

Abstract

This thesis deals with temporal characteristics of tone units in read speeches of professional speakers. The main goal of the research is to follow variability of the articulation rate (AR) within tone units. Thus, the domain where we investigate AR is the tone unit and we also deal with the general articulation rate. Read narrations in Czech in wildlife documentaries represented the studied material. To verify the statistical significance, we used the linear mixed effects model and the ANOVA test.

The results of the measurement of the general average articulation rate within the narrations showed that the values of one speaker were significantly different from those of the other speakers. Interpersonal variability was also proved by the ANOVA tests and intrapersonal variability was also evidenced. The average AR values with regard to linear segmentation proved to be relatively uniform. Statistical verifications did not prove any statistical significance either.

In our analyses of tone units, we investigated whether AR was influenced by the size of tone units in prosodic words, further by the position of the prosodic word in the tone unit, and what were the directions of AR changes inside the unit. Statistical tests were used to verify the significance of the impact of the tone unit size as well as the prosodic word position on the AR.

The analyses of the directions of AR changes of prosodic words within a tone unit indicated the general trend of AR decrease during a tone unit. Significant deceleration manifested itself in the final prosodic word position.

Keywords

Articulation rate, articulation rate variability, tone unit, prosodic word, professional speaker