
An Investigation of Undergraduate Student's Filler Type in Academic Speaking Presentation

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the types of fillers used by students during academic speaking presentations. This qualitative descriptive study used a case study research design to twenty-one students of Fourth Semester from English Education Department Wiralodra University who presented journal topics in academic speaking courses. The instruments used in this study were observation and interviews. The data shows that the filler used by students is 7 Lexicalized Fillers (well, and then, like, you know, I think, so and ok) 3 Unlexicalized Fillers (uhh, uhm, and a). Lexicalized fillers are more often used by students during academic speaking presentations, appearing 152 times or 39.07% in 3 unlexicalized fillers, while unlexicalized fillers appear 237 times or 60.93%. Observations are used to find out what types of filler often appear during student presentations. From the students' observations, it is found that many participants used fillers during pauses and thought of the next word to say, so that fillers could appear. In addition, the researcher found that the participants often used blank pauses in the middle of the presentation because they diverted the meaning from the presentation. This study suggested the investigation of the filler function in academic speaking presentation for further research.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is one of the most important skills that English students need to develop. Students are required to practice English in everyday life, especially in class. Learning to speak can help students to get used to and become fluent in speaking, so that they can improve their speaking skills, because getting used to speaking will make a big contribution in improving students' ability to speak English, John (2021). This is because by speaking we can find out how students' ability to produce the target language. Talking is expressing even loudly using voice or speech. This means that when someone interacts with other people using language, they want to convey the meaning of something important or something they want to convey to other people.

Speaking a foreign language is not an easy task to do, especially for foreign learners, sometimes people make sounds that are denoted by words. By doing this, they usually make many mistakes and/or mistakes while engaging in conversation, such as speech delays, pauses, restarts, and fillers, but the most common mistakes found are fillers. Fillers are often treated as speech defects, speech disorders, meaningless voices, speech disfluency, Carney (2022). Traditionally, disfluency has been seen as potentially harmful to the comprehension process, with an estimated 6% of words spoken, or to be affected by some form of disfluency (Stasak, 2019). Disfluency can occur when the learner is unprepared

and uses pauses, hesitations, and time fillers to buy time while the learner is thinking about how to speak and produce words to get the message across to the audience.

Most students are tempted to use filler words when they need space and time to think about the next word. Opinions differ on the topic of fillers. Some language experts believe that gap fillers are useful because they help students think more and have conversations with more confidence, but they should not use too many fillers. Fox (2007) argues that the use of filler words is fine if not excessive, as there is no firm rule in court that requires us to use filler words when we are nervous or need time to form our thoughts. The use of fillers is normal, and their use does not reflect a lack of intelligence or education. However, other researchers argue that speakers should not use fillers in their speaking because this shows their weakness.

Based on the previous study, there was Stevani (2018), that this study to find out what fillers are used by students in delivering their academic presentations and function of each filler. Then from Alen (2016), in this study explains how students use fillers in different situations, such as one disturbing conversation situation and one normal conversation. Then the last one from Székely (2019) explains that this study was to determine the effect of Filled pauses uh and um in the context of neural text to speak which is trained on large single speakers in spontaneous conversations.

Due to the large amount of research on fillers, they only focus on certain fillers such as 'uh' and 'um'. Other studies have focused on silent pauses and tongue slips, while less sources of study that discuss the use of fillers is speaking class. Therefore, this study was look at which fillers are most used by students in academic speaking presentation.

Research Question

1. What are the types of filler used by undergraduate student in academic speaking presentation?

Literature Review

Speaking

Speaking is the ability to produce words in language practice, Newton (2020). Speaking is an important skill that must be mastered by students. This is because by speaking we can find out how students' ability to produce the target language. Talking is expressing even loudly using voice or speech. This means that when someone interacts with other people using language, they want to convey the meaning of something important or something they want to convey to other people.

The students must be able to communicate in English fluently, because speaking is very important in a second language. It means talking English is indispensable for practicing a second language and for achieving success in communicating. Mastering English speaking skills is a priority for many second or foreign language learners (Rao, 2019). This means that students have to evaluate their speaking English skills and improve their speaking skills. There are many speaking functions, as mentioned by Biber (2021) there are three speaking functions, that talk as interaction, talk as transaction, and talk as show.

According to Chen (2020), there are five types of speaking activities: "Imitation, intensive, responsive, interactive, and spacious". One continuum of types of speaking performance is the ability to reproduce (imitate) word phrases or possibly sentences. A very limited portion of class speaking time can legitimately be spent producing "human tape recorders," utterances, in which, for example, students practice intonation contours or try to define certain vowel sounds. This kind of imitation is done not for the purpose of meaningful interaction, but to focus attention on some elements of certain language forms.

Intensive speaking goes one step beyond imitative to include any speaking performance designed to exercise some phonological or grammatical aspect of language. Responsive speech is interaction on a

somewhat limited level from very brief conversations, standard greetings and small talk, simple comments and requests, and the like. Interactive speaking, a complex interaction that sometimes includes multiple exchanges and/or multiple participants. The difference between responsive and interactive speaking lies in the lightness and complexity of the interaction. Interactive speaking situations include face-to-face conversations and telephone calls, where we take turns listening and speaking, and where we could ask the other party for clarification, repetition, or a slower speech.

Finally, students at intermediate to advanced levels are asked to provide an extended monologue in the form of an oral report, summary, short speech, or possibly a story, in which opportunities for verbal interaction from either listener are limited (perhaps for nonverbal responses) or ruled out altogether.

Presentation

Presentation is presenting something such as an idea, thought, or suggestion to a group of interacting people or orally. For example, students presenting their material, product sales presentations, presenting teacher lessons and lecturers delivering lectures. According to Mantra (2022), student presentations usually involve individuals or groups of students presenting to academic staff, fellow students or other invited audiences. The process is a presenter transmitting a message to the audience about the topic. So, in a presentation there is a message that the presenter conveys, and the audience gets when they present the topic.

Presentations serve several purposes. According to Koch (2017), there are two purposes of presentation:

The first provide information to audiences who are not familiar with something that were convey. Presentations explain facts and data, so the audience knows what the presenter is talking about. At the end of the presentation, the audience must understand something they did not know and understand before. The second is the goal of a presentation is to influence the audience, emotionally and intellectually. This influence was persuading the audience to do something. These presentations can be found in business presentations and the professional world.

In conclusion, the purpose of the presentation is to provide information and convey the message from the presenter to the audience, especially in paper presentations. So that what is conveyed by the presenter can be well received by the audience.

Filler

According to Lomotey (2021), defines fillers as empty lexical items with uncertain discourse functions, except to fill in conversational gaps. This means that it usually appears to signal indecision or control of the conversation while the speaker is contemplating what to say next. Rajabi (2016) states that filler is an unconscious device that functions as a pause in the middle of a sentence when the speaker collects his thoughts but wants to maintain the listener's attention. Fillers don't add anything to the conversion, they just help the speaker think more and organize his speech.

Fillers can be categorized by terms like um, er, uh, ah. Hlavac (2011) expressed his opinion that fillers are lexically empty items that are most often used to fill speech gaps and signs of hesitation. From this brief explanation, fillers are sounds, words, or phrases that are used to fill in gaps between words when speaking and do not have any meaning in speech so they will not change the contents of the 'deleted' program.

According to Navratilova (2015), fillers are categorized into two types. The first is an unlexicalized Filler, and the second is a Lexicalized Filler. Lexicalized fillers in the form of words or short words phrases, like, well, so, and then, yeah, sort of, you know, ok, I think, if you know what I mean, and so on. On the

other hand, Kharismawan (2017) also stated a similar statement that lexically filled pauses consist of the phrases you know, and I mean which are widely used when the speaker is grouping words but does not want to release claims to the floor. Further, he suggests that one type of filler is like (when not used as a verb or preposition) and good (not in the initial position). Unlexicalized Filled Pause is a pause that does not contain a lexeme (not a word) which is used by the speaker to indicate doubt when the speaker is thinking about what to say in the next speech. In addition, Norrick (2009) also provides several examples of non-lexical pauses, such as uhm, uhh, a, err, ee, ah, um, and so on. The definition of unlexicalized filled pauses is also supported by Kharismawan (2017), he says that ehm, uh, err, ee, ah, um and other vocalizations that are classified as unlexicalized filled pauses are the easiest sounds to make when speaking. Afterwards, he referred to them as "neutral vowel sounds".

METHOD

The method that is used in this study is qualitative to find the types and functions for fillers used in academic speaking presentation. The goal is a picture and depth of understanding rather than numerical data analysis. This study used the case study as an inquiry design found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Cases are limited by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using various data collection procedures over a continuous period.

Respondents

The participants in this study were 21 student 4th semesters of undergraduate English Education Department of Wiralodra University in academic year 2022/2023 that taking academic speaking class. Researchers look for their strategies to fill in the gaps they use when speaking.

Instruments

This research instrument uses observation and interviews. Researchers took two steps in collecting data in this study. First, the researcher made observations by recording student presentations using sound and video recordings. This process makes it easier for researchers to have a clear understanding of the recorded data. After following the presentation, researchers interviewed students to find out the reasons for filling the gaps used by students.

Procedures

Students present the topic of academic speaking in front of the class while the researcher observes them. The researcher records the subject's performance in the class. During the subject's performance, the researcher made field notes to write down some important information based on the appearance.

The interview part was held separately from the observation day. This is because the researcher wants to collect data more specifically. Subjects were interviewed one by one to avoid situations where students feel uncomfortable in formal situations with open questions. This helps the researcher collect various data. This section was recorded with an audio recorder to ensure researchers get the correct data for analysis.

Observations were made with the aim of collecting data from the planned talks. This section is needed to find out whether there are differences in the types of fillers used by students during speaking presentations. The presentation planned here refers to the topic that presented by students in the academic speaking class.

The last interview was conducted after the observation to ask only nine participants as a sample about their fillers during their speak. This helps the researcher to get more information from the students' own thinking.

Data Analysis

For analysing the data, the researcher used a qualitative analysis by coding process with inductive analysis by identifying theme. These techniques to analysing the data in quantitative research are data reduction, data display, and conclusion. In data reduction, the researcher was analysed the sharpened, classifies, directs, discarding unnecessary ones, and organizing data to verify the conclusion. In this stage, the researcher has created summaries and partitions based on the collected data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data were taken from the utterances of students majoring in English Education Department 4th semester in their academic speaking presentations. Filler data is marked in italics for words, phrases, clauses, or even sentences.

In this study there were 21 students who were observed. Analysis is proposed directly after the presentation of the data. Furthermore, Busetto (2020) framework is used to understand the intended meaning of the planned filler.

Types of Fillers

The researcher found many fillers used by the students in the presentation. Several utterances containing lexical fillers were found during in the academic speaking presentation. Therefore, details of the type and frequency of filler appearance can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Types and occurrence of fillers used by student.

No	Types of Fillers	Frequency	Percentage
1	Lexicalized Fillers	152	39,07%
2	Unlexicalized Fillers	237	60,93%
TOTAL		389	100%

Table 1 shows that there are 389 fillers found in academic speaking presentation transcripts of semester 4 students consisting of 152 lexical fillers and 237 unlexicalized fillers. Unlexicalized fillers are mostly found in conversations with 237 out of 389 fillers (60.93%). Meanwhile, lexicalized filler occurred 152 times (39.07%). This finding indicates that students tend to use pause to fill in pauses, hesitate, think, or say the next utterance.

Researchers found that the type of gap most often used by students was filler. In this case, filler means short, meaningless words (or sounds) that are used to fill the small pauses that occur when we decide what to say next. The fillers used by students are 7 lexical fillers and 3 non-lexical fillers.' According to Erten (2014), fillers are discourse markers that speakers use when thinking or having doubts in speaking. Speakers use fillers to fill time while elaborating on the topic or next sentence. These fillers have at least some roles in human communication, although they convey additional meaning to the speaker's utterances, and help interlocutors to understand each other. In this case, the fillers that students use when presenting topics in academic speeches aim to help them fill in the gaps while

thinking about what words or sentences, they will say next.

Lexical Fillers Used by Student in Academic Speaking Presentation

The details of findings regarding the type of lexicalized filler are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Lexicalized Fillers.

Type of Filler	Lexicalized Fillers						
	Well	And then	Like	You know	I think	So	Ok
TOTAL	14	51	7	6	5	42	27
	152						
PERCENTAGE	3.60%	13.11%	1.80%	1.54%	1.29%	10.80%	6.94%
	39.07%						

Lexicalized fillers are fillers in the form of words or phrases. As can be seen in Table 2 there are seven forms of lexical filler words uttered by students in their presentation as much as 152 or 39,07%. The three most frequent lexical fillers are *and then*, *so*, *ok*. The word *is* the dominant lexical filler found in academic presentations of speaking, the filler 'and then' occurs 51 times or 13.11% in student presentation, followed by the filler 'so' 42 times or 10.80%, and the filler 'ok' as much as 27 times or 6.94%. then continued with the use of the next filler which is often used by students during presentations including the 'well' filler 14 times or 3.60%, the 'like' filler as much as 7 times or 1,80%, the 'you know' filler 6 times or 1,54% and the least used is filler 'I think' that is as many as 5 times or 1,29%.

Unlexicalized Fillers used by student in academic speaking presentation

The researcher found many fillers used by the students in the presentation. Several utterances containing unlexicalized fillers were found during in the academic speaking presentation. Therefore, details of the type and frequency of filler appearance can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Unlexicalized Fillers

Type of Filler	Unlexicalized Fillers		
	Uhh	Uhm	a
TOTAL	105	29	103
	237		
PERCENTAGE	26.99%	7.46%	26.48%
	60.93%		

The researcher found many fillers used by the students in the presentation. Several utterances containing unlexicalized fillers were found during in the academic speaking presentation. Therefore, details of the type and frequency of filler appearance.

Unlexicalized fillers are fillers in the form of vowel sounds. As can be seen in Table 3, there were three forms of unlexicalized filler words that were spoken by students in the presentation as much as 237 or 60.93%. the two most common and most frequently occurring unlexicalized fillers are and '*uhh*' and '*a*'. Filler '*uhh*' was used by students during presentations 105 times or 26.99% followed by filler '*a*' which was used by students in presentations 103 times or 26.48%. and the least amount of filler used by students during presentations was '*uhm*' filler as much as 29 times or 7.46%.

The research findings have provided evidence that there are various fillers used by fourth semester

English education department in academic speaking presentations. This finding reinforces the theory put forward by Navratilova (2015) that there are two types of filler produced by students, namely lexical filler and unlexicalized filler. Lexicalized fillers are more often used by students during academic speaking presentations, appearing 152 times or 39.07% in 3 unlexicalized fillers, while unlexicalized fillers appear 237 times or 60.93% in 7 lexical fillers. This finding is in line with the findings of Pamolango (2016), which shows that unlexicalized fillers are used more dominantly than lexical fillers in academic speaking presentation. One of the factors that could lead to the same finding is because students who are considered to have a low level of English proficiency are not very familiar with achieving a relatively broad vocabulary, so they tend to use lexeme words to fill in the blanks in English. in their presentation. This is also reinforced by findings which show that there are 10 forms of lexical and non-lexical fillers identified in this study.

Therefore, un-lexical fillers are mostly used by students, un-lexical filler 'uhh' is the filler that is most often used. The filler 'uhh' occurs 105 times out of 237 un-lexical fillers. These findings support Stevani (2018) in terms of the most used simple fillers. One of the factors that can influence students to use the undefined 'uhh' filler in their utterance is simpler. Students often say this filler by adding small pauses. This suggests that the filler is giving the speaker time to think because he or she seems unsure of what to say next.

This study also shows that all speakers produce fillers in their utterances. Since conversation is "a prototypical form of language use" and "fluent speech is rare" (Huhta, 2019), the use of fillers is common. Using certain fillers is very natural for native and non-native English speakers alike. As supported by Stevani (2018), it is almost impossible to find speakers who do not use fillers at all when speaking even among native speakers. This is also confirmed by Pamolango (2016), that not only students from Asia as non-native speakers produce more filler, but also foreign language students who use English as their first language (native speakers). Furthermore, Pamolango claims that the more difficult the language we use, the more filler it produces. This is natural for speakers because sometimes they need to think or feel uncomfortable with what they want to say. In this case, filler proves its function as a communication strategy to help voices speak naturally and be useful in interactions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, this section aims to answer the research questions. First, from the research question, "What are the types of filler used by undergraduate student in academic speaking presentation?" Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that:

This study investigates the types of Lexicalized Fillers and Unlexicalized fillers used by students in academic speaking presentations. It was found that both types of fillers were used by students in their presentations. Responding to the first research question, the writer found that students used fillers in their utterances. The fillers found based on the theory from Navratilova (2015) are lexicalized fillers and unlexicalized fillers, also found in students' utterances. Lexical fillers were used 152 times or 39.07% in their presentations, while non-lexical fillers were used 237 times or 60.93% in their presentations. From this it is very clear that unlexicalized fillers are used more than lexical fillers when students deliver academic speaking. The type of filler that is most often occur in academic speaking presentations is the filler 'and then' in lexical fillers and the filler 'uhh' in unlexicalized fillers. There are various kinds of fillers that presenters use when delivering their presentations. From one speaker to another, most students said different fillers. Most presenters use non-lexical fillers at the beginning, middle, or even at the end of the presentation. Sometimes, they say it several times followed by a pause of a few seconds.

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