Complexity in Language

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Throughout history language sciences have been dealing with numerous phenomena that are either inherently complex/dynamic systems, or which display characteristic properties of such systems. Within an individual, one can point to perceptual dynamics and categorisation in speech, the emergence of phonological templates, or word and sentence processing; across society, think variations and typology, the rise of new grammatical constructions, semantic bleaching, language evolution in general, and the spread and competition of both individual expressions, and entire languages.

A handful of language phenomena will be portrayed which exhibit properties well-known in complex systems from other domains of life and science. We will also present the findings from two sociolinguistic projects that used the methodology of social network analysis. One involved exploring the social spread of neologisms in a Twitter-like site, the other investigating the impact of interactions among exchange students on their L_2/L_3 learning outcomes.

Bio:

Michał B. Paradowski is an assistant professor at the Institute of Applied Linguistics, University of Warsaw, a teacher and translator trainer, and an ELT consultant for television, and currently a visiting scholar at the Department of Second Language Studies, Indiana University Bloomington. His interests include issues relating to second and third language acquisition research, cross-linguistic influence, bi- and multilingualism, psycholinguistics, embodied cognition, and complexity science. His recent edited volumes are *Teaching Languages off the Beaten Track* (2014) and *Productive Foreign Language Skills for an Intercultural World* (2015).