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Marina Dyakonova A phase-based approach to Russian free word order

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In this book a syntactic account of Information Structure encoding is worked out which is based on the Derivation by Phase theory and the cartographic approach to the syntax-pragmatics interface. The analysis is developed on the basis of Information Structure encoding in Russian, a discourse configurational language. The book comprises a thorough description of the Russian data, an overview of previous research on the subject, a new syntactic analysis, and an extension of the proposed approach to other languages.

The analysis put forth in this book is based on the idea that Information Structure is encoded directly in narrow syntax via [Topic] and [Focus] features. These features are checked by feature-matching with the dedicated functional heads, Top° and Foc° , which form part of the phasal Edge, a structural domain relevant for discourse-related information encoding. The main premise of the present study is that the Edge is an integral part of the architecture of both phases, vP and CP. Thus [Topic] and [Focus] features can be checked at the level of vP as well as at the level of CP.

The conclusion reached in the study is that all languages use the vP- and the CP-phase Edges for Information Structure encoding. Crosslinguistic variation stems from the extent to which the Edges are activated as well as from some IS-independent language-specific grammatical properties.

The book will be of interest to researchers working on syntax, the relation between syntax and pragmatics as well as for those interested in crosslinguistic instantiation of Information Structure.

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LOT
Netherlands
Graduate
School of
Linguistics
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