

Types of Speech Fillers in Top Girls

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ABSTRACT

Speakers use speech fillers in their communication once in a while to gain time to think, pause, or organize their thoughts. Speech fillers are sounds, words, and phrases produced to fill the gap during the conversation, which is thought to be less important as part of the sentence and could not change the meaning of the utterance. However, speech fillers become problematic when overused or employed in the wrong context. This study investigates speech fillers and how they are produced and perceived appropriately by interlocutors from a phono-pragmatic perspective. Consequently, this study aims to examine the types of SFs used in 'Top Girls' and the extent to which they are employed. The data have been analyzed and classified based on the eclectic model Rose's (1998) theories on the types of fillers which combined with similar notions on the types and functions of fillers which taken from Stenström's (1994) model. A qualitative methodology was used, and the results showed that lexicalized speech fillers were more frequent than unlexicalized ones. In particular, this study will benefit learners specialized in pragmatics because it clarifies the pragmatic indication of speech fillers used in the dramatic text. The occurrence of each speech filler was calculated manually using auditory judgments to identify types of speech fillers.

KEYWORDS

Dramatic Text, Lexicalized Fillers, Speech Fillers, Types of Speech Fillers, Unlexicalized Fillers



1. Introduction:

Spoken interaction is different from written interaction in that it contains speech fillers (henceforth SFs), discourse markers, and many other phenomena that make the speech go natural. According to Brown & Yule (1983, cited by Navratilova, 2015, p. 1), speakers may use many prefabricated SFs in their utterances, such as ehm, err, what I mean, I think, well, you know, if you see, and so on.

People occasionally insert SFs into everyday discourse to give themselves time to think or arrange their thoughts. However, when used excessively, SFs become problematic when overused. Too many fillers can interrupt our message and entirely alter the way the listeners perceive speakers, giving the impression that they are unprofessional, unprepared, and possibly even unintelligent. In other words, when people overuse SFs in our speech, they run the risk of confusing the listener and losing their credibility.

Additionally, SFs are "expressions like er, erm, you see, and well used in speech to fill in pauses" (Bygate, 1987, p. 115). During verbal interactions, speakers are highly likely to use expressions such as well, I mean, actually, you know, and let me think to create a delay that enables them to carry on the conversation during times of difficulty.

Speech Fillers may or may not be taught explicitly in the course, especially in the dramatic text. Thus, the interlocutors believe that fillers are one of the factors which support their speaking ability even though fillers are seen as one of negative perception in speaking. The cause of using filler words by interlocutors in "Top Girls" could be one of the things that need to be found out. Furthermore, the effectiveness of SFs used by interlocutors as their preferred strategy to communicate with each other and the awareness of SFs leads to the framework of the importance of SFs in the dramatic text. Therefore, the researcher is interested in the use of SFs by interlocutors since these words are often seen negatively when spoken while being one of the best ways to fill in gaps and sometimes to cover confusion.

However, speech fillers, (henceforth SFs), are discourse markers used by speakers to show that they are deliberating or hesitating tools appeal at speaking. SFs serve a communicative function rather than as the conversation's main message. Instead, they convey a collateral message. They merely help in meaning. A variety of interpersonal messages, such as holding the floor, which can be conveyed with SFs (Erten, 2014).

Therefore, this study aims to find out the types of SFs used in 'Top Girls' and the extent to which they are employed. Thus, the researcher formulates two research problems: (1) What are the types of SFs used in "Top Girls"? and (2) How often are SFs used in the play?

1.1. Theoretical Background:

According to Tottie (2011), the first researchers who studied fillers, specifically on Uh and Um, were psycholinguists. She also mentioned the other researcher, such as Maclay & Osgood (1959), Goldman-Eisler (1961), Stenström (1994), Kjellmer (2003), Gilquin (2008), who conducted on the topic of filler. Stenström (1994) defines the filler as lexically an empty item with uncertain discourse functions, except to fill a conversational gap (p. 222). It means that the fillers commonly occur to mark of hesitation or to hold control of a conversation while the speaker thinks what to say next. Rose (1998) conducted FPs in English Language teaching course materials at the University of Birmingham, UK in a thesis entitled "The Communicative Value Of Filled Pauses in Spontaneous Speech." Four adult native English speakers from North America, of various ages and social backgrounds, were the subjects—two males and two females. The researcher interviewed each of them for a total of fifteen minutes on average. The audio recordings were made for later listening. In order to prevent participants from becoming overly conscious of their talk and possibly affecting the data, the subjects were informed before the interviews that the researcher was

collecting samples of natural talk for the purpose of discourse analysis but were not informed that FPs was a specific aim of the study.

He concluded that a focus on FPs might benefit listening comprehension by encouraging learners to get benefit from speakers' pause time to process inputs. FPs may further benefit speaking ability in helping learners to hold their turns in the conversation and to be more fluent, and more like native speakers.

Clark & Tree (2002) in their study "Using uh and um in spontaneous

speaking". The words "uh" and "um" are used by examined speakers to indicate that they are initiating a pause in speech to look for a word or to maintain the floor. Four huge corpora of spontaneous speech were used as the study's primary sources of evidence. These corpora, which varied in the type of speech they contained, face-to-face conversations (the London–Lund corpus: LL corpus) telephone conversations (the switchboard corpus: SW corpus) speech to answering machines (AM corpus); and narratives (Pear corpus). Moreover, they varied depending on whether the speakers were British or North American (SW and Pear corpora) (LL and AM corpora). Because it accurately represented face-to-face interaction, had both prolongations and pauses, and had sufficient SFs for useful analysis, the researchers used the LL corpus as their main source of information. The findings of this study stated that "um" and "uh" are interjections in English, with all the characteristics it implies. Due to the fact that they denote ongoing production, uh and um are unique. They were employed by speakers to signal that they were beginning what they believed would be a brief or lengthy wait before speaking.

Kharismawan (2017) examined "The Types and Functions of SFs used in Barack Obama's Speeches." In this study, he sought to answer two research questions: 1) what are the types of SFs in Barack Obama's speeches? And 2) what are the functions of SFs in Barack Obama's speeches? The objective of this study was to introduce the different kinds and uses of SFs while also raising students' awareness of SFs as a potential cause of linguistic hesitancy. A strategy of descriptive qualitative was used in this investigation. Rose's (1998) theory on the forms of SFs was combined with ideas from Stenstrom (1994) and Baalen (2001) on the types and functions of SFs in order to identify the issues raised by this study. The findings of this study conducted that there were two types of speech fillers: lexicalized and unlexicalized SFs. The study also demonstrated that SFs serve the five additional functions of editing term, empathizing, hesitation mark, mitigating, and time creating devices.

Riana, Murni, & Sumarsih (2018) conducted "Types of SFs used by kindergarten students in telling picture". The subjects of this research were 20 kindergarten learners enrolled at RA Melati Secanggang, Langkat, Indonesia. The data of this study were the talk of the kindergarten learners when they telling a picture. The researchers utilized a smart phone to record the students' utterances and to pick up on clear remarks in order to collect the students' speech. In this study, observation served as the instrument and descriptive qualitative research method. On the basis of Rose's (1998) theory, the various SF types were examined. The findings revealed that kindergarten students employed two different types of SFs. Both lexicalized and unlexicalized SFs were the types of SFs discovered in this study.

1.2. Rose (1998) and Stenström (1994) Models:

In this research, an eclectic model was followed to meet the research requirements: Stenström (1994) for the types and functions, and Rose's (1998) for the types of SFs.

Stenström's (1994) model of discourse analysis takes a good tool for analyzing particular turn-taking interaction of spoken texts and for highlighting their characteristic features, which can be further used for meaningful interpretations. However, the model does not offer many options for describing the link between turn-takings and their particular contexts, which are recreated by speakers.

Based on Stenström (1994), SFs are divided into two categories: a silent pause and a filled pause. On the other hand, Rose (1998) distinguishes between two types of filled pauses. The first one is an unlexicalized filled pause, while the second is a lexicalized filled pause (See Figure 1).

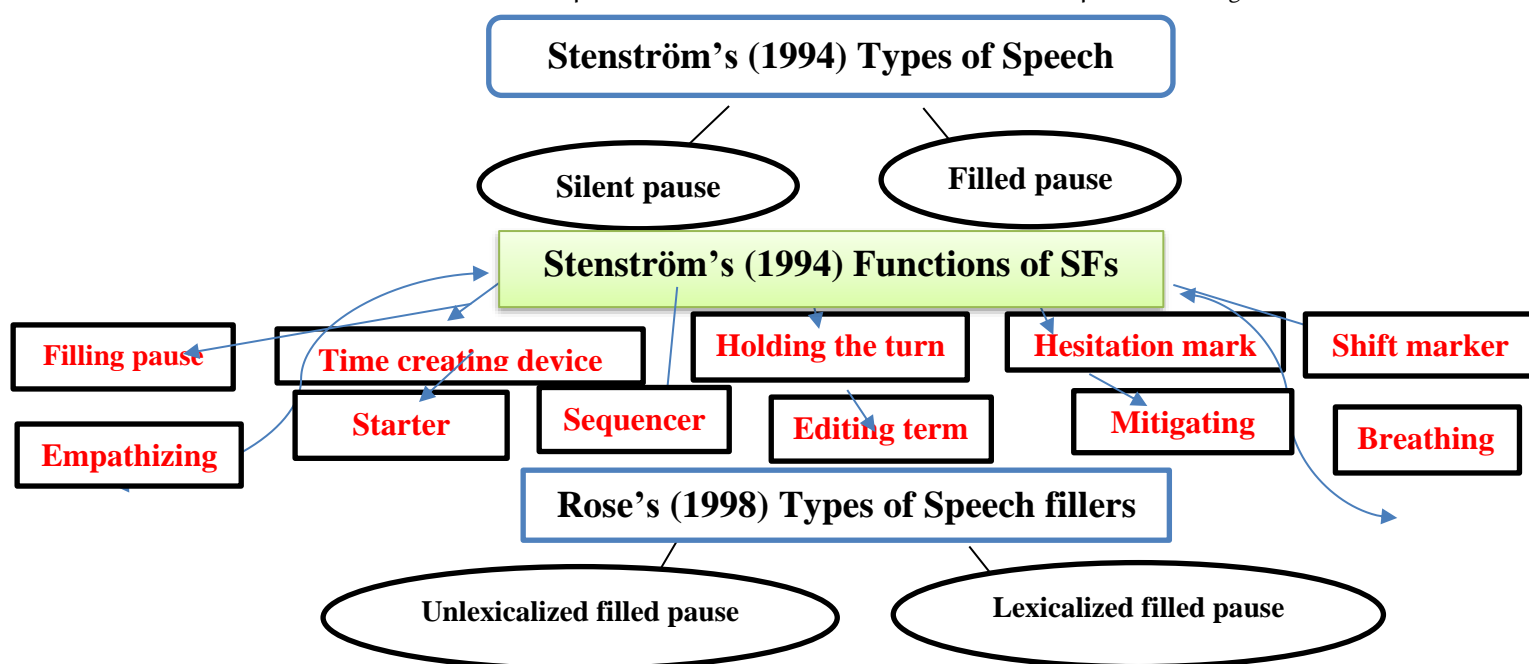


Figure 1: Types and Functions of SFs based on Stenström (1994, p.1) and Rose (1998, p.1)

Rose (1998) states that lexical SFs are words or short phrases, such as well, yeah, like, sort of, if you see what I mean, you know, etc. On the other hand, Stenstrom (1994) argues that lexical SFs are lexical items like sort of, well, and you know have a positive influence on the smooth flow of speech. They help the speakers to take, hold and relinquish the turn, and appeal for feedback. She also states that those SFs are one type of hesitation phenomenon.

Rose, (1998) claims that unlexicalized SFs are pauses filled with any of the subsequent phonetic combinations: /am/, /u/, /a/, /um/, /e/, /m/, /em/ as in the coming extract. See for example;

//my cousin's daughter came down and said *er* princess diana was in an Accident (Rose, p. 8)

Filled pauses can typically be used to signify that the speaker has no intention to give the turn, but is definitely preparing what to say next. For instance:

A: everyone was. PROMISED their LEAVE# {AND| GOT it# on^ the DAY# and there was no MONKEYING {ABOUT# {#

B: - ʔ:m - . so WE were RECURRING (Stenstrom, 1994, p. 76).

Without the filled pause ʔ:m, it will be easy for speaker B to get the impression that speaker A had finished the message. In other words, s/he had nothing else to add, and s/he was ready to give up his/her turn (Stenstrom, 1994).

- WELL# ʔ: m. I mean that is. the most obvious | ʔn| ʔ: EXAMPLE# but ʔ: ʔ —. if they talk about UNEMPLOYMENT# (Stenstrom, 1994, p. 69).

Stenstrom (1994) states that there are many functions of SFs: filling pause, holding the turn, hesitation mark, empathizing, time-creating device, mitigating, starter, shift marker, breathing, sequencer, and editing term.

Although both Stenstrom (1994) and Rose (1998) models deal with types of SFs, Stenstrom's model (1994) focuses on the functional side of SFs too.

1.3. Types of Speech Fillers:

Speech fillers can be divided into different types based on their word structure. It might be a simple word, a phrase, or a clause. One word, such as all right, well, um, yeah, uh, eh, so, and right,

constitutes a basic word filler. Speech fillers can also take the form of a phrase. A set of words is known as a phrasal filler, such as *by the way* and *how to say*, without a subject or a verb. The other is a clausal filler, which is a group of words such as, *I mean*, and *you know* that function as both a subject and a predicate (Stevani et al., 2018).

Based on their functions, pauses (both silent and filled) and verbal or lexical speech fillers were divided into two types by Stenström (1994). However, Rose (1998) distinguished two types of filled pauses (SFs). There is a lexicalized and an unlexicalized filled pause.

1. Unlexicalized Fillers or Non-Verbal Speech Fillers:

Non-lexeme (non-word) filled pauses, also known as unlexicalized filled pauses, are used by speakers to show hesitation while they consider what to say next (Rose, 1998; Baalen, 2001). A few examples of unlexicalized filled pauses are provided by Baalen (2001), including *ehm*, *uh*, *err*, *ee*, *ah*, *um*, and others. The term unlexicalized filled pauses are also supported by Juan (2006), who claims that the vocalizations such as, *ehm*, *uh*, *err*, *ee*, *ah*, *um*, and others that fall under this category are the simplest to make when speaking. Then he refers to them as neutral vowel sounds.

2. Lexicalized Fillers or Verbal Speech Fillers:

Lexicalized filled pauses are fillers that take the form of single words or short utterances such as, *well*, *yeah*, *sort of*, *you know*, *if you see*, *what I mean*, and so on. On the other hand, the phrases *you know*, and *I mean* are typically used when a speaker is grouping words but does not want to give up the claim to the audience, according to Baalen (2001), who also makes a similar claim. Furthermore, she also mentioned that *like* and *well* are examples of fillers (when they are not used as verbs or prepositions) and *well* (not in the initial position). According to Stenstrom (1994), verbal fillers, such as *well*, *I mean*, and *sort of*, are one type of filler that is similar to lexicalized fillers. FPs can also be lexicalized such as *like* and *you know* as in the following examples:

//and this bandstand also had *like* a kitchen area under NEATH // so it was a fairly HIGH bandstand // (Adopted from Rose, 1998, p.8)

_ //when people are very OLD. // *you KNOW* // the cars that they LIKE // the cars that they RODE in// that they grew. // the cars that // the people they KNEW // everything starts to disapPEAR //. (Adopted from Rose, 1998, p.8)

They may also be lexicalized using phrases such as *ok*, *so*, *okay*, and *let's see*. Even so, not all examples of these utterances constitute FPs, despite the fact that they may be used to fill gaps in speech. According to Stenstrom (1994, p.1), lexicalized FPs are distinguished from unlexicalized FPs in that they appear to be short moments during which speakers decide on the next word or the organization of their speech.

Therefore, It is worth mentioning that "silent and FPs are used for partly the same, partly different purposes". It is obvious that only SPs serve as breathing pauses; these pauses typically correspond to semantic-syntactic boundaries. For hesitations, strategic purposes (such as taking, holding, and yielding the turn), and to identify units of discourse, such as topics and subtopics, both silence and FPs are typically employed in combination (Stenstrom, 1994, p. 7).

2. Methodology:

A qualitative methodology was used, and reliable and spoken data was analyzed to use an eclectic model Stenström (1994) for the types and functions, Rose's (1998) model types of SFs, and Brazil's (1997) discourse intonation model. The source of the data is an authentic YouTube video downloaded from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qA-b_MOHss. This study is based on a quantitative analysis method for counting the frequencies and percentages of speech fillers employed in 'Top Girls'. The occurrence of each speech filler was calculated manually using auditory judgments to identify types of speech fillers in dramatic text.

2.1. Research Design:

The main objective of research design is to determine how the research questions are answered. A research design is an essential item in doing research. It contains all strategies used to carry out research, including data collection, interpretation, analysis, and discussion. (Robert, 2011; Kumar, 2011). Study designs, which can be used in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methodology tools, are types of inquiry that provide specific instructions for methods in a research design (Creswell, 2014).

The current study is qualitative in nature and employs the procedure for quantifying qualitative data. According to Creswell (2017), this approach can be used to quantify qualitative data through the process of enumeration. Additionally, this method is used to keep a record of each word's occurrences in a document. In addition, to calculate the number of times a word occurs in a text.

Qualitative research represents a naturalistic and interpretive approach. It interprets the phenomena according to the meaning given by people (Fontana et al., 1994). Quantitative research enables the researcher to investigate the data using statistical analysis (Richards & Schmidt, 2013).

It is worth mentioning that this study mainly employs a qualitative method of data description. The data were analyzed following Rose's (1998) theory types of SFs. This study is based on a quantitative analysis method for counting the frequencies and percentages for types of speech fillers employed in 'Top Girls.'

2.2. Data Analysis, Results, and Discussion:

This research used two types of fillers by Rose to investigate fillers used by interlocutors in dramatic text. In this study researchers found:

Data (1):

// Well, it's a step//

The filler word "Well" is used as lexicalized filler occurred in the data 44 times. The pragmatic indication of 'well' as a starter or discourse marker is to give agreement, a speaker can use this type to clarify his or her subjective stance toward the interlocutor. The expression conveys two messages, the first is positive, it is an approval of the news that they are transmitting and the second that suggestively expresses that it approves of the news and in turn leaves the void to say there is more ahead.

Data (2):

//Just before he died he said to me// ,

The word "Just" is used as lexicalized filler occurring 42 times. It is a great way to emphasize a point or, paradoxically, to hedge your argument. Additionally, it can show hesitation and explain your point in a more indirect way (which, in some situations, might be more polite!).

Data (3):

//I don't know how you could bear to leave Hawaii//

The phrase "I don't know" is used as a mark of a lexicalized filler occurring 7 times. The context in which we use "I don't know" is to leave the field or space for another person to continue the conversation because it is not in the speakers' best, and does not handle the conversion issue, or simply wants to listen to someone else.

Data (4):

// Ah! Nijo// !

The sound "Ah" is used as the mark of an unlexicalized filler occurring 6 times. The word "Ah" expresses the person's social reaction, which expresses in this situation an emotion of surprise under the sense of reaffirmation or amazement. The filler sound 'Ah' serves as a hesitation mark.

Data (5):

//Of course, you were//

The phrase "of course" is used as the mark of a lexicalized filler occurring 25 times. We constantly use the expression "of course" because the sense of it is to reaffirm the position of thought towards a certain action, in this context we often use it because of the atmosphere of friendship that generates the theme of conversion and gives it grace and attraction.

Data (6):

//Anyway I'm a heresy myself//

The word "Anyway" is used as the mark of a lexicalized filler occurring 12 times. The sense for the user "Anyway" is to redirect the conversation, so the other person has the space to continue with the topic or change it; the use we are giving it is in order to change the subject.

Data (7):

//My father taught me Latin although I was a girl. / But //

The word "But" occurs in the data 75 times, and is used as the mark of a lexicalized filler, verbal space to materialize the thought in words, in which the idea or memory is being processed, in this context but it is because he is telling a story and ordering the next words that will continue with his speech.

Data (8):

// Nijo, I mean a healthy life in the open air//

The phrase 'I mean' considered as a lexicalized filler appeared 3 times in the dramatic text, although it is a filler phrase, many times they have their function, in our contexts, we use "I mean" as a filler is used by the speaker as a self-corrector, i.e. the speaker needs to sort out his/her thoughts and correct something that has already been said. As found in the utterance above, the use of I mean is in the form of phrase that has meaning but it will not change the content of the sentences.

Data (9):

// I think a drink while we wait for the others. I think a drink anyway//

The phrase 'I think' considered as a lexicalized filler occurring 28 times. The main function of the filler 'I think' is to express one's opinion, usually without knowing whether this opinion is true or not. It is a polite way of expressing opinions, yet, as with all fillers, it can be excluded from the clause. Data 9 showed that the speaker showed her/his empathize through his/her opinion

Data (10):

//You're not getting out of it, you know//

The phrase "you know" is used as a lexicalized filler occurring 6 times, which can encourage feedback from listeners and promote engagement during informal interactions. They frequently appear at the start and end of a turn, although they can also appear elsewhere when looking for confirmation that the listener understands or agrees with the statement. The speaker assumes that the addressee(s) already know everything about the topic that is discussed and only wants to be sure.

Data (11):

//Oh it's a long story//

The sound "oh" is used as the mark of an unlexicalized filler occurring 43 times. It is often used at the beginning of a sentence or as a standalone word to show a reaction of surprise, whether that is positive (feeling thrilled) or negative (feeling alarmed or disappointed). It serves as interjection.

Data (12):

//That's what I should have done I suppose//

The phrase "I suppose" is used as the mark of a lexicalized filler occurring 4 times. It occurs under pressure to reaffirm the comment or expression being transmitted at the time, or as a positive response to the previous message.

Data (13):

//You really are exceptional, Griselda//

The word 'really' is used as the mark of a lexicalized filler occurring 25 times. The indication of using "really" is in an affirmative consultative way, that is, we consult what was already known, in the context of being amazed by the information.

Data (14):

//Yeah, start it's go//

The word 'Yeah' is used as the mark of a lexicalized filler occurring only once. Data 14 shows the word yeah has a meaning but it will not change the content of the sentence. Yeah is informal response form, the speaker comments on somebody's argument/opinion and agrees.

Data (15):

//Well, we'd had worse, you see//

The phrase 'you see' is used as the mark of a lexicalized filler occurring once. The function of "you see" is to indicate how you see it; it is used to leave the space of thought of the other person about understanding the message.

Types of Speech Fillers:

A word, phrase, or sound used to fill in silences or pauses in speech is known as a speech filler. After analyzing all data, this section explained the types of SFs used in Top Girls by using theory the types of fillers by Rose, the findings can be presented as the following table shows the types of SFs used in the data:

No.	Speech fillers	Type		Percentage
		Unlexicalized	Lexicalized	
1	Ah	6	-----	2%
2	Anyway	-----	12	4%
3	But	-----	75	23%
4	I don't know	-----	7	2%
5	I mean	-----	3	1%
6	I suppose	-----	4	1%
7	I think	-----	28	9%
8	Just	-----	42	13%
9	of course,	-----	25	8%
10	Oh	43	-----	13%
11	Really	-----	25	8%
12	Well		44	14%
13	Yeah		1	0%
14	You know		6	2%
15	You see		1	0%
Subtotal		49	273	100%
Total		322		100

Table (1): Types of SFs Used in 'Top Girls'

Accordingly, they were two types of SFs lexicalized and unlexicalized fillers with total number of occurrences 322. As it can be seen, lexicalized SFs were used more frequently 273 times than unlexicalized ones 49 times. Thus, lexicalized filled pauses are fillers that take the form of

single words or short utterances. In addition, lexicalized SFs are distinguished from unlexicalized SFs in that they appear to be short moments during which speakers decide on the next word or the organization of their speech. Therefore, whether those words were in the sentence or not, they could not change the meaning of the sentence. However, they all use lexicalized more often than unlexicalized SFs. This indicates that the interlocutors use words or phrases to avoid silence and take a controlling role in their speech.

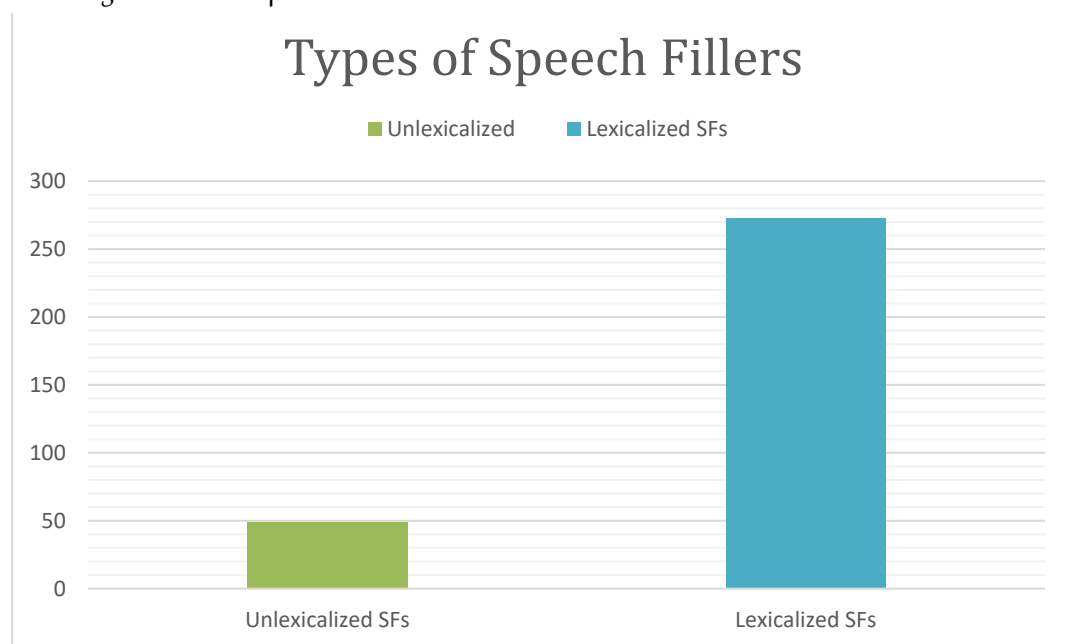


Figure (2): Types of SFs used in Top Girls

3. Conclusion:

This research attempted to investigate the types of speech fillers used by interlocutors in a dramatic text that produced fillers with different functions. Furthermore, the analysis and findings of this research showed that there were two types of fillers; those were unlexicalized filled pause and lexicalized filled pause. Lexicalized fillers appeared 273 times, on other hand unlexicalized filler appeared 49 times. The most frequent filler used in 'Top Girls' was lexicalized fillers whether those words were in the sentence or not, they could not change the meaning of the sentence. The aim of this research is to introduce the types of fillers and to increase interlocutors' awareness and comprehension of fillers when they hesitate in using foreign languages, which is actually the very nature of speaking. Without fillers, the conversation would be inappropriate and too formal.

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