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Discourse Grammar and its applications: Evidence from language disorder and diachrony

Most grammatical models assume that linguistic structure represents a fairly monolithic system of mental and linguistic activity. Some lines of recent research, however, suggest that human cognitive behaviour in general, and linguistic discourse in particular, cannot reasonably be reduced to a single, monolithic system of mental processing but has in fact a dualistic organisation. This talk presents such a dualistic model of grammatical structure and processing, viz. Discourse Grammar (Kaltenböck et al. 2011, Heine et al. 2013), which comprises two distinct components: Sentence Grammar and Thetical Grammar. The talk will also demonstrate the application and explanatory potential of such a framework with the help of two illustrative studies from different linguistic domains: formulaic language in the context of speech disorder, and the diachrony of discourse markers.