

## EFL STUDENTS' USES OF *UM* AS FILLERS IN CLASSROOM PRESENTATIONS

**Nissa Ilma Mukti**

*Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University, Indonesia*

e-mail: nissailmamukti@gmail.com

**Ribut Wahyudi**

*Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand*

e-mail: Ribut.Wahyudi@vuw.ac.nz

### ABSTRACT

This study examines the filled pause *um* used by the English Department students of the State Islamic University of Malang during their oral presentations in the classroom. A filled pause such as *um* is a linguistic expression used to signal hesitation in its immediate context, with the primary function of bringing the listener's attention to a particular kind of linkage of the upcoming utterance with the immediate discourse context. In achieving the purpose of the study, a total of twenty five oral presentations in English based on different topics were collected and analysed. By using Clark and Tree's (2002) framework on the use of *um*, the study shows that the filled pause of *um* played different roles based on the speaker's thoughts on feelings of uncertainty. Furthermore, it is also used in almost all positions of utterances, and each of which brings specific meanings. An *um* is used at the initial position of an utterance to show readiness to open a new sentence, topic, or point of a presentation, to express awkwardness, and to show respect to others. In the middle of an utterance, it is used to detect a problem, to struggle, to find upcoming words, and to restart a conversation. Finally, in the final position of the utterance, it is used as a result of agnosia and to close a presentation. Future research could make use of the findings from the present study to examine the use of filled pauses based on different characteristics among speakers to find out other different functions of filled pauses especially in EFL classroom presentations.

Keywords: classroom, filled pause, oral presentation, *um*

### INTRODUCTION

In conversation, it is normal for people to use hesitation strategies, a pause or delay in performing an action or while engaging in an action. Hesitation may indicate fear, reluctance, uncertainty, or faltering, as in a speech (Tree, 1999). Tree argues that some examples of hesitations are *umm*, *well*, *I mean*, *you know*, and *okay*. The use of hesitation in the EFL classroom context has been very widely explored. The use of *okay* and *alright* have been previously studied in the classroom of foreign students by Filipi and Wales (2003). They highlighted that *right* indicates a display of less involvement than *alright* in its use of a response token, indicating that *right* is a more neutral marker (Gardner, 2001). The word *okay* was used to perform a wide range of functions, even though it was associated with topic continuance. The findings of the research showed that the word *alright* functioned as a sentence to begin a conversation or for giving instructions for an activity, while *right* is applied more restrictively or used as a connector in a conversation (Fillipi & Wales, 2003).

Rieger (2003) conducted a study on the use of hesitations in the EFL classroom. The research was on the use of hesitation strategies among intermediate learners of German as a second or foreign language when they participated in oral L2 tests. The research found that beginners tend to leave their hesitation pauses unfilled thus making their speech highly disfluent, while advanced L2 speakers, who are similar to native speakers, use a variety of fillers. Intermediate learners hesitate mainly for two reasons: to search for a German word or structure, or to think about the content of their utterance. Some participants use a variety of strategies to signal to the addressee that they are hesitating, while other participants leave their hesitation pauses unfilled.

Schegloff (2010) extended the study of *um* in the social interaction context which is usually attributed to trouble in the speech production process. Through the conversation analytic investigation, he found that what is done and understood in the use of *um* depends not only on the composition and position, but also on turn-taking, action sequence and the context of talk.

Other research investigating the use of *um* was conducted by Acton (2011). He investigated social variation in the use of *um* and *uh* in the United States. This corpus study shows that “*um* is gaining currency relative to *uh*; that is, there is a linguistic change in progress whereby the use of *um* relative to *uh* is on the rise” (p.1). It is also argued that comprehensive understanding of “the dynamics of gender and filler usage” urges us to examine “the meanings and associations of *um* and *uh* and of speakers’ stances, objectives, in relation to their social world” (p.1).

Furthermore, Corley and Hartsuikers (2011) suggest that “speech understanding can sometimes benefit from the presence of filled pauses (*uh*, *um*, and the like), and that words following such filled pauses are recognised more quickly” (p.1). Furthermore it is found that “natural delays such as fillers need not be seen as ‘signals’ to explain the benefits they have on the listeners’ ability to recognise and respond to the words which follow them” (p.1).

Due to the numerous studies dealing with the hesitation phenomena in the context of second language development, Rose (2013) created a cross linguistic corpus of hesitation phenomena in second language proficiency development to investigate the influence of speech patterns of first and second language speakers. The findings of the study show that “the silent pause rate and duration as well as other hesitation phenomena correlate with first language performance while the speech rate does not. The result shows that the corpus may be a useful reference for researchers who wish to investigate the correspondence between first and second language speeches, particularly dealing with the use of hesitation phenomena” (p.1). Hesitation is no longer divided into its utterances, but is broken down into long silent pauses (not including the short pauses associated with breathing, articulation, or junctures), filled pauses (*uh/um* in English), repairs, repeats, false starts, and lengthening.

Based on the corpus, a research study concerning filled pauses was conducted by Belz and Klapi (2013). The study argued that “pauses in spoken language indicate hesitations. Filler type (*uh* versus *um*) is believed to signal a minor or major speech delay in L1”...The results suggest that “filler type in German is not used to indicate the length of the following delay” (p.1). It is also revealed that “Advanced learners seem to have adopted this pattern of use, but cannot overcome their hesitations as fast as native speakers, probably due to their less automatised speech production” (p.1).

Another recent study was conducted by Laserna, Seih and Pennebaker (2014). They found that “filled pauses were used at comparable rates across gender and age. Discourse markers, however, were more common among women, younger participants,

and more conscientious people. These findings suggest that filler word use can be considered a potential social and personality marker” (p.1)

Based on the above rationale, the present study examines the intended meaning of *um* and its implication as used by EFL students in several presentations in the English classroom. The research investigates the function and occurrence of *um*, seen from different locations of a sentence. Therefore, the research study is carried out to answer the following questions:

1. What is the intended meaning of *um* used by the EFL students in their classroom presentations in English?
2. How are the occurrences of *um* used by the EFL students in classroom presentations in English?

### METHODOLOGY

This research is a descriptive qualitative study based on Clark and Tree's (2002) theoretical and analytical frameworks. The consideration of using Clark and Tree (2002) is that EFL classroom presentations in some way have the dimension of spontaneous speech in which Clark and Tree (2002) investigated. A total of twenty five oral presentations was collected from a class consisting of fourth and sixth-semester students, studying in an Islamic university in East Java, Indonesia. To collect the students' presentations, a Sony handycam DCR-SR68 having 5.1 surround sound recording was used. This electronic instrument has ample storage and a mega zoom lens. The electronic device was used to capture good quality pictures as well as to pick up clear speeches. The advantages of using this video recorder were that it did not disturb the learning process, and it could be used for other classroom activities if needed. The students' presentations were collected over a period of two months starting from April 1<sup>st</sup> up to May 30<sup>th</sup>.

Once the oral presentations were video-recorded, the researcher examined the utterance of *um* in the presentations. The sentences containing the filled pause *um* were then transcribed.

To understand the intended meaning of *um*, the analytical framework by Clark and Tree (2002) was applied. *Uh* and *um* have long been called filled pauses instead of silent pauses (see Goldman-Eisler, 1968; Maclay & Osgood, 1959). The unstated assumption is that they are pauses (not words) that are filled with a sound (not silence). Yet it has long been recognized that *uh* and *um* are not on par with silent pauses. In one view, they are symptoms of certain problems in speaking. In a second view, they are non-linguistic signals for dealing with certain problems in speaking. However in a third view, they are linguistic signals – in particular, words of English. If *uh* and *um* are words, as we will argue, it is misleading to call them filled pauses. To be neutral and yet retain a bit of their history, we will call them fillers (Clark & Tree, 2002, p.75). For example, *uh* gives the evidence that “at the moment when trouble is detected, the source of the trouble is still actual or quite recent. But otherwise, [uh] doesn't seem to mean anything. It is a symptom.” (Levelt, 1989, p. 484; see also Mahl, 1987; O'Donnell & Todd, 1991). When speakers detect trouble in speaking, they often produce an utterance other than *uh* and *um* (Levelt, 1989). If they do, the appearance of *uh* and *um* must be conditional on other factors. For example, if the speaker pauses long enough to receive the cue of his own silence, he will produce some kind of signal ([m, er], or perhaps a repetition of the immediately preceding unit) which says, in effect, “I'm still in control – don't interrupt me” (Maclay & Osgood, 1959, p.41).

*Um* and *uh* are often inserted as signs to correct a wrong utterance, and are commonly followed by a joke, an apologetic statement or an explanation of the problem.

These are also known as collateral signals. *Uh* and *um* in collateral signals belong to collateral interjections. The use of *um* and *uh* as interjections are similar, implying current emotions, states of knowledge, surprise, and requesting attention (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1972, p.413)

Furthermore, it is also described by Smith and Clark (1993), that *uh* and *um* indicate that there is a delay of speaking – *uh* indicates a brief delay, while *um* indicates a longer one. Short delay can be stated as around 1-2 seconds, whereas long delay is 2- 5 seconds. The inferences to this are that a speaker may need several times from stopping to begin talking again. Commonly, after a lengthening occurs, a speaker often pauses and thinks of the upcoming words.

Furthermore, the framework of Clark and Tree (2002) was used to understand how the intended meaning of *um* is planned. It is argued that “speakers plan utterances in three main stages: they conceptualize a message, formulate the appropriate linguistic expressions, and articulate them” (Levelt, 1989, cited in Clark & Tree, 2002, p. 80). Most theories of production predict that the planning of creating an *um* can be divided into three locations of occurrence: (1) at the boundary (front), (2) after the first word (ignoring *uh* and *um*), and (3) later (Clark & Tree, 2002, p.22).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Um* and its intended meaning

In relation to the theory of Clark and Tree (2002), the first result from the analysis showed that the use of *um* is caused by a difficulty experienced by the speaker, and *um* is used as an interjection, or to correct a mistake. Clark and Tree (2002) mentioned that there are specific causes to the three views on the use of *um*. This study found that such causes were due to the process of speaker’s thinking and their feeling of uncertainty in speaking.

---

Excerpt from Presentation on 24/05/13

---

1	AH	I just wanna ask one question ↑Can you give the:
2		eh(.) can you go to the sli-
3		no no yak, no, up one-. ↑Yeah. Can you give the
4		examples of the:= lexical conditioning in
5		English cuzlike(.) the examples ↑you gave us isn't
6		English right
7	DR	Oh yeah sure. <b>Um(...)</b> so(...) Yeah <b>um(..)</b> , [so]
8		.....
9	JK	[so](..) you know like leaves ↑
10		When leaf is pluralize <u>hehheh</u> . I mean being
11		plural, it is hhv right ↑not f right
12		Like this(.) like(...) like this . This f, becomes v
13		and add s here. Yeah? =
14		yeah? Okay. Ya- so(..) leave is one example in
15		English.

---

---

 Excerpt from Presentation on 15/04/13
 

---

16	MF	So: I guess that <b>um</b> (..) the title is only one man who-
17		who had no eyes
18		Because the eyes is not <u>eyes</u> like <u>this</u> but is actually
19		<u>heart</u> . So: that's why it's not blind, but the evilness.
20	ET	o(h)ka:y, and how can you <u>actually</u> be sure about it?
21		Like I mean(..), not all people who is blind(.) have no
22		heart? [right]↑
23	MF	[ <b>Um</b> (...)] yeah(...)
24	ET	so: blind is? People with no heart ↑
25	MF	<b>Um</b> (...) yeah well, maybe not all: Bu:t <b>um</b> (..) we(.) we
26		sometime hear the(.) of the word ↑ your hear is
27		<u>blind!</u> Right? So(..) It's the kind we hear ever(h)y day.
28		In here, <u>blind</u> is the heart, a:nd not the eyes.

---

The filled pauses *um* above function as help for speakers to advance the topic (Tottie, 2011). As seen from Clark and Tree (2002), the data above display that the speaker understood what he was about to say. However, the speaker experienced a problem in what he was about to say next. The speaker's upcoming word was hard to utter, and was still in a process to be stated. In this case, the speaker was momentarily unable to produce the required word or phrase, hence *um* was used to buy time for thinking. This may also happen as a result of an emotional reaction of nervousness or stress. It is also argued that second language learners often resort to using *um* as they have difficulties in making an oral presentation in English.

Furthermore, in relation to the second view of the role of *um* as an interjection by Clark and Tree (2002), the occurrence of *um* found in the data above is due to a surprising event. The surprising event found here is different from that in Clark and Tree (2002) that was more about disturbance experienced by the speaker while speaking. In this condition, however, the speaker was surprised by a sudden question which may be hard to answer. Thus, the speaker uttered *um* as an expression of thinking about the audience's question. The speaker also used a pause after the filled pause, indicating that more time was needed to think about the upcoming words.

---

 Excerpt from Presentation on 03/05/13
 

---

29	MS	How can you notice that <b>um</b> (..)which word
30		change to I mean from time to
31		time or: <b>um</b> (..) era↓(.) and which [doesn't]
32	IL	[Hehheh] <b>um</b> (...)
33		hehheh you kno:wwe're
34		not really sure <u>about it</u> ↑ bu::t >we can speak
35		English good↓right<hehheh

---

In the following example, the amount of the delay of the *um* utterance is manifested as an insert in the filled pause. In this case, the inserts are treated as signs, similar to Clark and Tree's study (2002). These sign can be commonly found in between laughter, sighs and tongue clicks, which are also utterances (DuBois, 1974; Tree & Schrock, 1999; Schiffrin, 1987; Schourup, 1982). As shown in the data above, filled

pause *um* is followed by laughter (hehheh), which was also an insert. It implies that the speaker's intention is to enumerate the time allotment of delay to create an answer. However, to fill the process of thinking, the speaker conceived a joke towards the question, and answers it with a joke. This performance is found not only in the second language learner's presentation, but in most student presentations because they were unable to answer questions. In another word, when students are unable to continue talking while speaking in public, they tend to say foolish things for not being able to answer questions in social situations. The result of this study shows that EFL students tend to lengthen the pauses in order to think of a right answer.

### Planning the utterance *um*

*Um* can occur at three locations of an utterance.

#### 1. At the boundary

---

Excerpt from Presentation on 22/ 05/ 13

---

36	KR	<b>Um(..)</b> During the past era ↓ it might still be impossible to have the same, the same rights for men and women. <b>Um(..)</b> this happen for(..) several years. However, now it's not like that for the rule ↓ anymore
37	LA	<b>Um(..)</b> yes, <u>especially</u> if you see it ↑ in the first page it shows it well.

---



---

Excerpt from Presentation on 02/05/13

---

38	JK	Good morning every one ↓ good morning to Mrs.
39		Backhaus ↑ a:nd good
40		afternoon to my beloved ↑ friends. <b>Um(..)</b> we would
41		like to start our presentation
42		<b>um(..)</b> £OHYA£ this is Richard, here is ↓ Stephanie ↑
43		a:nd we have Rozi there.
44		Now I would like to invite Richard to open the
45		presentation
46	RS	Good morning ↓ everyone <b>Um(..)</b> the first thing I
47		wanna sa:y is, well before coming ↑
48		in to my >presentation<, I wanna ask a question.

---



---

Excerpt from Presentation on 25/04/13

---

49	LN	All <u>right</u> now for the reading part ↑ it <u>will</u> be
50		expla:ined by: Inez.
51	IC	<b>Um(..)</b> okay gu:ys, no:w I will explain a:bout the:
52		after reading part

---

## Excerpt from Presentation on 02/05/13

53	TR	<b>Um(..)</b> if looking this <u>picture</u> , well, since we(.)↓
54		since we haven't read(.) so: >we
55		can just say< that the <u>man</u> is looking to: the lady's
56		necklace

## Excerpt from Presentation B on 02/05/13

57	PS	Now, I ask question.Ok[ay?]
58	AUD	[okay]
59	PS	How do pronunciation from? <b>Um(..)</b> first of all we(.) ↑
60		are going to <u>present</u> ↓the articulation above the larynx. Here
61		we have a diagram that is oral, nasal, <b>um(..)</b> cavity

## Excerpt from Presentation on 31/05/13

62	LK	<b>Um(..)</b> in the previous presentation ↑ we know (.)
63		about the: correlation <u>between</u>
64		morphology and phonology. Now we will discuss
65		<u>about</u> morphology and syntax,
66		which will be presented by: Hikmah.
67	HK	Well ↓ on the correlation between the: two ↓
68		actually just(.) can be seen from the
69		definition itself <u>actually</u> .

As Clark and Tree (2002) mentioned, the place of occurrence are divided into three locations: (1) at the boundary (front), (2) after the first word (usually ignoring uh and um), and (3) later. In the first analysis, it is seen that the *um* is uttered in front of a speech. The *um* in the beginning of the speech was followed by a delay for about 2 - 4 seconds. Different from Clark and Tree (2002) who argue that the first occurrence of *um* may just be because of a delay or disfluency, this research discovered that when the speaker uses *um* in the beginning of the speech, it is because the speaker is ready to begin the presentation.

If it arises in the first sentence, but occurs in the middle of a presentation, it implies that the speaker is showing awareness to the audience that the speaker is moving to the next sentence or point. The delay only represents that the speaker is ready to begin, to move to a new point, or a new topic. This condition is consistent when the use of *um* applied by the students in their presentations (Clark and Tree, 2002)

## Excerpt from Presentation on 25/04/13

69	TW	So so glottal stop is is like(.) this is the example. ↓ When we:
70		have got here: ↑ and
71		we plus it with you:, we don't read <u>got you:</u> ↑ but, we say
72		[gotcha], [yeah] yeah hehheh <u>gotcha</u>
73	UD	[gotcha] [hehheh]
74	NM	Um (..) but <u>sorry:</u> , but um(..) isn't it(.) isn't glottal stop
75		like when you paten,

76		hehheh, um (..) I mean, when you say <u>letter</u> : you say
77		*leker*? So, you don't
78		<u>pronounce</u> the /t/ part. I think it's it's(.) yeah

---

Another process on the occurrence of *um* can be seen from the first utterance for the EFL students' presentation is the feeling of awkwardness. The feeling of awkwardness may also refer to the feeling of hesitation. In Indonesia, the feeling of hesitation is a feeling of respect or embarrassment from fear to respect a person of higher status (Wolff & Poedjosoedarmo, 1982) to show politeness shown especially in Javanese culture. Therefore, when the presenters utter *um* to open the speech, they are waiting for the teacher to sit down and prepare to hear the presentation. Another example of showing respect is shown below:

---

Excerpt from Presentation on 03/04/13

---

79	LA	My first question is how much should I get paid? ↓
80	UK	Um (..) in our case ↑ we usually give depending on ↓
81		the hour.
82	LA	Oh- okay, thank you thank you <u>very</u> ↑
83		much. So: if I work fo:r three hours-, I will:
84		just times it right?
85	UK	Indeed.

---



---

Excerpt from Presentation on 26/04/13

---

86	US	So: this one is the head and this here- is the:
87		depend [ent]
88	RA	[Um] (..) excuse me but isn't that supposed to be 56
89		vice versa?
90	US	Oh yeah ↑ *yeah*, sorry we say wrongly hehheh.
91		It's vice versa. So, this is the:dependentand

---

This question uses *um* to open a sentence. However, in this case, the speaker uses *um* as a symbol of showing respect to others. As explained by Brown and Levinson (1987), politeness may be the symbol of solidarity. It has an intended meaning to answer a question respectfully, or in a polite way. Fung (2009) commented that it is best to show politeness and use indirectness when someone mentions salary.

---

Excerpt from Presentation on 18/04/13

---

92	HS	Excuse me, but I think that your explanation just
93		then weren't really correlating with my question.
94		Sorry, but err, you know.
95	EN	Um (..) really? I didn't know that. And (..) what ↓
96		makes you think that?
97	HS	<u>Well</u> : there are several points ↓ that doesn't match
98		the textbook

---



In this case, the speaker disagreed with the statement of the question. This is viewed from the expression of the speaker's gestures. The gestures change from before and after hearing the questioner utterances. One of the eyebrows is lifted up for a while showing a kind of grin. The way the speaker pronounced *um* was very low, and the speaker seemed very shocked, that was different from the way the speaker uttered *um* the first time, as in the thinking process. Perhaps no profession has uttered more *ums* than the legal profession. Such words are a clear indication that the speaker's style is halting and uncertain. Filled pauses are employed to signal doubt or uncertainty or to fill a pause when the speakers are hesitant in speaking (Clark & Tree, 2002). From the analysis above, it may be stated that the speaker applied gesture in the process of creating the utterance *um*.

2. In the middle of a sentence:

---

Excerpt from Presentation on 18/04/13

---

99	ZN	Uh(...) this is um(..) the diachronic part for um(..)
100		language development. If you
101		can see from here to here is um(..) diachronic
102		part.
103		Diachronic is um(..) well:
104	KR	Well diachronic is: when something is
105		happening in over time.

---



---

Excerpt from Presentation on 31/05/13

---

106	ES	I will discuss of um(..) about the: um(..)
107		differences↓ and the: similarities
108		between syntax and morphology↑ itself
109		Syntax is um(..) firstly(.) I will introduce to thee
110		definition before um(..) going to
111		the: similarities of syntax and *morphology↑ itself-

---



---

Excerpt from Presentation on 05/04/13

---

112	IS	So: derivational morpheme also use to↓ derive↑
113		some other um(..) grammatical
114		Um(..) grammatical types of the stem
115	AUD	So: is it- the same as free morpheme?
116	IS	*Yeah* um(..) no-

---



---

Excerpt from Presentation on 18/04/13

---

117	PB	So now we: analyse word into um(..) its	↑
118		original word and its uh(.) what is it	
119		[yeah] affixes.	
120	AUD	[affixes]	

---

However, it is also proposed that when *um* is uttered in the middle of a speech; the speaker detected a problem with what to say (Levelt, 1983, 1989). This statement is found from the research in which a person is confused of what to say, because of a guilty feeling in a presentation.

---

Excerpt from Presentation on 15/04/13

---

121	JK	Good morning every one <sup>↑</sup> good morning to Mrs.
122		Backhaus a:nd good <sup>↓</sup>
123		afternoon to my beloved friends.Um(..) we would
124		like to start our presentation
125		um(..) £OHYA£ this is Richard, here is
126		Stephanie a:nd we have Rozi there <sup>↓</sup>

---



---

Excerpt from Presentation on 30/05/13

---

127	GL	Alright um(..) I'll talk more about <u>why</u> <sup>↑</sup>
128		generative approach happen. Um(..)
129		but firstly, I would introduce <sup>↑</sup> oh <sup>↓</sup> I mean define
130		the generative approach itself.

---

In this case, the presenter applied a restart after a filled pause. Sometimes a speaker will utter a few words and then suddenly return to the beginning and say the same words (Clark & Tree, 2002). A restart usually occurs when the speaker unintentionally forgets to deliver some of the things which are supposed to be delivered. Therefore, once the speaker remembers, they use the filled pause *um* as an indication that the speaker is going to repeat something which he/she may have forgotten to state (Corley & Steward, 2008).

---

Excerpt from Presentation on 05/04/13

---

131	FN	Well(.) um(..) this <u>semester</u> I take calculus and
132		chemistry.
133	JK	Why?
134	FN	Well(.) um(..) I can enjoy the chemistry. You know: <sup>↑</sup> it's um(..) it's challenging

---



---

Excerpt from Presentation on 01/04/13

---

135	SK	>Do you give up everything in order to get <sup>↓</sup>
136		happiness<:r do you do
137		Anything what I mean is um(..) like-like how do
138		you <u>reach</u> <sup>↓</sup> your own
139		happiness?
140	AUD	No::
141	SK	<u>E:xactly</u> . You see- um(..) people have their own
142		way of the definition of <sup>↑</sup>
143		happiness <sup>↑</sup> Let see(.) um(..) you(.) yup What is
144		happiness?

---

The conditions where *um* is used in the above indicates some trouble experienced by the speaker. However, the only difference is that these sentences are followed by hesitation such as *well, I mean, or so*. Adell, Bonafonte and Escuredo (2007) stated that “filled pauses can be inserted, for example, in between the two utterances of a repetition. A filled pause may appear before or after entire speech acts, or words, but tends to occur at significant grammatical locations” (p.2).

### 3. In the last sentence

---

Excerpt from Presentation on 11/04/13

---

145	BM	Um(..) first of all we are going to present the
146		articulation above the larynx here ↑
147		we have a diagram that is oral, nasal, um(..)cavity
148	TR	As we all know that the sound produce ↑ because
149		of um(..) contractions.

---

When *um* is uttered in the last sentence, which is also mentioned by Clark and Tree (2002), it is usually used as an indication to point out an object. A study by Arnold, Maria, and Tanenhaus (2003) found that the speaker experiences difficulty in referring to something or describing an unusual shape rather than an everyday object (e.g., an apple) in which they have an object agnosia. However, a different interpretation can be applied when *um* is used in the second language learners presentation (see below).

---

Excerpt from Presentation on 10/04/13

---

150	IK	Well(.) actually my ↑ previous job: I was working ↓
151		on a call centre. So um(..) yeah
152	DR	O(h)kay and why do you quit from it?
153	IK	Well(.) <u>actually</u> , I am not okay with working <u>too</u>
154		late and in <u>THERE-late</u> is okay.
155		So: it doesn't suit me.

---



---

Excerpt from Presentation on 30/05/13

---

156	NM	Well(.) we think that this is all: from our
157		presentation, so: um(..) thank you >and
158		have a good day<

---

Clark and Tree (2002) did not mention what may be the cause of the occurrence of *um* in the last sentence. This study, however, shows that *um* does not mean anything - it is just a delay to fill the gap before closing a sentence. For second language learners especially in Indonesia (Fung, 2009), this often occurs.

## CONCLUSION

From the research conducted, it may be concluded that the use of *um* is due to a trouble or problem that is detected by the speaker who uses it as an interjection or to correct a mistake (Clark & Tree, 2002). It is used during the process of the speaker's thinking and

their feeling of uncertainty in speaking. Furthermore, the occurrences of the utterance *um* that are mostly applied by L2 speakers have different meanings depending on where the *um* occurs in the utterance. When *um* is uttered at the beginning of a speech or to open a speech for about 2 - 4 seconds, it may be interpreted as (1) readiness to begin a new sentence, topic, point or presentations; (2) exposing awkwardness, and (3) respectfulness. These were found in the students' presentations, or when there is a cultural aspect interfering.

When *um* is uttered in the middle of a speech, the speaker seemed to experience a problem of what to say, or having an uncertainty feeling in a presentation. These are commonly marked by the presenter trying a restart after a filled pause. Furthermore, when *um* is uttered in the middle of the speech, it is commonly followed by other hesitations such as *well, I mean, or so*.

In contrast with the two places of location described above, when *um* is uttered in the last sentence, the speaker is having difficulties in referring to something or in describing, for example, an unusual shape rather than an everyday object (e.g., an apple), in which they have an object agnosia (Arnold et al., 2003). However, when *um* is applied in an L2 learner's presentation, it has a different interpretation; it indicates a delay in filling in the gap before closing a sentence. This use of *um* is quite common among EFL learners in Indonesia (Fung, 2009).

The results of the present study are different from those previous related of Schegloff (2010) and Corley and Hartsuiker (2011), who found that the cause to the occurrence of *um* are dependent on age and gender. This research however demonstrated that *um* also occurs due to wanting to "keep the floor" or create an understanding with the audience, despite the fact that they might be of different ages or genders. Therefore, this research shows that the occurrence of *um* as fillers, which is commonly shown as a delay of speech, has its own interpretation, and not just natural delays, as found by Corley and Hartsuiker (2011).

However, it should be noted that this research was conducted under time constrains (within two months). Future research should allow a longer time for both data collection and analysis to produce more reliable results and more convincing findings.

## REFERENCES

- Acton, A. (2011). On gender differences in the distribution of *um* and *uh*. *University of Pennsylvania Working Papers in Linguistics*, 17(2), 1-11.
- Adell, J., Bonafonte, A., & Escudero, D. (2007). Filled pauses in speech synthesis: Towards conversational speech. In *Proceedings of 10th International Conference on Text, Speech and Dialogue LNCS 4629* (Springer) (pp. 358-365). Plzen, Czech Republic.
- Arnold, J. E., Maria, F., & Tanenhaus., M. K. (2003). Disfluencies signal thee, em, new information. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 32(1), 25-36.
- Belz, M., & Klapi, M. (2013). Pauses following fillers in L1 and L2 German map task dialogues. A paper presented in *The 6th Workshop on Disfluency in Spontaneous Speech, 21- 23 August, 2013, Stockholm, Sweden*.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). *Politeness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Clark, H., & Tree, F. (2002). Using *uh* and *um* in spontaneous speaking. *Cognition*, 84, 73-111.
- Corley, M., & Hartsuiker, R. (2011). Why *um* helps auditory word recognition: The temporal delay hypothesis. *PLoS One*, 6(5). Retrieved from e19792.10.1371/journal.pone.0019792.

- Corley, M., & Steward, O. W. (2008). Hesitation disfluencies in spontaneous speech: The meaning of *um*. *Language and Linguistic Compass*, 2, 589-602.
- DuBois, J. (1974). Syntax in mid-sentence. In C. Fillmore, G. Lakoff, & R. Lakoff (Eds.), *Berkeley studies in syntax and semantics* (pp. III.1–III.25). California: University of California.
- Filipi, A., & Wales, R. (2003). Differential uses of *okay*, *right*, and *alright*, and their function in signaling perspective shift or maintenance in a map task. *Semiotica*, 47, 429-455.
- Fung, L. (2009). A Study of indirectness in business meetings. *3L: The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 15, 23-39.
- Gardner, R. (2001). *When listeners talk: Response tokens and listener stance*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Goldman-Eisler, F. (1968). *Psycholinguistics: Experiments in spontaneous speech*. New York: Academic Press.
- Jefferson G (2004). Glossary of transcript symbols with an introduction. In G. Lerner (Ed.), *Conversation analysis: Studies from the first generation* (pp.13–31). Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: Benjamins.
- Laserna, C., Seih, Y., & Pennebaker, J. (2014). Um ... who like says you know: Filler word use as a function of age, gender, and personality. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 33(3), 328-338.
- Levelt, W. J. M. (1989). *Speaking*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Maclay, H., & Osgood, C. E. (1959). Hesitation phenomena in spontaneous English speech. *Word*, 15, 19–44.
- Mahl, G. F. (1987). *Explorations in nonverbal and vocal behavior*. Hillsdale: Erlbaum.
- O'Donnell, W. R., & Todd, L. (1991). *Variety in contemporary English*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Harper Collins Academic.
- Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1972). *A grammar of contemporary English*. New York: Seminar Press.
- Rieger, C. (Ed.) (2003). *Disfluency in spontaneous speech workshop, 5-8 September 2003, Göteborg University, Sweden*. Stockholm: Gothenburg.
- Rose, R. (2013). Crosslinguistic corpus of hesitation phenomena: A corpus for investigating first and second language speech performance. *A paper presented at 14th Annual Conference of the International Speech Communication Association, 25-29 August 2013, Lyon, France*.
- Schegloff, E. (2010). Some other *uh(m)*'s. *Discourse Processes*, 47, 130-174.
- Schiffrin, D. (1987). *Discourse Markers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schourup, L. C. (1982). *Common discourse particles in English conversation*. New York: Garland.
- Smith, V. L., & Clark, H. H. (1993). On the course of answering questions. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 32, 25–38.
- Tottie, G. (2011). *Uh* and *um* as sociolinguistic markers in British English. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics* 16(2), 173-197.
- Tree, F. (1999). Listening in on monologues and dialogues. *Discourse Processes*, 27(1), 35-53.
- Tree, F., & Schrock, J. (1999). Discourse markers in spontaneous speech: Oh what a difference an oh makes. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 40, 280- 295.
- Wolff, J. U., & Poedjosoedarmo, S. (1982). *Communicative codes in central Java*. Linguistics series VIII. Southeast Asia Program, Department of Asian Studies, New York: Cornell University, Ithaca.

## APPENDIX

### Transcription Glossary

The transcription glossary is based on the system developed by Jefferson (2004) and it is used in the majority of conversation and analytic publication.

#### WHY DOES WHAT

- 1,2 All lines are numbered so that they are easily can be referred in the context.
- A: Name of the speaker or is usually abbreviated.
- A? When the name of the speaker is unclear, it is followed by question mark.

#### TIMING

- (.)(1.5) A pause is usually indicated by a dot inside a bracket.
- = It shows when a talk is in a continuance without any gaps or stops in it.
- He[llo]  
[Hi] Square brackets indicates an overlapping talk among people
- >text< Arrow brackets which points towards the text indicates that a person's pace of talking is fast.
- >>text<< Double arrow brackets which points towards the text indicates that a person's pace of talking is extremely fast
- <text> Arrow brackets which move out from the text indicates that a person is talking at a slow pace

#### DOUBTS AND COMMENTS

- (What) It cannot be heard whether "what" is being heard or not
- ( ) It cannot be heard what is being said

#### SOUNDS

- So- A dash indicates that there is sharp cut-off of the prior word or sound
- Hh Indicating that the speaker is breathing
- Heh heh Laughter is often written down less than it sounds
- \*yeah\* It indicates that the words in between are pronounced in a creaky voice
- £smile£ Pound signs indicates that the words pronounced are followed by a smile

#### INTONATIONS, STRESS, VOLUMES

- Emphasis Underlining indicates speaker emphasis
- High↑ Arrow pointing upward indicates a rising intonational shift
- Low↓ Arrow pointing downward indicates a falling intonational shift
- LOUD Capital letters indicate a high volume

#### PUNCTUATION INDICATES INTONATIONS APPROXIMATELY IN THE FOLLOWING WAY

- . Falls to low
- ? Raise to high
- ; Fall to mid low
- , Continuing or maybe slightly upward