

Discourse particles marking speech production difficulties

The paper focuses on a type of discourse particle that signals production difficulties in spontaneous spoken discourse. Hesitation markers of this type, conventionally termed placeholders, mainly have a pronominal origin and serve as a preparatory substitute for a delayed constituent. Based on first-hand data of spoken Russian and Armenian, as well as on earlier reported data (on Samoyedic, Tungusic, Austronesian, East Caucasian languages, *inter alia*), a set of parameters for typological variation of placeholders across languages is suggested, including possible types of syntactic constituents for which placeholders may substitute and constraints on morphological marking placeholders can replicate. Particles of this type are placed among other lexical and grammatical resources that allow the speaker to refer to objects and events for which the speaker fails to retrieve the exact name, or simply finds the exact name to be unnecessary or inappropriate.