

Fillers as Communication Strategies Uttered by Prabowo Subianto in His Interview as President-Elect at the Qatar Economic Forum

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ABSTRACT

In the realm of political communication, the ability to convey messages effectively in international forums is crucial for leaders to shape their public image and perception. Fillers, often dismissed as marks of speech disfluency, can serve strategic functions in managing communication flow and engaging listeners. Some studies investigated the use of fillers in spoken communication, but none has focused on Indonesian political leaders. This article reports on a study that aims to examine the types and functions of fillers as communication strategies uttered by Prabowo Subianto in his interview as president-elect at the Qatar Economic Forum. This is a qualitative study that employs a conversation analysis. The data were collected from the interview video derived from YouTube which were then transcribed. The transcription was analyzed by using Rose's (1998) theory of types of fillers and Stenstrom's (1994) taxonomy of functions of fillers. This study reveals two major findings. First, in terms of the types of fillers, the results show that Prabowo uttered both unlexicalized and lexicalized filled pauses, dominated by lexicalized fillers. However, the unlexicalized filler "uh" was uttered most frequently. These results indicate that Prabowo tended to use both lexeme and non-lexeme words to fill the pauses. In terms of the functions of fillers, the findings show that Prabowo strategically used fillers as hesitating, time-creating, empathizing, mitigating, and editing term. He produced fillers most frequently for hesitating, which signifies that he uttered fillers to hesitate and gain more time to think of what to say next. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how political leaders utilize fillers to enhance communication effectiveness, especially in high-stakes international settings. Finally, this study provides some pedagogical implications for teaching speaking to learners of English as a foreign language.

Keywords: *Fillers, communication strategies, interview, president-elect*

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INTRODUCTION

In political communication, effective communication and speaking style in English facilitate the development of solid international relationships. This is because of the pivotal role of English as the primary language of worldwide diplomacy, business, and media. The ability to convey ideas, negotiate, and engage with diverse audiences significantly impacts the politicians' global success and public perception (McNair, 2019). In other words, proficiency in English enhances political figures' credibility and perceived competencies on the international stage. It indicates their ability to engage with global concerns, grasp international standards, and navigate the global political landscape. Thus, for political figures, mastering English oral communication strategies facilitates shaping their public image, conveying messages to worldwide audiences, and responding to global queries.

The reality reveals that political figures, who are commonly great at rhetoric, frequently face the challenge of communicating their ideas effectively and persuasively, particularly in high-stakes circumstances such as international forums. We often see many political

figures who do not speak English well in spontaneous speaking. As well-known figures, their way of speaking becomes a spotlight, especially in international contexts. Hence, to enable them to speak English competently, they should be prepared to encounter various challenges during the interactions. Reports on previous research reveal that speakers of English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL) who deal with such issues handle it by employing communication strategies (Awang et al., 2022; Hassan et al., 2021). Among the various types of communication strategies, fillers are one of the commonly used types to bridge the communication gaps when speakers look for appropriate words to say.

Fillers – words or sounds such as “um”, “uh”, “ee”, “you know”, and “well” – are an important linguistic aspect in spoken communication. Bygates (as mentioned in Santos et al., 2016), explains that fillers are inserts used in speech to fill pauses, such as “well”, “umm”, “hmm”, and so on. They are lexically empty items with uncertain discourse functions, except to fill a conversational gap (Stenstrom, 1994). Stenstrom (1994) classifies fillers into silent pauses and filled pauses. Furthermore, Rose (1998) classifies fillers into unlexicalized filled pauses (non-lexemes or non-words used by speakers to indicate hesitation while they think about

what to say next, e.g. “ehm”, “uh”, “ee”, “um”, etc.) and lexicalized filled pauses (fillers in the form of words or short phrases, e.g. “like”, “well”, “you know”, “I mean”).

Studies of fillers become paramount, especially for EFL speakers since they have various functions. While fillers are sometimes perceived as signs of hesitation, lack of preparedness or speaking disfluency, they can also serve strategic functions in communication and manage the flow of conversation (Clark & Fox Tree, 2002). Stenstrom (1994) proposes five functions of fillers, namely hesitating (a mark of hesitation), empathizing (attention-getting devices), mitigating (a solidarity maker or politeness device), editing terms and time-creating devices.

In political interviews, fillers are frequently used to fill the pause while the speakers formulate responses, particularly during high-pressure interviews or debates. In line with that, Fitriati et al. (2021) argue that fillers are used by speakers as communication strategies even though they do not convey meaning. Fillers help speakers manage the pace of speech and create a conversational tone, which can increase relatability and listener engagement. They signal that the speaker is thinking, structuring their thoughts, or intending to continue speaking, thereby

maintaining the listener’s attention and engagement. Hence, although fillers do not provide the main message, they make the sentence meaningful.

In recent years, several publications have appeared documenting the studies on the types and functions of fillers. Dealing with types and functions of fillers used in political figures’ interviews or speeches, earlier studies reveal that the political figures utilized both unlexicalized and lexicalized filled pauses during their interviews or speeches (Indriyana et al., 2021; Juliano et al., 2022; Kharismawan, 2017). The fillers function as hesitating, empathizing, mitigating, editing terms and time-creating devices. The most frequent function used is as hesitating (Indriyana et al., 2021; Juliano et al., 2022; Kharismawan, 2017) and as holding turn (Sameer, 2016). The fillers are not only as a distraction from speaking but also as a way to improve interaction (Kharismawan, 2017).

Other studies have also been spotlighted on the use of fillers as communication strategies in ESL/EFL job interviews (Awang et al., 2022; Hassan et al., 2021). The results indicate that fillers were extensively used by the interviewees as a processing time pressure-related strategy when the speakers were trying to fill the gap in speaking. Likely the previous findings, some studies examine

the use of fillers in casual conversations (Fitriati et al., 2021; Vrika & Diananseri, 2022) and found that both lexicalized and lexicalized filled pauses are by the speakers as hesitation devices, empathizing devices, mitigation devices, time-creating devices, and editing term.

Some linguistics scholars also have great intentions in researching the types and functions of fillers in English classroom contexts. Some are interested in examining fillers used by English students (Fitriati et al., 2021; Gandeza, 2023; Nurfadilah et al., 2021; Syamsudin et al., 2024), used by English teachers (Ali et al., 2023; Lomotey, 2021), and used both students and teachers/lecturers (Fatimah et al., 2017). Those studies found that unlexicalized and lexicalized filled pauses are uttered by students and teachers/lecturers during classroom interactions. Besides functioning as hesitation devices, empathizing devices, mitigation devices, time-creating devices, and editing terms, fillers also help students improve their speaking skills (Gandeza, 2023) and boost their self-confidence and enthusiasm in speaking practices by (Syamsudin et al., 2024). Fillers can also fulfil the essential functions in students' development of oral skills (Santos et al., 2016).

Regarding the use of fillers in interviews, Prabowo Subianto's interview

at the Qatar Economic Forum as President-Elect provides a unique opportunity to examine the use of fillers uttered by the Indonesian political leader in international diplomacy. Qatar Economic Forum, powered by Bloomberg, is the Middle East's leading news focusing on global business and investment. The forum invited Prabowo Subianto as the speaker of the event held from May, 14th to 16th, 2024 in Doha, Qatar. Prabowo Subianto's English proficiency is spotlighted because he is one of Indonesian political leaders and plays a significant role in worldwide diplomacy. Examining the fillers used in his interview will provide insight into how proficient his spoken English is in formal spontaneous communication and how it affects public perception.

Based on this background, this study focuses on examining the types of fillers and the contextual functions of the fillers uttered by Prabowo Subianto in his interview in the international forum. This study brings novelty to the related studies since none of the previous studies has spotlighted fillers used by Indonesian political figures. This study tries to answer two questions: (1) What types of fillers are uttered by Prabowo Subianto in his interview as president-elect at the Qatar Economic Forum? and (2) How the fillers function in his utterances.

By exploring the use of fillers in Prabowo Subianto's interview at the Qatar Economic Forum, this study is significant for several reasons. Firstly, it highlights how seemingly minor elements of speech can influence communication. Secondly, it provides insight into the ways political leaders manage public speaking situations to achieve communicative goals, particularly under the pressure of international forums. Thirdly, it will highlight the significance of considering fillers as a vital aspect of communication strategies. Lastly, the findings will provide pedagogical implications for teaching English, especially in speaking classes.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was designed within the descriptive qualitative framework, utilizing a conversation analysis. Since the primary purpose of this study is to analyze, describe, and interpret the data to examine how fillers, the spoken language features, are used in interviews or conversations, a descriptive qualitative approach was considered appropriate. The basic aim of the descriptive design is to collect, examine, analyze, describe, and categorize textual data using interpretative analysis (Creswell, 2012). Moreover, conversation analysis deals with how language is used to create meaning in real-life social

interaction and works inductively with empirical data recordings of naturally occurring talk or conversation (Flowerdew, 2013).

The object of this study is Prabowo Subianto's interview derived from the YouTube video of the Qatar Economic Forum channel. Prabowo Subianto, as the Minister of Defense and President-Elect, of the Republic of Indonesia, spoke with Bloomberg's Haslinda Amin at the 2024 Qatar Economic Forum, powered by Bloomberg and held from May, 14th to 16th, 2024. The data were taken from the interview transcript, specified in Prabowo Subianto's utterances during the interview. The unit of analysis is the utterances of Prabowo Subianto. The data were collected by downloading the video from YouTube, watching the video, and transcribing the interactions between the interviewer and the interviewee.

The procedures for analyzing the data followed several steps. First, find the words or sentences containing filler expressions uttered by Prabowo Subianto. Second, analyze, classify and arrange the filler expressions in the instrument datasheet. In this step, the types of fillers were then classified into the framework of filler types by Rose (1998) and the functions of fillers were examined based on Stenstrom's (1994) theory. Third, tabulate the expressions of fillers found.

Fourth, interpret the data by making a personal assessment related to the data analysis. The last, conclude and provide implications and suggestions from the research findings and interpretation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This study highlights two major findings based on the formulated research questions. In terms of types of fillers, the results show that the most dominant filler type in total is lexicalized filled pauses, followed by unlexicalized filled pauses. However, seen from the single part of the filler expression, the unlexicalized filler “uh” took the biggest occurrence of the fillers. In terms of the functions of fillers, fillers functioning as hesitating or hesitation devices appear as the most frequently used. Each of the findings is presented in the subsequent sections.

The Types of Fillers

Rose (1998) proposes two types of fillers, namely a silent pause and a filled pause. Since this study attempted to examine the word fillers, it focuses on the filled pause. The findings show that the two types of filled pauses proposed by Rose (1998), namely, unlexicalized and lexicalized filled pauses were found in the

study. The detailed findings of the types of fillers are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Types of Fillers Produced by Prabowo Subianto

No	Types of Fillers	Number	Percentage (%)
1	Unlexicalized	81	48
	Filled Pause		
2	Lexicalized	87	52
	Filled Pause		
Total		168	100

Table 1 displays that there are 168 filler words or expressions produced by Prabowo Subianto (henceforth, the speaker) during the interview consisting of 81 unlexicalized filled pauses and 87 lexicalized filled pauses. It indicates that lexicalized filled pauses were mostly uttered by the speaker with the number of 87 times (52%). Meanwhile, unlexicalized filled pauses occur 81 times (42%). The results signify that, in general, the speaker tends to use lexeme words to fill the pauses, hesitate, think or say the next utterances. The details of the findings related to the types of fillers are presented in the subsequent tables.

Table 2. Unlexicalized Filled Pauses

No	Fillers	Number
1	Uh	67
2	Ee	14
Total		81

Unlexicalized fillers are non-word-filled pauses produced by a speaker to indicate hesitation before saying the next utterance. As displayed in Table 2, the speaker produced 81 unlexicalized filled pauses, which comprise of two filler words: “uh” and “ee”. The filler “uh” takes the biggest part of the occurrence with the number of 67 out of 168 fillers in total. This result also shows that although

lexicalized filled pauses occurred most frequently during the speaker’s interview, the speaker more consistently produced the unlexicalized filler “uh” to fill the pauses. The examples of unlexicalized filled pauses in this study can be seen in (1), (2) and (3). The initial PS represents the speaker, Prabowo Subianto.

(1) PS : “Yes, **uh** as you know nation building is a long-term process and President Joko Widodo has **uh** built a strong foundation and I’m determined to build on that foundation.” [min. 00:37]

(2) PS : “I’m determined to **ee** get rid of hunger amongst **ee** our people, especially the young.” [min. 00:50]

(3) PS : “And **ee**, in the end, we have to **uh** concentrate on processing our natural resources.” [min. 01:34]

In those three examples, the fillers “uh” and “ee” were classified as unlexicalized fillers since they are in the form of non-words or lexical items.

Table 3. Lexicalized Filled Pauses

No	Filler Words	Number	No	Filler Words	Number
1	So	12	15	The Foreign	2
2	I	11	16	In the	2
3	And	9	17	The	2
4	I think	6	18	To	2
5	You know	5	19	What we	2
6	No	5	20	Food	2
7	We	5	21	Cutting down	2
8	Right	4	22	I mean	1
9	Yes	3	23	And then	1
10	What you call it	2	24	Now	1
11	It’s	2	25	As you know	1
12	Is	2	26	We think	1
13	We will	2		Total	87

Lexicalized filled pauses, on the other hand, are fillers in the form of words or short phrases. As presented in Table 3, there are twenty-six forms of lexicalized filler words with the number of 87 fillers uttered by the speaker during the interview. The top three most frequent lexicalized fillers to fill the pauses are fillers “so”, “I”, and “and”. The filler word “so” occurred 12 times in total. The examples of lexicalized

filled pauses are illustrated in (4), (5), and (6).

(4) PS : “... *I mean, I, I* believe, *you know*, the capital city is a political project and the main drivers must be the domestic resources and then the foreign, the foreign investment will come in later.” [min. 10:53]

(5) PS : “*So*, I will work very hard so that I don’t disappoint my people, *right?*” [min. 13:52]

(6) PS : “And, uh, *so, right*, I think it’s time to be a bit more, uh, daring within a good governance.” [min. 06:56]

The examples show that the filler “so”, “and”, “right”, “I”, “I mean”, and “you know” belong to lexicalized filled pauses. The fillers “so”, “and”, “right”, and “I” are in the form of words, while the

fillers “I mean”, and “you know” are in the form of phrases. The word “I” in (4) belongs to a filled pause as it was repeated twice in order.

The Functions of Fillers

This section presents the findings on the functions of fillers produced by the speaker within the framework of Stenstrom (1994). The fillers function as hesitating, empathizing, mitigating, time-creating, and editing terms. All five functions of fillers were used by the speaker in his interview. The details of the findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The functions of fillers produced by Prabowo Subianto

No	Functions of Fillers	Number	Percentage (%)
1	Hesitating	82	49
2	Time-creating	56	33
3	Empathizing	18	11
4	Mitigating	11	6
5	Editing term	1	1
Total		168	100

Table 4 displays that the speaker utilized all of the Stenstrom’s (1994) filler functions. Fillers as hesitating or a mark of hesitation are the most frequently occurred, with a frequency of 82 times out of 168 (49%), followed by fillers as time-creating, empathizing, mitigating, and editing term. Meanwhile, fillers

functioning as editing terms came up with the least function found. The frequent use of fillers as a mark or hesitation signifies that the speaker frequently hesitated and required time to think about what to say next.

Hesitating

Fillers as hesitation devices or a mark of hesitation were produced most frequently by the speaker. Hesitation happens when the speaker needs to make an utterance or plans to utter what to say next. The filler “uh” and “ee” appeared frequently in the speaker’s utterances to show this function. The examples of fillers that function as hesitation devices are shown in (7), (8) and (8).

(7) PS : “I think *uh* this *uh* misperception, *uh* we are not *uh* protectionists.” [min. 04:42]

(8) PS : “*Uh*, we will go *ee* digitalization, *ee* computerization and this will increase our tax ration, *uh* our *uh* revenue services.” [min. 08:00]

(9) PS : “Yes, *uh*, you know 35 billion dollars, but *uh*, the calculation is we will need 25 years to 30 years to complete this capital.” [min. 10:28]

In those examples, regarding the contexts, the fillers “uh” and “ee” were

uttered by adding a slight pause. This indicates that the speaker used the fillers to hesitate even as they tried to produce the appropriate words in his utterances. In other words, these fillers were produced to give the speaker time to think because he was not sure what to utter next.

Time-creating

The common form of fillers produced functioning as time-creating is the lexical repetition. This function means that fillers provide some time for the speaker to think and consider what to say next. (10), (11), and (12) illustrate the fillers that function as time-creating devices.

(10) PS : “*I I I* would say within 2 or 3 years, yes.” [min. 03:03]

(11) PS : “*We we we* cannot, uh, keep importing, uh, industrial goods all the time.” [min. 05:25]

(12) PS : “*We will, we will* not be, ee, an advanced industrial society if we are just producing of raw materials.” [min. 05:35]

Excerpts (10) and (11) present single-word repetition. The speaker repeated the words “I” and “We” three times in different utterances. Meanwhile, in (12), the repetition is in the form of the partial clause “we will”. Nevertheless,

these two kinds of repetitions signify that the speaker was gaining some time to plan what to say next.

Empathizing

Fillers performing as empathizing or attention-getting devices were also uttered by the speaker. In other words, the speaker employed the fillers to invite the listeners (in this case, the interviewer) to be involved in what he said. The fillers used as empathizing in this study include “so”, “right”, “you know”, “as you know”, and “what you call it”. The filler word “so” appeared as the most frequent lexicalized filler produced by the speaker. The examples of fillers as empathizing are in (13) and (14).

(13) PS : “Ee, *you know*, we import 20 billion dollars every year for diesel oil. *So*, can you imagine, uh, the savings we will have when we will switch to biofuel?” [min. 04:11]

(14) PS : “*So*, I will work very hard so that I don’t disappoint my people, *right?*” [min. 13:52]

The fillers “you know”, “so”, and “right” in (13) and (14) show an empathizing function because the speaker used them to get the listener’s attention and invited the listener to get involved in what he said. Moreover, fillers were also

produced as empathizing techniques, indicating to the speaker that his message had been received and understood. The filler “right” in (14) represents this function.

Mitigating

Fillers can also serve as mitigating devices. It means that fillers can mitigate utterances to avoid hurting the listener’s feelings. In other words, mitigating can also represent a solidarity marker or politeness device. The instances of Fillers functioning as mitigating in this study are displayed in (15) and (16).

(15) PS : “*I think* we have the lowest, uh, debt to GDP, uh, figure in, in the world, one of the lowest. And, uh, *so, right, I think* it’s time to be a bit more, uh, daring within a good governance. [min. 06:46]

(16) PS : “*We think* that we want to industrialize and those are our natural resources we have to, uh, protect our interest in the sense that we must the full value, right? [min. 05:07]

In those instances, the fillers “I think”, “We think”, and “so, right, I think” are categorized as mitigating. The fillers “I think” and “We think” used by the speaker in his utterances stipulate that he wanted to state his opinion, argument, or

statement more politely. More specifically, in (16) uttered “so, right, I think” in one sequence indicating that he was okay with the interlocutor’s response showing that she was not sure about PS’s answer. However, he tried to deliver his perspective politely. Thus, these fillers represent mitigating as a solidarity maker and politeness device.

Editing Term

Fillers functioning as editing term occurred very rarely in this study. It is the least function used. The speaker used fillers as editing terms represented by the phrase “I mean”. In this study, the editing term only occurred once. The evidence is shown in (17).

(17) PS : “So, we are, we are very confident. **I mean**, I, I believe, you know, capital city is a political project and the main drivers must be the domestic resources and then the foreign, the foreign investment will come in later.” [min. 10:53]

As can be seen in (17), the speaker produced filler “I mean” to correct and clarify his previous statements.

Discussion

The research findings have provided evidence that the speaker,

Prabowo Subianto, produced a variety of fillers during his speech in his interview. In terms of filler types, the results corroborate the theory proposed by Rose (1998) that there are two types of fillers produced by the speaker, called unlexicalized and lexicalized filled pauses. Moreover, these findings affirm most of the previous study’s findings that both lexicalized and unlexicalized filled pauses are used by the subjects of the studies (i.e. AL-Faragy & Mohammed, 2022; Ali et al., 2023; Awang et al., 2022; Fitriati et al., 2021; Indriyana et al., 2021; Juliano et al., 2022; Vrika & Diananseri, 2022). In addition, the lexicalized fillers were more frequently uttered by the speaker, which occurred 87 times in total. It indicates that the speaker tended to use lexeme words to fill the pauses in their talk. This is also strengthened by the findings revealing that there are 26 forms of lexicalized filler words identified.

However, although lexicalized filled pauses were mostly used by the speaker, the unlexicalized filler “uh” was identified as the most frequently used. This finding is in line with Fitriati et al. (2021) who also made the same discovery. This filler “uh” appeared 67 times out of 81 lexicalized fillers. One of the factors that may affect the speaker to utter the unlexicalized filler ‘uh’ is because it is the simpler one. The speaker often uttered this

filler by adding a slight pause. It indicates that the filler allowed the speaker to think since he hesitated about what to say next.

The findings revealing that the speaker produced fillers in his utterances which support the previous studies show that the use of fillers is common in speaking. Fluent speech is rare since an interview is an activity of interaction or conversation and is “the prototypical form of language use” (Clark & Fox Tree, 2002). In other words, it is nearly impossible to find speakers who did not produce fillers at all in spontaneous speaking even among native speakers. It occurs naturally to speakers since they sometimes need to think about, plan or hesitate what to convey. In this situation, fillers play their functions as a communication strategy to make speaking sounds natural.

In terms of the functions of filler, the findings of this study show similarities and distinctions from some earlier research. In terms of similarities, the current study and the previous ones discovered that speakers produced fillers to help them speak naturally since the fillers function as hesitating, time-creating, empathizing, mitigating, and editing terms. The five functions of filler formulated by (Stenstrom, 1994) represented in this study. In addition, this study reveals that the fillers functioning as hesitating or a

mark of hesitation occurred most frequently, followed by time-creating, empathizing, mitigating, and editing term functions. The dominant use of fillers as hesitating corroborates the earlier studies’ findings that reveal a similar discovery (Fatimah et al., 2017; Juliano et al., 2022; Nurfadilah et al., 2021).

This study also reports that fillers produced by the speaker in his utterances are mostly in the form of unlexicalized fillers “uh” and “ee”. In uttering “uh” and “ee”, the speaker added a slight pause indicating that he was thinking and planning what to say next. The unlexicalized fillers such as “uh” and “ee” should be considered integral to the information the speaker is trying to convey although the fillers do not contain or convey the primary message (Clark & Fox Tree, 2002). Hence, hesitation aids the smooth flow of utterances and belongs to the speaker’s technique to achieve successful communication. More specifically, hesitation in utterances allows the speaker to look for appropriate words to use in utterances, serving as a communication strategy.

Furthermore, fillers as time-creating devices came up as the second dominant function used by the speaker and the same with fillers for hesitating purposes. The difference is fillers as hesitating purposes referred to

unlexicalized filled pauses and time-creating devices referred to lexicalized filled pauses. In this study, the time-creating function commonly occurred in the form of word, phrase, or partial clause repetition. It can be said that this function contributes to the high number of lexicalized fillers used by the speakers in this study. For instance, the filler word “I” appears as the second most common lexicalized filler used it was repeated several times (see example (10)). This case also happened in other lexicalized filler pauses found in this study (see examples (10) and (11)).

This study also shows that fillers as empathizing or attention-getting devices were also uttered by the speaker. These fillers functioned to invite the listener to get involved in what the speaker said. Likely, the speakers also used fillers that function as mitigating. This was reflected when the speaker used fillers to make his utterances more polite and convince the listener to accept his arguments. Meanwhile, the editing term function came up as the least function of fillers used by the speaker. The filler as an editing term in this study was represented with the use of fillers “I mean”. The speaker used the fillers to clarify his previous statement.

Although some experts argue using fillers is normal for speakers, especially non-native speakers of English, the most

effective speech happens when filler words are used properly and moderately. The overuse of fillers reflects speech disfluency that enables messages are not conveyed optimally (Duval et al., 2014 as cited in Fitriati et al., 2021). It means that the overuse of fillers negates the speaker’s credibility. It may indicate that the speaker is unprepared, lowering his or her credibility. The result of this study revealed that the speaker’s frequent use of the unlexicalized filler “uh” in his utterances may signify speech disfluency, in which he thinks or hesitates while looking for words or ideas to speak next. Therefore, in order to effectively use fillers in speaking, speakers should have a greater understanding of fillers and their relevance.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

This study concludes with two major findings. In terms of the types of fillers used by Prabowo Subianto in his interview, the results show that he uttered both unlexicalized and lexicalized fillers proposed by Rose (1998) to fill the pauses during his speaking. The lexicalized filled pauses occurred dominantly in the whole. Nevertheless, the unlexicalized filler “uh” was uttered most frequently by Prabowo. These results indicate that Prabowo tended to use both lexeme and non-lexeme words

to fill the pause, hesitate, think, or say the next utterances during the interview.

In terms of the functions of fillers, this study reveals that Prabowo Subianto used fillers for five functions based on the framework of Stenstrom (1994), namely hesitating, time-creating, empathizing, mitigating, and editing terms. The fillers were used most frequently for hesitating, which indicates that he produced fillers to hesitate, to gain more time to think and plan what to say next.

To sum up, by examining fillers uttered by Prabowo Subianto during his interview at the Qatar Economic Forum, this study offers several pedagogical implications, especially for teaching speaking and communication strategies. Firstly, English teachers can teach students how to successfully and appropriately use fillers as communication strategies in their speaking to foster more natural and confident communication. It is necessary to understand fillers as strategic tools for managing speech flow, emphasizing key points, and engaging listeners. Additionally, teachers can introduce the advantages and disadvantages of producing fillers so that students will not overuse fillers in their speaking. Finally, by incorporating these insights in speaking classes, teachers can help students become more skilled and competent speakers in high-stakes communication contexts.

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