Self-interruptions and repetitions in spontaneous dialogues and their speaker-specificity

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Disfluencies, such as self-interruptions and repetitions, provide a window on the speech production and self-repair process. Most knowledge on these disfluency types comes from experimental tasks and monologues [e.g. 1,2]. However, most of everyday speech consists of spontaneous dialogues, a speech style which can be argued to differ markedly from experimentally elicited speech, because it requires more planning and aspects of dialogue management [e.g. 3,4]. In addition, little is known about inter-speaker variation in the production of disfluencies. As a result, theories on speech production and self-repair generally do not include variation. There is thus a gap in knowledge, leading to the following questions: (a) What is the distribution of self-interruptions and repetitions and their characteristics in spontaneous face-to-face dialogues and (b) how speaker-specific are they?

These questions were investigated by annotating interruptions and self-repetitions and several of their characteristics in spontaneous Dutch face-to-face dialogues and analyzing their distributions, which were compared to those obtained in earlier work on other speech styles. Specific distributions for spontaneous speech were found, suggesting that disfluency behavior depends on speech style and allowing for an evaluation of several self-repair models and theories. Moreover, self-interruptions and repetitions showed inter-speaker variation and contained some speaker-specific information.

References
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