the basis for essays published in this volume.

Number is an essential grammatical category in languages worldwide. The ways in which number is marked on nominals can vary considerably from language to language. They can also change over time and be influenced by contact with other languages. These aspects were central in our talks and discussions and ultimately led to the title of this volume.

In this issue, we explore grammatical number from various angles: Katharina Gayler, Elsadig Omda Ibrahim Elnur and Isabel Compes investigate how number marking can be described in a tonal language: the Wagi dialect of Beria. Deborah Arbes and Alexandre Arkhipov analyse number marking in connection with language contact in two very different languages: Kamas (in contact with Russian) and Welsh (in contact with English). Typological perspectives are taken by Thomas Stolz and Silva Nurmio, who discover co-plurals and singulatives respectively.

Together, the articles of this volume offer a diverse portrait of the possibilities and complexities of number marking. We hope that this volume will not only contribute to our understanding of grammatical number and its categories, but also inspire further research in this area.

As the editor, I would like to thank all the authors who contributed to this volume, as well as the reviewers, who provided valuable feedback. Finally, I would like to thank Julia Nintemann, Nataliya Levkovych, Thomas Stolz and everyone else who has participated in and supported the 4th Diversity Linguistics conference, which provided a fertile ground for stimulating discussions and papers.

Deborah Arbes, Bremen, March 2023