Does surprisal uniformly affect syllable and pause duration at prosodic boundary juncture?

Surprisal (in terms of predictability) has been observed in a number of recent studies on German (e.g., Ibrahim et al., 2022, Andreeva et al., 2020); however, word predictability has also been suggested to affect pause length (e.g., Goldman-Eisler, 1958). This study explored the question as to whether surprisal exerts a uniform effect on syllable and pause duration at two prosodic boundaries (intermediate or intonational phrase), using radio news data from the DIRNDL corpus. We will report some preliminary results regarding the hypothesis that the effect of surprisal on syllable duration will be stronger without pause than with pause, because pause duration can alleviate the effect of surprisal on syllable duration in the latter case.

References


Goldman-Eisler, F. 1958. The predictability of words in context and the length of pause in speech. Language and Speech, 1, 226-231.