

## A psycholinguistic study of pauses in spontaneous speech: evidence from Russian

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Pauses have been assumed as being meaningful for spoken word processing, forming a coherent speech and helping a listener to interpret casual speech.

The present research is based on The Corpus of Spontaneous Russian (<http://www.narusco.ru/>) that consists of radio interviews and TV talk-shows. Analysis of the fragments of speech between two pauses revealed that three types of pause realization are possible in spontaneous speech: (i) an interpausal fragment contains several semantic-syntactic units; (ii) a semantic-syntactic unit coincides with an interpausal fragment; (iii) a semantic-syntactic unit is broken by a pause.

Around 70% of all pauses analyzed break semantic-syntactic structure of the phrase. Sometimes, the left part of the phrase (before the pause) still includes some features that allow a listener to understand that the phrase is not completed. These are either unfinished syntactic structures (such as prepositions; for example: *об inh(0,199) опыте-е* ‘about (*inhalation*) the experience’) or the intonation (for example, the rising pitch on the word before the pause).

The most interesting from the psycholinguistic point of view are those broken semantic-syntactic units whose left part has neither syntactic, nor melodic features indicating that the phrase is not finished. We are focused on the description of the mechanism used by a listener while processing such units. The methods of psycholinguistic research and prosodic analysis that can be applied for such a study will be discussed in the presentation.

The research is supported by the research grant number 13-06-00374 of the Russian Foundation of Basic Research.