Fillers Used by Speakers on DIVE Studios Podcast

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ABSTRACT

Fillers are words or sentences used in speech in order to connect concepts or link ideas during pauses in speech. This research examined the types and functions of fillers used by speakers on DIVE Studio podcast. This study aims to determine the types and functions of fillers used by speakers in the Dive Studios podcast. Furthermore, conversation analysis is used in this study to gather data. This research also uses a qualitative approach to describe the data. The study's findings revealed 479 fillers, divided into lexicalized and unlexicalized filled pauses. On the other hand, the researchers concluded that fillers have several functions related to the speaker's state. Five functions represent this research: hesitating, empathizing, mitigating, time-creating devices, and editing terms. Additionally, knowing the many kinds and purposes of fillers may assist speakers in being mindful of their speaking abilities.

I. Introduction

Conversation is a fundamental units of human interaction, play a vital role in shaping our daily lives, relationships, and societal dynamics. Humans will undoubtedly engage in "communication" with others in order to share our thoughts, feelings, and intended meaning with others who act as our interlocutors [1]. Conversation is a language kind of communication that preserves interpersonal ties [2]. It indicates that socializing through language can help people maintain their relationships with others. The speaker and listener are the two most crucial participants in a discussion. They both need to cooperate during their chat [3]. Communicating in a second or foreign language is not easy. Because it can be challenging, people sometimes pause when communicating in foreign language. In fact, many spontaneous speakers of different languages have pauses in speech that are taken when necessary [4]. In conversation, the moment when the speaker pauses to consider about what to say next is known as fillers.

Words include phrases such as er, um, well, okay, I mean, you know, right, yeah, like and the use of repetition is another example of fillers. Baalen (2001)[5] defined fillers as sounds, words, pauses, or repetitions that occur anywhere and at anytime in an utterance and they can be eliminated without affecting the message that is being conveyed. On the other hand, filler words play a crucial role in the management of conversations, facilitating turn-taking, signaling uncertainty or hesitation, and maintaining the flow of dialogue.

Many previous studies have been completed through various platforms to expand the understanding of filler words. Research conducted by Aliyah and Hestrian (2021)[6] entitled Analysis of Fillers Used by Agnes Monica with BUILD Series' Interview. The aims of the study are to determine the types of fillers and the function of each fillers was said by Agnes Monica in the interview at BUILD. As the results of the study, they found two types of fillers used by Agnes Monica in the interview with Kevan Kenney. The two types of fillers found were unlexicalized filled pause and lexical filled pause. Moreover, the researchers found 13 unlexicalized filled pauses and 45 lexical filled pauses.

Another study was conducted by Indriyana et al. (2021)[7] entitled Fillers and Their Functions in Emma Watson's Speech. Unlike the previous study that analyzed fillers on video interview, this study's aims are to find the types and the functions of fillers used in Emma Watson's speech. As result, the researchers found that Emma Watson produced more unlexicalized filled pauses (71

occurrences) that lexicalized filled pauses (22 occurrences). In conclusion, the fillers shown five functions, namely empathizing, hesitating, mitigating, editing term and time-creating devices.

Meanwhile, Firiady and Mahendra (2019)[8] investigated fillers in English public speaking. In this research, phrase fillers were identified to be most common use by the speakers with the total number of occurrences 85. Despite coming from English-speaking nations, the speakers still used filler words while communicating in a professional setting. This suggests that, even in public speaking, fillers occur spontaneously in communication. The researchers found that the functions of fillers are to connect idea to another, it also can help to fill the gap while a speaker was trying to find the ideas that he/she wanted to convey.

Similar research has been conducted by Khusna and Indriani (2022)[9] entitled Identifying The Used of Filers in Speaking Fluency of Asian Novice Teachers, in which this study explored the used of fillers in speaking fluency, especially for novice teachers in Asia. The result of this study showed that the use of fillers for novice teachers in Asia is not too dominant. However, the researcher suggested for novice teachers to be able to reduce the use of fillers while presenting the material being taught. The research also found that there are 12 fillers and 3 types of fillers found.

Unlike the previous studies, in this study, the researcher is interested in analyzing filler words in the podcast because YouTube channels and other social media platforms have made podcasts popular trends in recent years. A podcasts typically consists of conversations between two or more persons in a studio. Robinson (2009)[10] defined that the term "Podcast" is made up of the following two words: Pod refers to the iPod, a well-known MP3 player, and Cast refers to the broadcasting. Hence, the researcher chose a podcast entitled "MARK of NCT 127 Never Stops Talking, Can Anyone 'Fact Check' This Convo?!" from the DIVE Studios Youtube channel on the K-Pop Daebak Show segment. DIVE Studios is a popular YouTube channel and podcast network founded by Korean-American musician and entrepreneur, Eric Nam. It serves as a platform for diverse voices and content creators to share stories, discuss, and interact with its audience.

The researcher chose that podcasts because the guests, Mark Lee, is a Korean-American singer. In this case, the two of them do the conversation in English as their main language throughout. Even though English is their first language, they are bilingual speaker who speak Korean as well. Based on this reason, the researcher was interest to take this podcast to be analyzed. This study focuses on the types, the meanings, and the functions of Filler Words produced by the speakers on the Video Podcast K-Pop Daebak Show "MARK of NCT 127 Never Stops Talking, Can Anyone 'Fact Check' This Convo?!" Season 3 Episode 15. The researcher took the data from the the whole conversation in the podcast exclude the ads and game time segment which this segment made them mostly talking in Korean. Because of that wide research scoop, the fillers found were more various in type and more in quantity.

Furthermore, tho know about the types of fillers used in the podcast, the researcher used the theory from Rose (1998)[11]. She categorized types of fillers into two types, namely lexicalized fillers and unlexicalized fillers. Lexicalized fillers are words like "well", "so", "okay", and "let's see". Similar claims are made by Baalen (2001)[5], who claims that lexicalized filled pauses typically consist of the phrases "you know" and "I mean," which are typically used when a speaker is searching for words but does not want to lose the point. According to Rose (1998)[11] and Baalen (2001)[5], unlexicalized filled pauses are non-lexemes (non-words) filled pauses that speakers utilize to show hesitancy before making the next utterance. Ehm, uh, err, ee, ah, um, and other similar words are examples of unlexicalized filled pauses that are provided by Baalen (2001)[5]. The researcher analyzed the functions of the filler words based on the concepts proposed by Foss and Hakes (1978)[12], Stenstrom (1994)[13], and Baalen (2001)[5]. There are five functions of fillers, namely hesitating, mitigating, empathizing, editing term and time-creating devices. In addition, hesitating is when filler is frequently used to indicate hesitancy or maintain control of a discussion while the speaker considers over their next move[14]. As a result, speakers might utilize filled gaps as a reason to hesitate and as a way to draw listeners' attention. According to Baalen (2001)[5], fillers can soften statements so as not to offend the addressee. She also draws attention to the fillers as a sign of respect or solidarity. Filler as an empathizing or draw attention. It implies that the speaker can determine whether or not the listener is paying attention[15]. Stenstrom in Yulianti (2018)[16] defines that fillers can be used as time-creating devices as well. Fillers give the speaker some time to consider what to say next. He argues that lexical repetition is a frequent type of filler used as a time-creating devices. According to Baalen (2001)[5], fillers are used to correct the speakers' speech errors in the utterances. It indicates that the speaker is aware of their flaws and is

attempting to remedy them. The words I mean, um, ehm, uh, huh, and eeh are signs that the speaker is aware of a speech error that has to be corrected.

In conclusion, this study is important to analyze the video Podcast from DIVE Studios Youtube channel on the Deabak Show segment with the chosen episode "MARK of NCT 127 Never Stops Talking, Can Anyone 'Fact Check' This Convo?!" Season 3 Episode 15 to find the types and the function of filler words used by the speakers in the podcast.

II. Method

This research used qualitative method to find the types, meanings, and aims of fillers used by bilingual speakers on DIVE Studio Podcast. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009)[17], the term "qualitative research" refers to studies that focus on the nature of interactions, actions, circumstances, or content. In this type of study, the researcher gathered, identified, analyzed, and reached findings based on the data analysis without making any assumptions. The basic objective is to illustrate how people in certain environments learn to comprehend, account for, act upon, and otherwise manage their everyday circumstances[18]. This research is categorized as qualitative research because the researcher examines data containing fillers used by speakers in DIVE Studio Podcast using theories of types of fillers proposed by Rose (1998)[11] and functions of fillers by Foss and Hakes (1978)[12], Stenstrom (1994)[13], and Baalen (2001)[5].

The samples were obtained from DIVE Studios videos with the title "MARK of NCT 127 Never Stops Talking, Can Anyone 'Fact Check' This Convo?!" Season 3 Episode 15 because the study focused on fillers used by speakers in podcast. A video with a length of 1 hour and 3 minutes include the ads, was chosen from the DIVE Studios Youtube channel.

The researcher did some actions to gather the data. First, the researcher watched the video abundance times. Second, the researcher made a transcription and did rechecking while watching the video several times. After that, the researcher took some notes of phrases containing fillers.

After gathering the data, the researcher analyzed it by performing qualitative analysis on it. The words, phrases, and utterances used by Mark and Eric on the podcast were the source of the data the researcher examined. Firstly, the researcher categorized the fillers into types of fillers based on Rose (1998)[11] theory on fillers types. Secondly, the researcher used Foss and Hakes (1978)[12], Stenstrom (1994)[13], and Baalen (2001)[5] theory to identify the function of fillers used on the podcast. Finally, based on the research findings, the researcher came to a conclusion.

III. Results and Discussion

Table 1. Types of Fillers Used by the Speaker

Filler Words	Fillers Types			
	Lexicalized Filled Pause	Unlexicalized Filled Pause	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Uh		√	30	6.26
Well	√		9	1.88
Um		√	109	22.75
I mean	√		20	4.17
You know	√		50	10.44
Like	√		261	54.49
Total	340	139	479	100

The data findings are explained using Rose (1998)[11] theory on fillers types. According to the data, there were *uh* and *um* which are categorized as unlexicalized filled pause because those utterances were not a word and did not have meaning. Furthermore, the lexicalized filled pauses type that used by the speakers on the podcast were *well, I mean, you know,* and *like*. Those are words and phrases and they had meaning. Besides, the total of lexicalized filled pauses and unlexicalized filled pauses from podcast in each type has been shown in table 1.

Table 2. Functions of Fillers Used by the Speaker

Functions of Fillers	Frequency	Percentage(%)

Functions of Fillers	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Hesitating	39	8.14
Mitigating	14	2.92
Empathizing	63	13.15
Editing term	25	5.22
Time-creating devices	338	70.56
Total	479	100

According to the data, there are five functions of fillers found in the podcast such as hesitating, mitigating, empathizing, editing term, and time-creating devices. It can be seen that the most used fillers is for time-creating devices with the frequency 338. Those five functions were proposed by Foss and Hakes (1978)[12], Stenstrom (1994)[13], and Baalen (2001)[5] theory. Furthermore, for detail data of each function gained in the podcast have been shown in table 2. In addition, the explanations are chosen from each representation of the types and function.

A. *Fillers 'uh' and 'um' as the hesitating*

Eric Nam is an American-Korean singer. He is the host of the podcast Daebak Show on DIVE Studio Youtube channel. In the other hand, Mark is also an American-Korean singer and member of a boy group called NCT 127. In the podcast, Mark and Eric did not meet for the first time. They have been knowing each other for long before the podcast. The situation was very casual just like a conversation between old friends who had not seen each other for a long time and asked each other how they were doing and how busy they were.

*Mark: "I'm pretty sure it's called fact check yeah it is called it is the title song and **uh** we're just trying to **um** do a fact check on what we can show to the K-pop industry yo"*

From the data above, it can be seen that the bold words are fillers. The context was NCT 127 will have a comeback album which when the podcast was being shot the title track hadn't announced yet. Before saying that Mark said he was pretty sure that the title track was called fact check. From his statement, he was not sure about his idea. With his hesitation he explained what was meant by the song title. So, from this data the function of fillers *uh* and *um* are as hesitating.

B. *Fillers 'well' as the mitigating*

Based on age, Eric Nam is older than Mark. In the field of work as a musician too, Eric is Mark's senior who started his career earlier. Mark was born in Canada and moved to Korean to start his career as an idol.

*Mark: "yeah so 2016 so 2000 so good full three years so 2013 to to 16 and then 16 to now debut um **well** I'm still a baby compared to you"*

Based on the data above, the bold word is filler word. The context was Eric asked Mark when did he move to Korea and how long has he been debuted. His answer after using *well* could has two meaning that related to the context. The first one, Mark's age is younger than Eric and the second, Mark's debuted-age is younger than Eric. But, instead of saying those possibilities, Mark using fillers *well* to soften his words meaning. According to Baalen (2001)[5] that fillers can soften words to avoid offending the recipient. So, from the data above, the function of fillers *well* is as mitigating.

C. *Fillers 'you know' as the empathizing*

Mark has a lot of nicknames from his fans and his favorite one is Spider-Mark. He explained the reason why does he like the nickname is because he has some similarities with the character Spider-Man. He also mentioned that he wants to be Spider-Man Asian version in the movie if they need it.

*Mark: "**you know** I was in the park once playing basketball with like Chenle and there were kids and one of their shoes or was it a ball it got stuck up on a roof and I climbed up and got it for him."*

According to the data above, the speaker used fillers *you know* as an invitation to the listener. From the context, after he said that he wants to be Spider-Man Asian version, he tried to strengthen his reason by telling his experience. He used fillers *you know* to get attention from the listener to listen to him. From his story *'I climbed up'* is being highlighted to convey the similarity between

him and Spider-Man. Fillers *you know* would draw attention to the point made regarding the subject matter. So, the function of fillers *you know* is as empathizing.

D. *Fillers 'I mean' as the editing term*

Eric has two little brothers who work with him as his manager. Besides, Mark also has an older brother who does not work with him. He also wants to have his brother working with him. He thought that it could be a perfect picture.

*Mark: "and you know it's just like I want just like having your brothers be co-work like working together like oh my God that's like a be that's a perfect picture you know **I mean** from on on on the surface."*

Regarding to the data above there are some fillers such as *you know, like,* and repetition the word *on*. But, in this data finding the researcher will only focus on the filler word *I mean*. The speaker used filler *I mean* as the editing term. The context was Mark said that having a brother who work with him in the same field was a perfect picture, but Eric jokingly showed his expression of disagreement about Mark's statement. That's why Mark corrected it by using fillers *I mean*. It shows that fillers also can be used to correct speaker's wrong utterances into the right one.

E. *Fillers 'like' as the time-creating devices*

The conversation was getting deeper when Mark was telling about how does music affect his life. He sounded really serious in answering it since there was no laugh anymore in the conversation.

*Mark: "...I think that's what I was trying to say I was **like like** I don't know..."*

Based on Stenström (1994)[13], lexical repetition is a common form of filler that is employed as a time-creating devices. The use of repetition word gave the time for the speaker to think about the next utter. From the data above, Mark used fillers *like* two times to get some time to think about what to say next since he seemed he got difficulty concluding what he explained. It can be seen before using fillers *like* twice, he said that's what he was trying to say.

The gained data about types and functions of filler words used in Dive Studios Podcast have shown in the Table 1 and 2. In this research, lexicalized filled pauses were the most often utilized type of filler with the number of frequency 340, then unlexicalized filled pauses with the number of frequency 139. From the total number of each type of fillers, *like* was the most used filler, which appeared 261 times (54.49%), followed by *um*, which appeared 109 times (22.75%). Next, filler *you know*, with 50 occurrences (10.44%), came in third place. In other hand, the researcher found five functions of fillers used by the speakers in the podcast they were hesitating, mitigating, empathizing, editing term, and time-creating devices. From the data findings, the speakers on podcast often used fillers as time-creating devices with the number of occurrences 338 (70.56%). Since conversation in talk show is unscripted, so the speakers used fillers as time-creating devices to think what they want to say next spontaneously. TV talk shows are live programming, thus the participants—typically a host and a guest—engage in spontaneous discourse or if the show is multifaceted, more guests may also be present [19].

The nature of spontaneous podcast discussions is responsible for the abundance of filler words in this format. Filler words, including "um," "uh," and "like," frequently come out naturally as speakers move through unplanned talks. They act as a safety net for reflective or spontaneous cognitive processes. Many podcasts have an informal, conversational tone that enables live, unscripted dialogue between hosts and guests. Filler words are a linguistic crutch in this fast-paced environment, helping thoughts flow naturally and preserving discourse continuity. Although filler words tend to be more prevalent in informal conversations, they are part of what makes podcasts authentic and natural. They foster an environment in which real, uncensored conversations can occur, which appeals to listeners who want a more personal and intimate experience. The speakers strategically use fillers to navigate social dynamics, convey nuances, and enhance the overall conversational flow. Understanding these functions contributes to a deeper appreciation of the subtle yet impactful aspects of language use in natural discourse.

IV. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study revealed that there were two types of fillers; lexicalized filled pauses and unlexicalized filled pauses. Furthermore, this study also revealed five functions of fillers; hesitating, mitigating, empathizing, editing term, and time-creating devices. Based on those findings the researcher concludes that fillers commonly happen during informal and spontaneous conversation such as podcast. The shortcoming of this study is that researchers cannot examine the point of view of the speaker because of the distance between the researcher and the speaker. The suggestion for further research is that researchers can take from the phenomenology side which can apply interviews so that the point of view of the speaker can be covered. In addition, the further research can conduct deeper analysis of the types and functions of fillers by involving the speakers using phenomenology analysis or from other research paradigms.

Acknowledgment

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