Title: Modeling Pausing Patterns in Adult Narrative Speech

Abstract:
Silent pausing is an integral part of spoken language production. While largely an idiosyncratic speech feature, speakers also use pauses systematically for linguistic reasons. For example, pauses signal the relative strengths of syntactic boundaries (Bailly & Gouvernayre, 2012; Cooper & Paccia-Cooper, 1980; van Donzel, 1999) and the vagaries of topic/information structure (Oliveira, 2002; Swerts & Geluykens, 1994; van Donzel, 1999). The goal of the current study was to characterize the role of these different linguistic factors on pause frequency and duration within-subjects, and then to model the interaction of these factors in spontaneous speech situations. The within-subject approach also allowed for the consideration of individual differences in lung function and working memory capacity on pausing patterns in natural speech-language production. Overall, the study results demonstrate the benefits of a holistic approach to understanding speech pausing.