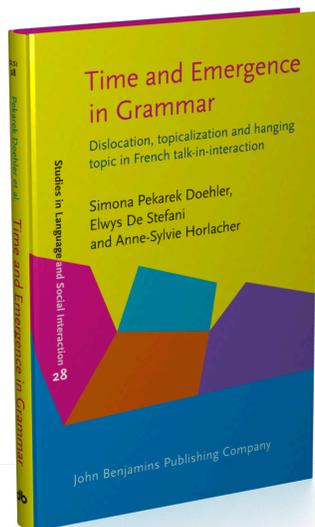


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Time and Emergence in Grammar

Dislocation, topicalization and hanging topic in French talk-in-interaction

Simona Pekarek Doehler, Elwys De Stefani and Anne-Sylvie Horlacher

University of Neuchâtel / KU Leuven / University of Basel

This monograph examines how language contributes to the social coordination of actions in talk-in-interaction. Focusing on a set of frequently used constructions in French (left-dislocation, right-dislocation, topicalization, and hanging topic), the study provides an empirically rich contribution to the understanding of grammar as thoroughly temporal, emergent, and contingent upon its use in social interaction. Based on data from a range of everyday interactions, the authors investigate speakers' use of these constructions as resources for organizing social interaction, showing how speakers continuously adapt, revise, and extend grammatical trajectories in real time in response to local contingencies. The book is designed to be both informative for the specialized scholar and accessible to the graduate student familiar with conversation analysis and/or interactional linguistics.

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“An important and pioneering empirical study of a prominent family of constructions in spoken French (Left-Dislocation, Right-Dislocation, Topicalization, and Hanging Topic) from the point of view of their emergence in natural conversation. The authors contrast the discourse contexts in which each construction appears, revealing the subtle regularities and variations in the speakers' deployment of each form. Adopting the perspective of Emergent Grammar, the authors conclude that syntax, far from being a static, autonomous system, is a flexible and adaptive repertoire whose forms and uses respond to the precise demands of social interaction.”

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“This first comprehensive treatment of right-dislocation, left-dislocation, hanging topics and topicalization in French from a rigorously conversation analytic perspective has one central message: to argue that what seems to be related to information structuring alone serves in fact a multitude of interactional functions.”

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