Frequency effects and prosodic boundary strength

It has long been recognized that spoken language does not necessarily provide reliable cues to indicate word boundaries in all contexts. Turk (2010) hypothesized that prosodic boundary structure is planned in order to achieve smooth signal redundancy. On this view, speakers manipulate the strength of boundaries between words in order to make the recognition of each word in an utterance equally likely. Prosodic boundary strength is assumed to inversely relate to language redundancy, i.e., the likelihood of recognition on the basis of non-acoustic information. This talk explores the impact of the likelihood of syntactic structure, lexical word frequency and word bigram frequency on the placement and strength of prosodic phrase boundaries in English and sketches a first representation of these effects at the syntax–prosody interface (Bögel 2015).

References: