

When “ähm”, “and” and “hy” sound the same - occurrence and prosodic aspects of  
discourse pragmatic markers in  
in bilingual heritage speakers’ two languages

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Abstract:

“Based on Labrenz et al. 2023, Böttcher & Zellers 2024 this study explores the distributional and prosodic similarities and differences of different particles in discourse. Both lexicalized discourse particles (for English e.g. yeah, so, well) and filler particles (e.g. uh, uhm) share structuring discourse functions. This study looks at different types of particles and investigates their occurrence at the boundary between broader units of discourse, where they are likely to be used in a structuring function to indicate so called frame shifts (Maschler 2009). The data analysis focuses on elements occurring at discourse boundaries in formal and informal narrations by mono- and bilingual speakers from the RUEG corpus in the English, Russian and German data. Since prosody is also an important means in discourse organization (e.g. Tseng 2006), the analysis also includes prosodic aspects of the discourse particles. A variety of elements and their combinations was found at discourse boundaries, including filler particles, discourse markers, tongue clicks and connectors. While filler particles, alone or in combination, are more frequent in formal narrations, discourse markers and connectors are more frequently found in informal narrations. Prosodically, the boundary elements were produced similarly in pitch and duration, but different types also showed finer phonetic differences. Both the choice of particle and their prosodic realization are influenced by the formality of the situation.”

References:

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