

Left and right peripheries in discourse: Theoretical and empirical perspectives across languages

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The goal of this workshop is to investigate the left and right peripheries in spoken and written discourse across languages, focusing on their internal structure from both theoretical and empirical perspectives.

The left and right peripheries of discourse units have received considerable scholarly attention across languages over the past few decades. While peripheries have been largely ignored in traditional, sentence-based accounts of grammar, recent discourse-oriented approaches to grammar – including macrogrammar (Haselow 2017) and Discourse Grammar (Heine et al. 2013) – acknowledge the important role that the left periphery (LP) and the right periphery (RP) play for the structuring of discourse. Research on LP and RP has so far focused on a wide range of topics from both synchronic and diachronic perspectives. For instance, one major issue discussed in the literature has been the question of granularity, i.e. the nature of the unit in relation to which LP and RP can be defined (see, e.g., Degand & Crible 2021), which has been addressed from a variety of perspectives across theoretical frameworks, including text linguistics, conversation analysis, discourse semantics and discourse pragmatics (for an overview, see Fetzer 2018). Moreover, a large number of studies on the peripheries of discourse units across languages have investigated specific linguistic elements occurring in LP and/or RP as well as the various discourse functions that these elements have come to fulfil (see, e.g., Beeching & Detges 2014; Hancil et al. 2015; Van Olmen & Šinkūnienė 2021). With regard to their functions, elements at LP have been hypothesized to have undergone a process of subjectification and thus to be subjective, whereas those at RP have been hypothesized to have undergone a process of intersubjectification and thus to be intersubjective (see Beeching & Detges 2014; Salameh Jiménez et al. 2018). The universality of this hypothesized functional asymmetry between LP and RP has been tested in numerous studies across languages (see, e.g., the contributions in Beeching & Detges 2014; Van Olmen & Šinkūnienė 2021).

There is general agreement among scholars that the peripheries of discourse units can be occupied by a wide range of linguistic categories such as discourse markers, comment clauses, vocatives, question tags or dislocations, which have been subsumed under the terms *extra-clausal constituents* (Kaltenböck et al. 2016) or *pragmatic markers* (Fraser 2009). These peripheral elements have been characterized by a number of formal and functional features, including prosodic non-integration, syntactic non-integration, syntactic optionality, positional mobility, semantic non-restrictiveness, non-truth conditionality and multifunctionality (see, e.g., Brinton 1996: 33–35; Dik 1997: 380–407; Jucker & Ziv 1998: 3). While these formal and functional features are generally considered sufficient for assigning linguistic elements to LP/RP and for distinguishing them from elements belonging to the ‘core’ of discourse units, numerous studies across languages have shown that not all characteristic features apply to all

left-peripheral and right-peripheral elements to the same extent, with some of the features being applicable to a limited number of extra-clausal constituents only.

The wide range of linguistic categories occurring in LP/RP, as well as the considerable amount of variation with regard to their formal and functional characteristics, lead to the assumptions that (i) some linguistic elements occurring in the peripheries are more prototypical members of LP/RP than others, and (ii) the boundary between peripheral elements and elements belonging to the ‘core’ of discourse units is gradient and fuzzy (see also Traugott 2015). One aim of this workshop is to test these assumptions on the basis of empirical data within and across languages.

While the internal structure of LP and RP has been modelled in different ways in various languages such as German (Speyer 2008; Vinckel-Roisin 2015), French (Degand 2014; Detges & Waltereit 2014), Dutch (Van der Wouden & Foolen 2015, 2021) or Japanese (Onodera 2014), the co-occurrence of peripheral elements and their sequencing behaviour within LP and/or RP have received relatively little attention in the literature (see, e.g., Crible & Degand 2021; Fetzer 2014; Haselow 2019; Lohmann & Koops 2016). Therefore, a second aim of this workshop is to provide more insight into the sequential ordering of left-peripheral and right-peripheral elements across languages, as well as into the effects of their sequencing behaviour on the structuring of discourse.

The submissions to this workshop adopt theoretical and/or empirical (i.e. experimental and/or corpus-based) approaches and aim to answer the following research questions:

- How can the notions of LP and RP in discourse be defined and conceptualized?
- According to which formal and functional criteria can linguistic elements occurring in LP and/or RP be classified?
- To what extent can some elements occurring in LP and/or RP be conceptualized as being more prototypical members of LP/RP than others?
- How can the boundary between ‘core’ and ‘periphery’ be defined and conceptualized?
- How are LP and RP structured internally, i.e. which structural slots do LP and RP consist of?
- To what extent does the internal structure of LP and the internal structure of RP differ from one another?
- How can the co-occurrence and sequential ordering of elements in LP and/or RP be conceptualized?
- To what extent is the sequential ordering of elements in LP and/or RP constrained by different factors?

The research questions underlying this workshop are addressed by investigating either one specific language or by comparing several languages, and by taking into consideration possible variation in terms of the internal structure of LP and/or RP across spoken and written discourse as well as across discourse genres.

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