

Exploring the Use of Fillers in English Language Classrooms

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Abstract

This study attempts to investigate the use and types of fillers by the English language teachers in local classrooms. Various studies have validated the importance of using fillers in second language contexts. Hence, this research will be significant to view the use of fillers in English language classrooms. This research is binary in nature. Firstly, Participants of the research were the 20 randomly selected English language teachers from various five different universities of Lahore. Then, data was collected through the recordings of the teachers. A total of 20 lectures of forty-five minutes each were taken from these teachers. Further, Qualitative approach was chosen for data analysis. The analysis of data presented that these English language teachers used a high ratio of fillers in their classroom teaching. It was also explored that both lexical and non-lexical fillers were part of their spoken discourse. At the second stage five open-ended questions were also asked by the 20 teachers to gather their opinion regarding the use of fillers in the lectures. Teachers opinioned that fillers are integral part of their second language, and it has positive effect on learners.

Keywords: *Spoken Discourse, Fillers, English Language Classrooms, Teachers, Pakistan*

1. Introduction

Language is a rich phenomenon. It is comprised of symbols that paved ways for expression and communication. Ali et al., (2021) says that language is the most powerful tool for communication. It is important to view that how humans use language and for this purpose one studies discourse analysis. It is said that (discourse analysis) DA is a field of exploration made out of different heterogeneous ways to deal with the investigation of connections between language-being used and the social world. In other words, Discourse analysis is a branch of linguistics that primarily studies the use of language. Language is typically viewed as a social practice that influences the social world by field researchers. Here main interest is the study of the form and function of spoken and written language. Discourse analysis also focuses on the recognition of linguistic features of different genres that are central to the interpretation and perception of language related to social and cultural aspects. All these features are helpful for making cohesion and coherence in the text.

Coherence and cohesion; a piece of discourse needs to have a certain structure, which is based on very different factors than what a single sentence need. The manner in which sentences connect up with one another to frame talk is attachment. The items are hanged together because of cohesion. Union happens because of the mix of lexical and syntactic designs. It ought to be viewed as regarding the two essential elements of etymological association - paradigmatic and syntagmatic. By doing so, the principles of linguistic description are meaningfully extended beyond the sentence. Discourse structure can be studied in two ways: paradigmatically, by tracing the relationship between the constituent linguistic elements along the axis of equivalence, and syntagmatically, by tracing the relationship between the linguistic elements along the axis of combination. In the first scenario, pronouns and other pro-forms are recognized as cohesive constructs; in the second scenario, the primary characteristics of cohesion emerge in the form of sentence connectors and thematic arrangements of sentence constituents.

Halliday refers to cohesion through grammar and cohesion through lexis as cohesion through combination and cohesion through equivalence. He discusses subordination, coordination, pronouns, and other grammar concepts. He also deals with item repetition or occurrence within the same lexical set in the lexical scheme.

One can gain some insight into how speakers structure what they want to say by analyzing the cohesive links that are present throughout a discourse. Recurrence, the use of preforms, connectors, thematic arrangements, and other methods are just a few of the many tools used to achieve cohesion.

The field of cohesion, which is connections between sentences and other words, is not enough to help us understand what we read and hear. It is not difficult to produce a piece of discourse that is extremely cohesive and has numerous connections between the sentences, but it is still difficult to interpret. People are the ones who interpret what they read and hear. They try to come up with an interpretation that fits their experience of the world. Therefore, coherence refers to the "connectedness" that people experience when interpreting what they hear or read.

Coherence is concerned with the connectivity of underlying content, whereas cohesion is concerned with connectivity of the surface. In other words, coherence is related to the mutual accessibility and relevance of the surface-level concepts and relationships. Taking into account the underlying phenomena, a reader or listener would need to make meaningful connections that are not always conveyed by the words and sentences.

It is interesting to mention that despite getting fluency in spoken discourse particularly in English language, there are situations where the speaker sometimes stops for some instance. This gap can be due to several reasons like thinking about appropriate word, lack of appropriate vocabulary or hesitation to utter any specific word. Whatever the cause is, this situation is there for native and non-native speakers of English. Moreover, In ESL situations, there are a lot of instances where one needs to add up words which are from mother tongue. This phenomenon is called as code mixing (Ali, Ranjha, & Jillani, 2019). But apart from that there are some other instances where words are used which are considered assign or marker of hesitation. These are called as fillers. So being the researchers the core aim is to find out the ratio of fillers in ESL situations and to explore how and where teachers used them during their lectures.

1.1 Fillers

Can be taken as discourse markers when the speaker wants to have time for thinking or he/ she is hesitant (Erten, 2014)

It has been viewed that even native speakers sometimes struggle to express themselves properly when speaking. Kaivanpanah et al., (2012) stated that the worse the speaker, the greater the communication problems. Dornyei and Scott (1997) viewed that this problem occurs when linguistic competence and communicative intent do not match. To fill this gap, we use various communication strategies. One of these strategies is the use of language fillers. There are words like “well” “you know” “em” “ehm” “I mean” “kind of” and several other identical expressions. Fox, 2010, Baawelllen (2001) and Rose (1998) all termed them as fillers. They were of the view that these phrases or words can come up anytime in the utterances as they are not planned and can easily be deleted from any spoken discourse as they do not alter the content of speech.

Fillers can be divided into two subcategories.

Lexical and non-lexical fillers. Being lexical means that they are actual words. For example, in this case the lexical filler looks like the latter two. The others known as non-lexical, are just sounds, and are often called filled poses. Yule (2014) stated that these words and utterances are often viewed as undesirable, but they are common to all conversations and that they are "one of the things that make conversations work." department". That is, they have their own, distinct, and necessary strategic functions. Different types of linguistic fillers are found in many languages around the world, although the lexical items, phrases, and utterances used as linguistic fillers vary from language to language. Sign language even has linguistic fillers. Johnson (2016) said that this shows how common and fundamental sign language is in communication.

The term "speech disfluency" encompasses linguistic fillers, also known as discourse markers. Disfluency in speech includes:

Linguistic fillers and false starts

Fixed expressions

Premature moves are sentences that are cut off, though fixed expressions allude to a

speaker's self-rectification milliseconds after a mistake or an error. Even though it gets a bad rap, many experts believe speech disfluency is normal and doesn't necessarily mean you should change it, despite what the media says.

The sort of discourse disfluency that gets the most terrible press are phonetic fillers. During speech, we use utterances like these that have no particular meaning. They are much of the time seen as not filling a specific need and are in many cases considered to be an indication of distractedness or anxiety.

These verbal stops have many names and come in many structures. Filler words, verbal pauses, linguistic fillers, discourse markers—the list goes on and on. Anything you desire to call them, they are a piece of ordinary discourse and show up in each language, including American gesture-based communication.

1.1.1 Reason of using Fillers

These seemingly pointless utterances are used for a variety of reasons. Linguistic fillers are often thought to be pointless, but they can be useful for many things. Therefore, why do people employ linguistic fillers? Sociolinguists claim that filler words serve six purposes:

i. Permit thought

Our brain has a chance to catch up with our speech and decide what to say next during these pauses, such as "um" or "eh." This does not necessarily mean that speech is bad. If anything, it is a sign that the speaker is speaking with more thought and is not just muttering words without thinking about them.

ii. Allow politeness in the Speech

With pauses or filler words, our statements are perceived as more polite. What we say will probably be less offensive if we speak less directly. You might take offense, for instance, if you ask a friend what they think of your new sweatshirt and they respond, "I don't like it." However, if they say, "Um, it's just... I'm not sure I like it," you already know that they are being honest and trying not to upset you.

iii. Work as a Support to Talk on Sensitive Topic

Phonetic fillers assume a comparable part while looking at something that may be delicate. Rather than asking, "Are you seeing a therapist?" It's possible that asking, "So, do you, like, see a therapist or...?" will be more socially acceptable.

iv. Focus on what we'll Say Next

In a dialect known as "valley speak," this kind of filler is frequently used casually. In this way the filler, "like" is the most common way to emphasize something. "I think this building is, like, beautiful," for instance.

v. Shares the Nuances of one's Behavior or Emotion

A person who says, "I'm feeling good about this exam" shows that they are optimistic about their results. Nonetheless, in the statement, "I'm feeling, you know, similar to, great about this test" there is something else entirely. This overtone suggests a lack of self-assurance.

vi. Reflecting Uncertainty

Filler words can provide the listener with an explanation of a statement without the spoken caveat if we are estimating i.e., if a research paper has 53 pages the usual utterance would be i.e., There are like more than 50 pages in this research paper.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The exploration of new ways of rapid information has elevated the importance of communication. Therefore, the value of fluency has gained a lot of important. Viewing the second language situations, this situation is identical. But as English is the lingua franca of the world, so it becomes more important in native and non-native language situations. Although sometimes it happens that during spoken discourse there are certain instances where the speaker uses certain words which fills the gap or covers up the pause in his/her speech. As mentioned earlier, these are called as fillers. Knowing the presence and utility of fillers it is pivotal to explore how much presence do fillers have in ESL teaching? And ESL teachers who are teaching English language content during their lectures since sometimes are using fillers or not?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study will be significant as it will open up a new channel of understanding regarding the use of fillers in ESL situations. This study will also be important to give an insight the situations of regular ESL speakers in connection with using fillers. This study will also convey a message that if ESL teachers who are fluent enough in their English language speaking using fillers, it means that lack of fluency is not the issue to utilize fillers in their spoken discourse. Finally, this study will be pivotal to the future researcher to know that how many different types of fillers are uses as it shows the cognitive choice of an individual speaker.

1.3.1 Objectives

There are some objectives set for the study:

To look for the frequency of fillers in English language classrooms

To investigate the reason of using fillers

2. Literature Review

2.1 Acquisition of Language and Learning

First, it should be noted that there are many ways to develop your own language.

Second Language Proficiency and Knowledge and Krashen (1982) classify these as:

Two ways: acquisition and learning. The difference between the two is that you are gaining seconds Language refers to autonomous and unconscious learning, whereas learning conscious process. Since this is research in the first place, it is important to distinguish between these two Focuses on learning and aims to raise awareness of how to integrate language fillers EFL classroom. As already mentioned, the use of language fillers as a communication strategy is usually not explicitly taught (Erten, 2013) but they learn these skills instead. However, it is difficult to acquire related to language level. As you become more capable, your ability to do so increases Recognize and reproduce more complex skills (Krashen, 1982).

2.2 Language Acquisition Stages

O'Malley & Chamot (1995) present a theory of second language acquisition. Learning based on the work of Anderson (2005). The theory is Acquisition of a second language takes place in his three stages; the last stage being related to language. The process of mastering something as complex as using language filler words. skills at these levels. Acquisition is a cognitive, associative, and autonomous stage. What is the cognitive stage. By observing a specific task, learners are instructed on how to complete a specific task. by experts doing the same job, or by studying and trying to understand it yourself. At this stage when the learner is skilled enough to explain what they have learned and how communicates in a given language but lacks the knowledge and ability to reproduce it so make mistakes. During the associative stage is the ability higher and the error is more and more minimal. Based on O'Malley & Chamot (1995). According to Anderson (2005) it was important that participants were at least engaged. Associative phase to work well in spontaneous conversational situations. Even if the learner becomes more proficient, remembering the grammatical rules and apply them to consciously generated language. In the third and final stage, autonomous Level rules are used autonomously, which saves a lot of work.

2.2 Features of Communicative Competence

The term 'Communicative Competence' was introduced by Hymes in the mid – 1960s, and since then it has been popular among teachers, researchers, and others interested in language.

Communicative competence is an essential part of actual communication but is reflected only indirectly, and sometimes imperfectly due to general limiting conditions as noted above, this study generally communication strategy, especially the closely related term called strategy ability. In their research, Canale & Swain proposed a framework for communication.

2.3 Competence based on three Main Areas

Grammar, Sociolinguistics, Discourse. According to Canale & Swain (1980), these determine a learner's ability. Three years later, Canale (1983 added his fourth in a later revision and the final component area: discourse ability

2.4 Fillers in English Language Classrooms

Teaching is the most important part in any English language classroom thus, the hesitation in speaking while teaching has been overlooked as teacher is someone who creates and innovates any content to the desire, mental caliber, mood, and other variables of the learners (Erten, 2014).

No one can deny the fact that in English language teaching, the teachers don't use fillers. There are a lot of research that validated the use of fillers in English language classrooms precisely ESL classrooms. Several research have given various reasons for using fillers by the teachers and learners in the classrooms. Some of them are of the view that fillers are signals of cognitive procedure going in speaker's mind for the speech creation (Santos, Alarcón & Pablo, 2016). Some other researchers argued that fillers are part of the social process and thus they are integral part of the teachers' discourse (Stevani, Sudarsono & Supardi, 2018). Fillers and the development of oral strategic competence in foreign language learning. further, a study performed by Indriyana, Sina and Bram (2021). Shared the opinion that fillers are actually part of oral strategy by the teachers in ESL classrooms. So, viewing this it can be said that this gap or pause does not reflect lack of speaking competence rather the thinking process of speaker for the linguistic choices he/she had in mind (Fitriati et al., 2021). It is also explained that classroom fillers aid the process of meaningful utterances though they don't have actual meaning themselves. Biber et al., (2002) also supported that dysfluency is a part of conversation because real time speaking whether planned or unplanned is always difficult to execute. so pauses, repetition and hesitation are normal part of it.

2.5 Pakistani English Language Classrooms

Ali et al., (2020) is of the view that Pakistani classrooms are devoid of any technology usage, hence the use of English language for teaching focuses on previously utilized methods only. The value of English is appreciated unanimously by all the citizens of the country yet the ways to learn English have been least impactful (Ali et al., 2021). Therefore, the learners are unable to learn English language (Ali et al., 2019). It is also an established notion that as Urdu is the most practiced language, so the learners and the teachers used code mixing of Urdu and English inside classrooms (Ali et al., 2017).

So, it is pivotal to explore if fillers are used in Pakistani classrooms or not.

2.6 Previous Studies

Several researchers have validated the value of fillers. These early studies address the use of fillers but are in a different area. Erten (2013) highlighted a study on the importance of teaching fountain pens to students in ESL/EFL classrooms in the Turkish Education and International Journal of Education. increase. A second study, by Santos, Alarcon, Pablo, and Ertrn (2014) giving value to the use of fillers conducted a study on teaching fillers in ESL settings. He wanted to explore what fillers are most acquired by the users after they are taught different fillers. The span of recording were two sessions. And both pre teaching and post teaching recordings were done to view which fillers are used by the students. Data was analyzed through qualitative method. It was explored that the assumption that fillers are regular part of learners' speaking was right. Moreover, the most preferred filler was uhm/hm, well, and how to say etc.

Likewise, Lomotey (2021) focused on conducting a study to explore the use of fillers in a public sector university. Focusing on the real time lectures (24) qualitative approach was used. The data was transcribed to classify lexical and un lexical fillers. The outcomes revealed that in connection with communicative purposes, fillers were the regular part of the teachers and learners speaking. Moreover, fillers performed cognitive function as well and while filling the gaps due to hesitation, attention, and feedback it maintained fluency also.

Hubacova (2015), in the Mexican Article Journal, focused on teaching fillers in her FL classrooms with different educational settings and different FL classes. We are reporting on the survey results that are placed. Finally, in the Journal of Linguistics and Language Teaching of Indonesia, Navratilova (2015) conducted a study to find the types and functions of fillers used in argumentative conversations by male and female English teaching program students. Despite all this prior research, the authors are interested in investigating the pens used by faculty and students in EFL classroom interactions. Building on previous research, the authors now conduct this research from various perspectives related to fillers in the field of discourse markers. However, the analysis of this topic focuses on the types of lexicalized and non-lexicalized files that faculty and students use in classroom interactions, and the types of lexicalized and non-

lexicalized fillers that faculty and students use. The feature of lexicalized fillers is emphasized. ALIYAH (2021) performed an investigation on the analysis of fillers used in an interview. The focus was to investigate the functions and types of fillers in a three-minute interview part. Using qualitative approach, it was explored that total 58 fillers were used by the speaker, and it performed social and cognitive function in speaking.

Previously, no study has been conducted in exploring the use of fillers in local classrooms. This is one of the earlier studies that will focus on the ratio of fillers used by local teachers in their teaching. This study will also be significant to view that how frequently bilingual teachers used fillers.

3. Research Methodology

This is a binary investigation. Firstly, the population of the research was selected which was Pakistan. Secondly, from the said population through convenient sampling method Lahore was chosen for data collection. Thirdly, five randomly selected universities were part of the study. Moreover, 20 varied teachers were picked to be the participants of the study. The universities and the teachers were chosen through a balloting method (pick and choose method). This act was performed to evade any biasness in the research.

For the first stage, the design was quantitative as it exploits descriptive analysis for the data representation. At the second stage, the research uses qualitative methods by conducting interviews from the teachers. Questions were particularly designed for this purpose. Later, these interviews were scripted, and opinions of the participants were made the part of this study. Importantly, these teachers were teaching EFL classrooms in a public sector university in Lahore.

In collecting the data, the authors used a non-participant observation technique. In observational studies of non-participants, the authors were not participants in the observed activity, but observed 'sitting on the sidelines'. They are not directly involved in the observed situation (Observation was used in this study as a tool to collect data. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative observation occurs when researchers make field notes about individual behaviors and activities in the research setting.

3.1 Population of the Study

The population for this exploration comes from Pakistan. Particularly the English language teachers working at the university level. All these teachers were teaching English as a major subject in their respective universities.

3.2 Sample of the Study

The sample size was 20 teachers from five different universities in Lahore. These teachers and universities both were selected randomly. Random sampling always provides a fair chance to all the population and avoids bias in research.

3.3 Research Procedure

The procedure of research continued for a month. The lectures room in the respective universities has a recording system where the recording of the lectures was done without sharing it with the teachers. This was done to avoid any consciousness or pressure on the teachers. Further to abide by the ethical rules for any research the permissions from the teachers were after sharing their recording with them. The recordings were later transcribed for the data analysis.

Furthermore, after collecting the data the researchers planned interviews with the 20 teachers. A total of five open-ended questions were structured and they were asked from all the teachers. All the teachers gave consent to give an interview and they were told that the interviews will be recorded. The total time of recording was 120 minutes. Later the data was transcribed to present the results.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are very important in any research. In this investigation, researchers were keen to maintain validity and reliability. Therefore, some variables were made constant that can avoid validity and reliability. The classroom settings, time of the class, students all were remaining constant with all the 20 teachers. The class size was identical with all teachers. The days of the lectures were already scheduled, and all the teachers were well prepared about their lectures. Importantly, the teachers were not known about recording so any factor that could create consciousness was also eliminated.

4. Results

4.1 Filler types used by Teachers in EFL Classrooms

There were various types of fillers used by the local teachers in their lectures respectively. During their classroom interaction it was explored that some of the utterances were lexical, and some were un-lexical.

Table 4.1 Lexical and Un-lexical utterance

Participants	Frequency			
	(LXF)		(ULXF)	
	N	%	N	%
Teachers	20	97.14 %	50	49.41 %
TOTAL	20	97.14 %	50	49.41 %

The above table clearly explains that the teachers' usage of lexical and un-lexical fillers is frequent. It can be seen that the lexical fillers used by the teachers are 97.14% whereas the percentage of using un-lexical fillers are 49.41.

Moreover, the percentage of various types of fillers are given below:

Table 4.2 Filler Types

Filler Types	Filler	(Fr)	
		N	%
Lexicalized	Ok	414	80.22 %
	Yah	34	7.01 %
	You know	36	7.25 %
	I mean	12	2.21 %
	So	29	6.15 %
	Actually	7	1.17 %
	Fine	18	4.16 %
	Got it	5	1.32 %
Unlexicalized	Um	4	93.18 %
	UHH	3	6.81 %

4.2 Findings of the Study

The above table clearly explains the use of lexical and un-lexical fillers. The lexical fillers and non-lexical fillers are a regular part of teachers' communication. The highest percentage of lexical fillers used by the teachers is 80.22% (OK)% which can be seen in table 2. whereas the highest percentage of using an un-lexical filler is 93.18% (Um). The lowest percentage of a filler is 1.32% (Got it) which is a lexical filler. On the other hand, the lowest percentage of the un-lexical filler is 6.81%. All the data above shows that the different types of fillers are constantly used by the teachers inside their respective classrooms. The findings validate that using fillers is a regular practice in EFL classroom in Pakistan. The observer's proficiency level appeared to influence how the verbal fillers were used.

Some learners even used expansions of regular words as filler words. Silver Valod (2011) explains that word-last syllable expansions are common and used as language fillers. This can be viewed as a linguistic filler or padding when hesitating what to say next. Strategy. As Malley & Chamot (1995) argue, this is the individual's working memory.

Teachers with a high level of competence are in this case, most likely to use less fillers than other languages. Moreover, it was also explored that while mixing of codes i.e., from English to Urdu the fillers are used and sometimes visa-a-vis.

In relation to the explanation of the results of this study. The above findings are based on the problem presented by the author. An analysis of fillers was conducted to find the purpose of this study, which consisted of examining the types of lexical and non-lexicalized fillers and their frequency. The authors draw several points from the results. First, from our initial research question, we learned that faculty use both types of fillers. There were lexicalized and non-lexicalized fillers.

4.3 Discussion

The authors analyzed the types of filler materials used by instructors and students by transcribing entire classroom interactions. As a result, 573 fillers were found in 389 utterances of lecturer-student conversations. The set of fillers found in the instructor's utterances was his 764 fillers, consisting of his 660 lexicalized fillers and 54 non-lexicalized fillers.

The results of this study differ from previous studies. Although some previous studies had analyzed fillers, the authors attempted to analyze the data with different objectives to distinguish the data from previous studies. The first previous work by Erten (2013) "Teaching Fillers and Student's Fillers Usage":

A study conducted at the ESOGU Preparatory School", a second earlier study by Santos, Alarcon, Pablo, and Hubackova (2015). The last previous study by Navratilova (2015), entitled Fillers, designed Fillers for use in discussions by male and female students of the English Teaching and Research program. From these previous studies, they did not adopt and explain detailed descriptions of the types of fillers used. Learn more about how fillers work. Therefore, in this current study, the authors build on the

theories of Rose (1998) and Stenstrom (1994) to explore more about the types and functions of lexical and non-lexical fillers used by teachers and students in classroom interactions. Analyzed and researched in detail. The outcomes from this study also support the results from the study performed by Erten (2013) who shared that in ESL classrooms fillers are used regularly. He argued that using fillers is not a part of any dysfluency but rather a routine.

The outcomes concluded from this study also support the results of Lomotey (2021) who shared that lexical and un lexical fillers are used by university teachers in their lectures. He also shared that in order to achieve communicative competence fillers are pivotal. He further supported those fillers perform many functions like cognitive and social.

Finally, this study ties with the study by ALIYAH (2021) who investigated the use of fillers in an interview and found out that fillers are used in regular speech as a routine.

4.4 Interviews from the Teachers

As discussed earlier this study is also comprised of teachers' interviews. These interviews were conducted with all the twenty teachers. Consent for taking the interviews were taken from all teachers. There were five questions asked by the teachers which were open-ended. These questions were asked after getting permission from the participants. All the participants were aware that the interviews were recorded. Later all the data was transcribed. Below are randomly selected replies from teachers regarding the questions.

Q.1. What do you think can be the reason of using fillers in your lecture?

The replies to question were given by all the teachers but we will randomly choose teacher 6 as he said:

“In my view there might be several reasons that I use fillers in my speaking. I believe that one of the reasons is that while speaking I need some pause to adjust or add some appropriate word or phrase which I feel can be more significant for the learners.”

Similarly, teacher 10 said:

“I believe that my major reason for using fillers is that it gives me some instance to reorganize my thoughts to speak better. In this way I become more confident in my speaking”

Q.2. Do you think using fillers can affect your lectures in any way?

The reply to question two can be taken from the answer given by teacher 14 who stated that:

“I have been teaching since long and I am also aware that I am using fillers in my teaching. In my opinion, fillers have a positive effect on my speaking. Personally, it provides me with a level of comfort to adjust my speech by having a gap and in this way my thoughts can be presented well.”

Likewise, teacher 17 said:

“Fillers have positive impact on my teaching. And it provides me with comfort while speaking. I usually use “I mean” during my spoken discourse and it is enjoyed by me and my learners as well. This filler of mine is also popular amongst my learners.”

Q.3. Do you think you need to use fillers when you feel hesitation in speaking?

In the words of teacher 8:

“I don't think I am in any kind of hesitation when I use fillers in my speaking. Rather I feel that they are a regular part of my spoken language. During my lectures I often use various kinds of fillers, but my communication is never hesitant or interrupted by lack of vocabulary or content.”

Q.4. Has it become your habit to use fillers in your speaking? If yes, why?

Teacher 10 said:

“Yes! I do agree with this statement that using fillers has become my habit. There might be several reasons to it. Some of them may be unknown to me. But to my knowledge I use fillers as it provides me with a bit of time to promptly manage

my linguistic choices in my speaking.”

In the very words of teacher 2:

“Since I have started teaching, I was an efficient English speaker. It is because I learnt English speaking in my childhood. Gradually I got aware that I use fillers in my speaking while teaching. And I concluded that they are an automatic feature of my speaking and now has become my habit to use certain fillers which are equally popular in my learners as well.”

Q.5. Do you only use fillers in EFL settings?

Teacher 9 replied to this question:

“My native language is Punjabi. And I also use fillers in Punjabi what are relevant to that language. If I examine my Punjabi talk there are some pet words that are used as fillers by me”

Whereas teacher 15 said:

“In my view every language speaker uses fillers. Fillers usually helps a speaker in many ways i.e., from gathering thoughts to overcome hesitation in speech. Sometimes fillers become your trademark words and you become habitual in using them. I am an Urdu speaker and I use fillers relevant to my native language”.

5. Conclusion

The responses from the teachers give clear verdict about the use of fillers in their respective teaching and it also validates the fact that fillers are not only used in EFL setting but they also use it in their native language. The overall results and findings of this study are connected with several other investigations that fillers are regular part of any spoken discourse. The beauty lies in the choice of fillers that depends upon the choice of the speaker that is why we hear different fillers from different speakers of same language. In summary, this study examined the types of lexical and non-lexical fillers and the function of lexical and non-lexical fillers used by instructors and students in EFL classroom interactions. The overall findings also validates that in local classrooms of Pakistan, Pakistani teachers also use fillers during their teaching like

other teachers of the world. Thus, it can be said that the use of fillers does not reflect lack of communicative competence rather these are words embedded in the spoken discourse.

5.1 Limitations of the Study

However, this study has obvious limitations. The authors have not investigated or discovered why teachers and students use filler words in classroom interaction utterances only. Another limitation of this study was that only 20 teachers were taken as a research sample. For future the sample can be extended to gather more broader results.

Moreover, the research concerned only the university framework. Therefore, the authors anticipate that the study will need to be expanded to other researchers of other educational levels to get more specific results on why fillers are used.

5.2 Future implications

This study can be beneficial for the many concerns as it has some pivotal implications.

This research will provide an awareness that fillers are a regular feature in teachers' communication. They are not related to language incompetence as they are also used by natives as well. Further, this study also has a practical implication that can be explored by future researchers to research more about fillers in other English language learning situations (ESL, ESP etc.). Moreover, exploring the ratio and percentage of fillers can be investigated in some other local populations as well i.e. students. This study also has an implication to make people aware about the use of types of fillers. Finally, it can aware people that fillers can serve as connectors and supporters in speaking which maintains speech flow. This awareness can help to maintain balance in speech.

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Appendix 1

Teachers' Questionnaire

- Q.1. What do you think can be the reason of using fillers in your lecture?
- Q.2. Do you think using fillers can affect your lectures in any way?
- Q.3. Do you think you need to use fillers when you feel hesitation in speaking?
- Q.4. Has it become your habit to use fillers in your speaking? If yes, why?
- Q.5. Do you only use fillers in EFL settings?