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978-1-108-42480-6 — Exploring Linguistic Science
Allison Burkette , William A. Kretzschmar Jr.
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Exploring Linguistic Science

Language Use, Complexity, and Interaction

Exploring Linguistic Science introduces students to the basic principles of complexity theory and then applies these principles to the scientific study of language. It demonstrates how, at every level of linguistic study, we find evidence of language as a complex system. Designed for undergraduate courses in language and linguistics, this essential textbook brings cutting-edge concepts to bear on the traditional components of general introductions to the study of language, such as phonetics, morphology, and grammar. The authors maintain a narrative thread throughout the book of "interaction and emergence," both of which are key terms from the study of complex systems, a new science currently useful in physics, genetics, evolutionary biology, and economics, but also a perfect fit for the humanities. The application of complexity to language highlights the fact that language is an ever-changing, ever-varied product of human behavior.

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For the past ten years I have given a great number of presentations before audiences in many places about complex systems and different aspects of language and linguistics. Those audiences were always receptive, most often enthusiastic, and always full of questions. They have wanted to know how

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the (relatively) new idea of complex systems could help them in their own work. I hope that this book will help some of those people, and many others, understand more fully how complex systems affects their lives and work. And I would like to say thank you for all those questions that motivated me to offer an answer in this book.

WAK

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