IDENTIFYING THE USED OF FILERS IN SPEAKING FLUENCY OF ASIAN NOVICE TEACHERS

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Abstract

Speaking skill is a skill that must be possessed by everyone, especially for a teacher. However, for a novice teacher who is teaching, speaking fluently in front of the class for the first time it is certainly not easy. Then, not infrequently in conveying material, they often use fillers. The purpose of this descriptive qualitative research is to investigate the used of fillers in speaking fluency, especially for novice teachers in Asia. Class observation is chosen in this study to find out the concrete data. Researchers use Brown and Abeywickrama's (2010) theory as to classification of the level of fluency in speaking. This research was conducted at one of the state universities in Indonesia. As a result, the level of fluency which was followed by 16 novice teachers in Asia was classified as good with a presentation of 48.6%. In addition, the researcher also found that the use of filers showed the number 1,215 consisting of 12 fillers words. However, this percentage of numbers shows that the novice teachers are strongly advised to reduce the use of these fillers.

Keywords: *fillers, novice teachers, speaking fluency*

Introduction

The unfinished Covid-19 pandemic certainly has a significant impact on the education sector. The online system has certainly been extended to minimize the spread of Covid-19. Changes to the online-based education system have occurred in almost all countries affected by the Covid-19 pandemic (Adnan & Anwar, 2020). The Covidd-19 pandemic, which is a global problem, makes the entire system must try to survive amid the increasingly widespread pandemic.

Talking about covid-19, Indonesia is one of the countries in Asia with a fairly high case of the Covid-19 pandemic and it's increasingly every day. This is evidenced by the number of cases of 1,753,101 on Wednesday, 19 March 2021 and it will increase again and again. In Indonesia, the online-based education system is something new and still has many shortcomings in its execution. Online system problems are experienced by educators, students to educational institutions (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020). In other words, they must be able to adapt quickly to tackle more serious educational problems (Khusna & Khoiruddin, 2020). Online learning systems are also experienced by those who learn a second language (L2).

The online situation due to Covid-19 has made all teaching and learning activities change drastically. This includes novice teachers in Asia, especially Indonesia. Novice teachers are those who have graduated from the teaching academy and are already skilled at teaching (Storm, 1989). In other words, they are facilitators for all their students (Indriani, 2017). Online learning

certainly makes a significant difference for novice teachers. When presentations are done online they have to increase the performance of their speaking skills. Sometimes they use fillers while presenting in teaching and learning activities.

Fillers is one type of language that is often used by humans when they are communicating (Jeong, Lee, & Kang, 2019). In other words, fillers are short utterances that often appear and are often spoken spontaneously (Brennan & Williams, 1995; Swerts, 1998). The words 'uh' and 'um' are the two most frequently used fillers when someone is talking (Strassel, 2004). In verbal communication, a filled pause can be hinted at as a sign of unconscious speech, it can also serve as a signal sent by the speaker to convey a certain message (Laserna, Seih, & Pennebaker, 2014)). The messages using these fillers can be in the form of telling the listener that the speaker needs to pause to think so that the speaker can continue the conversation (Fox Tree, 2007).

However, excessive use of fillers is certainly an indication of someone's less than perfect fluency. Speaking fluency is an important dimension of communicative language teaching (Yang, 2014). Speaking fluency in English is the goal of many people as a foreign language (EFL) especially those who are studying English in the field of education (Muller at all, 2014).

This study was intended to investigate the use of fillers in novice teachers. The quantity in question is the use of the fillers in speaking fluently to novice teachers. This research is aimed at novice teachers in the Methodology in Teaching English as

Foreign Language class at the state university, Indonesia. This research was conducted to answer two questions, they are; 1. How the used of fillers influence the speaking fluency? 2. What types of fillers do novice teachers use during teaching and learning presentations?

The influence of using fillers in fluency in speaking by novice teachers makes this research necessary. This is because in previous studies only focused on offline classes. However, the current situation making an education system with an online system is a challenge for novice teachers to practice in a different system than before. This certainly has a very significant difference in delivering learning material. Therefore, fluency in speaking is really needed when the teacher is delivering learning material in online classes.

Research with a focus on examining the use of fillers has been carried out by Suparti, et al. (2018) entitled "AN ANALYSIS OF FILLERS USAGE IN ACADEMIC PRESENTATION". Descriptive qualitative were used in this research. The research data were taken from the Corpus class at Tanjungpura University. In this study, the researcher processed the data by manually sorting by separating the filler from other words. The results showed that there were 12 fillers used by the students during the presentation. Of the 12 fillers, the filler "Ehm" is filler was most often used by students who appeared 689 times. Meanwhile, "correct" and "how to say" are the least used. In this research, fillers also provide several functions from the use of filers, such as providing opportunities for speakers thinking, to restate or improve what

the speaker has or will say, to start a presentation or speaking, to confirm the listener's conclusion, and to emphasize the main points of the reading.

Furthermore, the research conducted by Bördlein and Sander (2020), entitled Habit Reversal to Decrease Filled Pauses in Public Speaking: A Partial Replication was created due to related concerns. Many students have difficulty speaking in public which makes them use too many pauses to fill in (such as "um", "like", etc.). This research aims to replicate this research as a student project. The method used is to examine four social work program students. The training phase and the number of sessions were shortened compared to the original study. As the results, the mean number of responses (full breaks) per minute decreased during the study and during follow-up measures. From this research it can be concluded that the use of many pauses filled in can affect speaking fluency. Especially, when someone is speaking in public or making a presentation. As the result, it is very important to reduce the use of the filled gap. With the result that, it does not interfere with or affect the fluency of one's speech.

Method

In this study, a qualitative research method is used to find out the best result. The qualitative method was chosen because this study was related to how the influence of the fillers used by novice teachers while practicing teaching. Jackson, at al. (2007), highlight that The methodology suggests how to answer

or investigate what problems are worth investigating, how to frame the problem so that it can be explored so that it gets an answer, how to develop appropriate data generation, and how to make logical connections between problems and answers, the resulting data, analysis, and conclusions so that they become unity that is the answer to a problem. Qualitative research is a type of research that seeks to understand or answer a natural phenomenon and then describe it using explanations so that it is easy to understand (Silverman, 2020).

Subsequently, the researchers use observation as a research instrument. The observation technique was chosen because this study aimed to find out the influence and the type of fillers on the novice teachers while practicing in class. Observation is a systematic observation or an activity of observing an object carefully and directly at the research location, and also systematically recording the phenomenon under study (Moon, 2018).

Meanwhile, for the assessment of speaking fluency, the researchers used Brown and Abeywickrama's (2010) theory regarding Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices. In their book, they divide the classification of speaking fluency by dividing it into four clusters, namely; Excellent, good, bad and very bad. In this classification, the researcher adapts it by making the object of speaking fluency the effect of using fillers on novice teachers. The frequency table is as follows:

No	Classification	Frequency (f)
1.	Excellent	0% - 25%
2.	Good	>25% - 50%
3.	Bad	>50% - 75%
4.	Very bad	>75% - 100%

Information:

1. Excellent (0%-25%)

   Excellent (0% -25%) This category is a category where the speaker can minimize the use of fillers, so that it does not disturb on speaking fluency while presenting.

2. Good (>25% - 50%)

   Good (> 25% - 50%) good category is given if the fillers only give a little effect on the speaker. this is because the speaker uses quite a lot of fillers but has not disturb the overall fluency of the speaker.

3. Bad (>50% - 75%)

   This category is the level of the previous category. This condition is where the use of fillers is very much than the previous category. Therefore, fillers can disturb on fluency in speaking, and then reducing the use of filers is needed by the speaker so as not to disturb the listener's concentration and interfere with the speaker's fluency.

4. Very bad (>75% - 100%)

   The last category is very bad. This category is assigned when the speaker is speaking using too many types of filler during the given time to speak. This has had a profound disturb on

the fluency in speech and has greatly disturbed the listener in listening to the on going discussion. Therefore, improvement in speaking is very necessary so that the use of fillers can be reduced. The use of a lot of filers can reduce the integrity of the speaker when speaking, especially when doing presentations or speaking in public.

This formula is used to find out the results of the summation related to the influence of the fillers. The formula details as follows:

Total fillers used:

$$f_i = \frac{\Sigma_{fi}}{t} \text{x } 100\%$$

Information:

fi = Subtotal of fillers

fx = Total fillers affected

$\sum fi$ = Thenumber of subtotal of the fillers

t = Time

The following is an explanation of the allocation of research time and research samples:

1. Time: This research was conducted by researchers in 2021.

2. Sample: researchers took samples from the students in Methodology class in TEFL, in one of the state university in Indonesia.

Discussion

In this study, the researchers found there are 1,215 fillers used in presentations by 16 students with the duration of 25 minutes. The types of fillers found were 1,092 simple words, 86 phrases and 37 clauses. There are 12 types of fillers found in observations of novice teachers when doing teaching practice in the classroom. The types of fillers found are *okay, right, so, actually, like, something like, then, well, I mean, yeah,* and *then.*As details are in the table below:

Table 1: The data of fillers used

No	Fillers	Frequency (number)	Percentage (%)
1.	Ehm	289	24
2.	Okay	187	16
3.	Right	168	14
4.	So	114	10
5.	Actually	79	7
6.	Like	76	6
7.	Something like	67	6
8.	Then	64	5
9.	Well	58	5
10.	I mean	37	3
11.	Yeah	27	2
12.	And then	19	2
	TOTAL	1.215	100

Based on the data from table 1, it shows that the use of filler "ehm" ranks first with the number of 289. This can be concluded that the fillers "ehm" are the fillers that are very commonly used

by novice teachers. Then, the word "okay" with 187 used during the novice teacher presentations in the classroom. In addition, fillers "right" ranks third in terms of usage by 14% or equivalent to 168. Then, the fillers with the least percentage use were the word "and then" with 19 times out in presentations conducted by novice teachers.

Subsequently, the researcher also found and classified the types of fillers into three categories simple words, phrases and clauses. The words e*hm, okay, right, so, actually, like, then, well* and *yeah* are simple types of fillers. Then the words *something like* and also *and then* are types of phrase fillers. Last, is a clause with the used of the word *I mean*.As details are in the table below:

Table 2: They types of fillers used

No	Types of fillers	Frequency	Percentage (%
1.	Simple words	1.092	90
2.	Phrase	86	7
3.	Clause	37	3

The used of fillers in presentations by novice teachers can be categorized as good. The results showed that the use of fillers was 48.6%. Good category is given if the fillers only give a little effect on the speaker. This is because the speaker uses quite a lot of fillers but has not disturbed the overall fluency of the speaker. However, the percentage of figures with a total of 48.6% shows that the use of fillers during the presentation can interfere with the concentration of the listener and can interfere with the fluency of the novice teacher in other words, reducing the use

of fillers is needed so that the presentation is better and shows that the novice teacher has good speaking skills. As a detailed calculation of the fillers can be seen below:

Total fillers used:

$$f_i = \frac{\Sigma_{fi}}{t} \text{x } 100\%$$

$$f_i = \frac{1.215}{25} \text{ x } 100\%$$

$$f_i = 48,6\% \text{ (GOOD)}$$

Furthermore, the scattered findings of fillers can be seen through the conversational transcripts and presentations of the novice teacher in the classroom. The researcher uses the symbols NT 1, NT2, NT3 ... etc. to make it easier to mention the novice teachers. Then, the researcher will also use the pseudonym to protect the identity of the student and the novice teacher. The use of fillers is used to open a conversation by the beginner teacher. There are fiver fillers words that are used by the novice teacher to initiate a conversation that is *ehm, okey right* and *well*. It's used can be seen as follows:

NT1 : **Ehmm**, today we are going to discuss something and I am sure that you have heard before.

NT3 : **Ehmm...okey...**good thank you for your answer.

NT4 : **Okey...right...**we will move to the Padlet first.

NT5 : **Well,** can one of you read this paragraph for us?

Then, the use of filers also functions as a pointer to the main points in an explanation made by the novice teacher. The used of the simple word *like,* the clause *I mean* and the phrase

something like to explain the main point makes these words also appear frequently in conversation. The examples of its use can be seen in the following discussion:

NT6 :   Narrative text is the type of text that tells about old stories. **I mean** like historical story, fairy tale, legend etc.

NT8 :   Have you ever heard about report text?..No?..It is **something like** you read about the reporting something about information **like** announce something…

NT13 : Miss Aliyah (pseudonym) ehmm, would you like to give your opinion about online learning? **Like** do you agree or not.

NT16   Ehmm, yeah that's right, **like** what I have told you before…

Besides, fillers are also used to pause so the brand can think about what they are going to say next. The fillers are in the form of *ehm, something like, and, then, and, actually* and *like.* It can be seen bellow:

NT9   Well, **actually** when we talk about opinion, we are talking about what in your mind.

NT10   **Ehmm**, before we start our lesson today, **ehmm,** please one of you lead the prayer.

NT12   Okey, **then**, the language feature can be seen in this slide **like,ehmm**present tense, **ehm**, **like,,** see, **then**.. come, **ehm, and** go.

NT14   **Ehm**, please MrYulianto (pseudonym) please explain your answer for us, I think you have, **ehm**, something different in your answer.

NT15   Descriptive text is to describe and reveal or describe the characteristics of people, objects, animals, places and others. **Actually**, it's **something like** you describe something.

The use of fillers can also be in the form of a conjunction before saying something like a compliment or combining different sentences or words. The fillers *and then,so* and *yeah* are found in the presentation of beginner teachers in doing presentations. As an example can be seen in the conversation below:

NT2   **Yeah**, good… good answer, thank you

NT7   Okey, all of you have done right? **So**, can you explain your answer that you have written in the Padlet?

NT9   When we make an orange juice you need an orange first, **and then**, ehm..**andthen** put it together with….

NT11   **Yeah**, you are right… the answer in second paragraph in the 4th line.

Based on the examples above, it shows that fillers have several functions. The use of controllable fillers makes the speaker have good speaking skills. In this case, the use of fillers can have a different function when the novice teacher makes a presentation. Fillers can be used as conjunctions, pauses for thinking up to the opening word or the achievement of a point in a sentence uttered by the novice teacher.

Speaking fluency

Speaking skill is a skill that every person with a particular profession must have. The fluency in speaking is a person's expertise in conveying messages by choosing the right diction and saying the meaning clearly so that the listener can understand the message easily (Karimy & Pishkar, 2017). On the other hand, for a teacher, the ability to speak proficiency is a vital thing that must be mastered, so that every material presented can be

understood by the student. The choice of diction in each sentence that is spoken also shows that the teacher has the competence in delivering learning material. It is not uncommon for teachers who do not have good speaking skills to be easily seen with their frequent use of fillers. However, the indicator of teachers who do not have the ability to speak is not only seen from the use of fillers. The indicator can be in the form of inaccurate selection of diction so that it can result in student confusion in understanding the material (Nasution & Nasution, 2019).

The speaking fluency in English for non-native speakers is certainly not easy. Limited vocabulary mastery makes speaking English a challenge in itself. On the other hand, for a novice teacher who teaches English, of course, these conditions are not easy. They are required to convey the material clearly with relatively moderate language skills. As a solution, they must look for alternative diction to explain the material easily so that the material presented will be easier to understand. Unfortunately, in choosing diction during the presentation of the material, they often use fillers as a pause to think about what they will say next (Stevani, Sudarsono, & Supardi, 2018).

The importance of fluency in speaking for a teacher makes increasing speaking skills is deemed necessary. It is intended that when the teacher is teaching, especially novice teachers who have minimal experience can teach well. As a result, the material being taught can be accepted and understood by students. Sari and Lestari (2019) outline steps to improve speaking skills.

1. Increasing vocabulary, mastery of a lot of vocabulary certainly

makes it easy for the speaker to choose the right diction to convey the material. This will certainly make it easier for the listener to understand the context of the conversation easily.

2. Speak at a volume that is easy to hear, when someone is talking, especially a teacher, it is highly recommended to speak at a volume that is easy to hear so that students hear what the teacher is talking about. This also aims to prevent the teacher from repeating the conversation, so that the teacher does not need to spend time talking about the same thing.

3. Speaking practice regularly, speaking practice is also highly recommended so that a teacher is familiar with the situation at hand. In addition, practicing speaking will also allow the teacher to improve fluency in speaking.

Fillers

Erten (2014) underlines that fillers are the marker language used by speakers at the moment they think or hesitate while talking or explaining something. In other words, filers are used by the speaker to pass the time while the speaker is explaining the next topic or sentence. In addition, Santos et al (2016) define fillers as a sign of pause or hesitation that usually occurs and indicates someone is thinking about what they will say next. The use of filers can be said to be the norm if the climates that are said do not contain too many fillers. This will certainly influence someone in understanding the content of the sentence being discussed.

Fillers can be classified into several types. Difference in filler is based on construction he said. Simple words, phrases, and clauses are a kind of filler. Simple word fillers consist of only one word, such as um, like, well, yeah and others. A phrase filler is a group of words without a subject or verb, such as; by the way, and then and how to say. The next clause filler is a group of words that have a subject and predicate, for example, such as; I mean and you know.

In addition, fillers can also be classified based on their function of use. Castro (2009) explains that the function of discourse markers in a textual context can be used as: (a) an opening marker, the speaker is used by the speaker to start a speech or to explain a speech. (b) an indicator point/ information indicator, a filler can also be used by the speaker to show or emphasize the main points of a conversation. (c) fill the time, filler can also be used by speakers to fill the time in conversation. In this case, the speaker uses the filler to think what sentence or word next to say. (d) last, correction marker, filler is used by the speaker to correct the speech when the speaker says the wrong word.

Mancuso (2014), underlines that the used of many types of filler would affect the speaking fluency. Therefore, reducing the use of fillers is needed. Here are some ways that can be used to reduce the use of fillers:

1. Often practice speaking, thus someone will learn to control what they say. In addition, with a lot of practice speaking can also improve the vocabulary of the speaker.

2. Practice and think about what to talk about before starting the speech. This will get the speaker ready about what he is going to explain or discuss.

3. Study the material before starting to make a speech, studying the material that will be brought will certainly increase understanding of the material. This is also anticipation about unpredictable situations, such as questions or other responses. As a result, the speaker will be more prepared with the material he will talk about.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research data that have been described, it can be concluded that the use of fillers is not too dominant. In other words, the fluency of the novice teacher is in the good category. With a presentation of 48.6% put the fluency category in the middle position. However, it is highly recommended for novice teachers to be able to reduce the use of fillers while presenting the material being taught. This figure is a vulnerable number if the novice teacher cannot reduce the use of fillers, it can have an impact on speaking fluency to the novice teacher himself. The research also shows that there are 12 fillers and 3 types of fillers found. There are nine simple tenses such as *ehm, okay, right, so, actually, like, then, well* and *yeah*. Then one clause form *I mean* and two phrases *somethinglike* and also *andthen*.

Based on this research, the researcher hopes that all novice teachers can reduce the use of fillers when making

presentations in class. This is because the used of many type fillers shows that the teacher is not prepared enough to deliver a presentation. In addition, the dominance of the use of fillers also shows that the novice teacher also lacks good speaking skills. With the result that, it can make the beginner teacher less appreciated by the listener. In addition, the ability to reduce the use of fillers can also increase the listeners' appreciation of what is being discussed.

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