

# Non-verbal vocalisations in conversational speech

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When we speak we do not only produce and perceive words, i.e. verbal vocalisations, but also many vocalisations with no or an unclear word status. The latter are called here non-verbal vocalisations (NVV). These NVV can be divided into vegetative utterances (e.g. clearing the throat and coughing), affect bursts (e.g. laughter and sighing), interjections (e.g. onomatopoeic utterances), melodic expressions (e.g. humming and whistling), but also fillers (e.g. uh and uhm) and listener signals (e.g. yeah and hm). Though the phonetic forms of NVV can be studied by analysing their productions in isolation their usage in talk-in-interaction reveal a much greater range of forms with presumably a multitude of communicative functions.

In this talk I report on studies of NVV in corpora of conversational speech. A particular interest lies on the phonetic make-up of the most frequent NVV, namely breath noises, tongue clicks, laughing, fillers and listener signals. These NVV can be regularly found in so-called “silent pauses”, especially in preparation phases immediately before articulation. A closer phonetic inspection of these “sounds in silence” together with some suggestions for their annotation underpins the complexity of vocal production in spontaneous dialogues.