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Speech rate and pauses in male speech of Blagoveshchensk residents

Abstract

The current paper presents the results of an acoustic study of two prosodic components – speech rate (articulation rate) and hesitation pauses. The material of spontaneous monologues was obtained from 5 male subjects, the residents of Blagoveshchensk, representing two age groups – young and middle-aged. Duration measurements were performed on wave forms and dynamic spectrograms in Praat, then descriptive statistics was applied to the obtained data. As a result, it was discovered that all the subjects demonstrated fast articulation rate (11–17 phonemes per second). The factor of age was found to influence the articulation rate, but, unexpectedly, the younger subjects used a slower rate compared to the older subjects. The examination of hesitation pauses duration showed inter-speaker variation – for 2 subjects, empty pauses were longer than filled pauses while for the other two subjects it was the reverse, and for the remaining subject their duration turned out very similar. However, empty pauses generally displayed a longer mean duration than filled pauses.

Keywords: Amur variety of Far-Eastern regiolect, spontaneous speech, duration, articulation rate, hesitation pause

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