

**Der Innsbrucker Linguistische Arbeitskreis (ILAK)  
und das Institut für Anglistik der Philologisch-Kulturwissenschaftlichen Fakultät**

**laden herzlich ein zum**

## **Habilitationsvortrag**

**von**

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## **Complex thinking: a new paradigm in language theory?**

**Dienstag, 29.6.2021, 19:00 Uhr**  
**Hörsaal 6 (Innrain 52d)**

### **Abstract:**

As evidenced by the publications of Esther Thelen and Linda Smith (1994), Diane Larsen-Freeman, Lynne Cameron (2008) etc. and later William Kretzschmar (2015) complexity theory has increased in popularity in linguistics and many publications include complexity in their titles. One crucial question here has to be whether complexity theory is just a metaphor (cf. Larsen-Freeman), an alternative theory (cf. Kretzschmar) or a significant new paradigm in language theory.

A new paradigm will emerge when the preceding dominant research programme has exhausted its problem-solving capacity and is increasingly perceived as problematic. Before we therefore investigate the new paradigm developed by dynamic complexity theory, we will have to analyse the shortcomings of the traditional paradigm with a view to its ability to deal with complexity.

Furthermore, we need to show how complex language theory differs from the traditional paradigm and prove its superior problem-solving capacity. This lecture will focus on the traditional attempts by language science to determine rules, laws and regularities in language and its failure to explain language behaviour in complex dynamic systems.

### **References:**

- Kretzschmar, William, Language and complex systems, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2015  
Lakatos, Imre, The theory of scientific research programs, in: Lakatos and Musgrave, eds., Criticism and the growth of knowledge, CUP, Cambridge, 1970, 91-197  
Larsen-Freeman, Diane, Lynne Cameron, Complex systems and applied linguistics, Oxford Applied Linguistics, Oxford, 2008  
Morin, Edgar, Introduction à la pensée complexe, Seuil, Paris, 2005  
Thelen, Esther, Linda Smith, A dynamic systems approach to the development of cognition and action, MIT Press, Cambridge Mass., 1994