

Complexity in Language

Developmental and Evolutionary Perspectives

The question of complexity, as in what makes one language more complex than another, is a long-established topic of debate among linguists. Recently, this issue has been complemented with the view that languages are complex adaptive systems, in which emergence and self-organization play major roles. However, few students of the phenomenon have gone beyond the basic assessment of the number of units and rules in a language (what has been characterized as *bit complexity*) or shown some familiarity with the science of complexity. This book reveals how much can be learned by overcoming these limitations, especially by adopting developmental and evolutionary perspectives.

The contributors include specialists of language acquisition, evolution and ecology, grammaticization, phonology, and modelling, all of whom approach languages as dynamical, emergent, and adaptive complex systems.

SALIKOKO S. MUFWENE is Professor of Linguistics and a member of the Committee on Evolutionary Biology and the Committee on the Conceptual and Historical Studies of Science at the University of Chicago. He is the author of *The Ecology of Language Evolution* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), *Créoles, écologie sociale, évolution linguistique* (2005), and *Language Evolution: Contact, Competition and Change* (2008). He has edited several books, including *Iberian Imperialism and Language Evolution in Latin America* (2014). He is the founding editor of Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact. His research includes the emergence of creoles, the phylogenetic emergence of language, and globalization and language vitality.

CHRISTOPHE COUPÉ is a researcher in cognitive science at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) and the University of Lyon, France. With a background in computer science, cognitive science, and psychology, he has been involved in several multidisciplinary programs focusing on language complexity, language origins, and language change. His contributions have mostly consisted in the design and analyses of databases, and in statistical or computational models of linguistic evolution and diversity. In 2003, he received the Prize of the Young Researcher of the city of Lyon for his Ph.D. dissertation on the origins of language. In addition to other papers on phonological complexity, information rate and functional load, he has co-edited the collective volume *Approaches to Phonological Complexity* (2009).

FRANÇOIS PELLEGRINO is a senior researcher in linguistics and cognitive science at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) and the University of Lyon, France. He has coordinated several projects on language complexity and has been the coordinator of the “Laboratory of Excellence,” Advanced Studies on Language Complexity (ASLAN) since 2011. For more than ten years, his research has focused on the structure and dynamics of phonological systems in the light of the science of complexity and of Shannon’s information theory. He has co-edited the collective volume *Approaches to Phonological Complexity* (2009) and, over the last fifteen years, he has authored or co-authored about 80 journal articles, book chapters or conference papers.

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-107-05437-0 — Complexity in Language
 Edited by Salikoko S. Mufwene, Christophe Coupé, François Pellegrino
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Salikoko S. Mufwene

University of Chicago

Christophe Coupé

University of Lyon

François Pellegrino

University of Lyon



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UNIVERSITY PRESS

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi - 110002, India
79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107054370

DOI: 10.1017/9781107294264

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First published 2017

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Mufwene, Salikoko S., editor. | Pellegrino, François, 1971– editor. | Coupé, Christophe, 1977– editor.

Title: Complexity in language : developmental and evolutionary perspectives / [edited by] Salikoko S. Mufwene, François Pellegrino, Christophe Coupé.

Description: Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge University Press, [2016] |

Series: Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact

Identifiers: LCCN 2016041226 | ISBN 9781107054370

Subjects: LCSH: Complexity (Linguistics) | Discourse analysis. |

Linguistic analysis (Linguistics)

Classification: LCC P128.C664 C65 2016 | DDC 410–dc23 LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2016041226>

ISBN 978-1-107-05437-0 Hardback

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Contributors

- KATRIEN BEULS, AI Laboratory, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
ALBERT BASTARDAS BOADA, Universitat de Barcelona
BART DE BOER, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
CHRISTOPHE COUPÉ, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and
University of Lyon
WILLIAM CROFT, University of New Mexico
BARBARA DAVIS, University of Texas at Austin
LUCÍA LOUREIRO-PORTO, University of the Balearic Islands
MAXI SAN MIGUEL, University of the Balearic Islands and IFISC (CSIC-UIB)
SALIKOKO S. MUFWENE, University of Chicago
FRANÇOIS PELLEGRINO, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and
University of Lyon
P. THOMAS SCHOENEMANN, Indiana University
LUC STEELS, ICREA/Institu de Biologia Evolutiva (UPF-CSIC), Barcelona

Acknowledgments

This book is largely the fruition of the 10-month fellowship that the lead editor Salikoko S. Mufwene enjoyed at the Collegium de Lyon from October 2010 to July 2011. It enabled him to obtain funding from the same institution to co-host, in collaboration with the other two editors and with Jean-Marie Hombert and Egidio Marsico, all at University of Lyon and CNRS, a workshop with the same title as the present book. We express our hearty thanks to the then Collegium's director Alain Peyraube for his interest in the subject matter, for his encouragements and advice during the preparations, and for ultimately making it possible for this book to materialize. We are also deeply indebted to the Collegium's then administrative coordinator Marie-Jeanne Barrier for single-handedly managing the logistics that enabled the Workshop from the time the funding was allocated, through actually coordinating the details of the meeting (for instance, making sure that we had all the equipment and the meals on time), to the bookkeeping details she graciously attended to after the event. We likewise thank the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon for lending us facilities for the Workshop.

We are equally grateful to other participants who underscored the significance of the Workshop but did not submit their papers for publication: William S.-Y. Wang (Joint Research Centre for Language and Human Complexity, Chinese University of Hong Kong), Vittorio Loreto (Sapienza University of Rome) and Francesca Tria (Institute for Scientific Interchange, Turin), Jean-Marie Hombert (CNRS and Université de Lyon), Fermin Moscoso del Prado Martín (then a CNRS fellow at Université de Lyon), and Ramon Ferrer-i-Cancho (Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Spain). Our exchanges would have certainly been less productive without their engaged contributions.

Additionally, Christophe Coupé and François Pellegrino are grateful to the LABEX ASLAN (ANR-10-LABX-0081, French program "Investissements d'Avenir" ANR-11-IDEX-0007) of the University of Lyon and to the Laboratoire Dynamique du Langage (UMR5596) for their support.

Lucía Lureiro Porto and Maxi San Miguel thank Vincent Blondel and IOP Publishing for permission to reproduce Figure 8.5.