

Word-internal pauses in the DoReCo corpus

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In this talk, I will present a cross-linguistic survey of word-internal pauses using data from the DoReCo corpus, a multilingual corpus of spontaneous speech from >50 endangered and lesser studied languages. Two broad categories of word-internal pauses can be distinguished: systematic pauses that align with phonological word boundaries, particularly after prefixes and proclitics in (poly)synthetic word forms, and spontaneous, less systematic pauses that can occur at any morph juncture and even within morphs. Word-internal pauses are sometimes ambiguous with regard to the phonological domains they delineate. The ubiquity of word-internal pauses and the fact that they can disrupt minimal morphological forms suggest a high degree of flexibility in how natural speech is produced, and calls into question the status of pausability as a reliable criterion for wordhood.