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Speaking Disfluency Among EFL Learners at Soran University

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Abstract

Disfluency in spoken language is unavoidable. Utterances in everyday speech are replete with such phenomena as conversational repair, repetition, filled pauses, hesitation, and others. Disfluency is frequently thought to result from problems with speech planning, preparation, and cognitive load. Disfluency is an inherently interactional phenomenon, and in this vein, it has received little attention, if any. By implementing the principles of interactional linguistics, the current study investigates disfluency in interaction among EFL learners at Soran University. The method that is made use of is the qualitative method. For data collection, a semi-structured interview was used in which thirty students from the English department/Faculty of Arts/Soran University participated, whose ages ranged between 22-26 years old. Methodologically, the paper examines disfluency in light of the participants' perspectives to avoid the uncalled-for intricacies that have been associated with the phenomenon in previous research. The results showed that the following patterns recur among the EFL learners: *repetition, prolongation, silent pause, pre-verb, and repair*. Filled pauses, in particular, were realized as the dominant type of disfluency as compared to the other disfluency patterns.

Keywords: Disfluency, EFL Learners, Interaction

Introduction

Speech disfluency is a linguistic term that refers to perturbations or brief interruptions in the flow of speech. Disfluencies are common in the speech of non-native English speakers (Fox Tree, 1995). Disfluencies are basic to human conversations, particularly in spontaneous interactions. Speakers must exert considerable effort to speak a foreign language with less disfluency. Nonetheless, this does not appear to be the case for many non-native English speakers. There are various explanations for why such disfluencies occur in learner speech. According to Buffy and Nicholson (2007), disfluencies occur for two main reasons. The first is attributed to the speaker's inconsistencies. The second factor is the strain placed on the speakers while speaking.

This is particularly evident among learners who have had little direct exposure to the target language, as in Kurdistan, where learners have had little contact with native speakers. Students typically have fewer opportunities to practice their language skills with native speakers. As a result, they may have more disfluencies in their speaking. Given all of this, speakers cannot develop the skills required to communicate effortlessly and fluently in English. That is, even after graduating from English departments, students continue to struggle with disfluency.

This project looks into how disfluency manifests itself in English conversations among EFL students at Soran University. It is assumed that identifying where the disfluencies are will make developing fluency in a foreign language easier. It is critical to conduct research on such a topic to identify inconsistencies. This, in turn, will lead to a better understanding of L2 speech production. Furthermore, because hesitation and disfluency strategies are not taught in foreign language classrooms in Kurdistan, it is critical to

determine when and how L2 learners acquire these useful strategies that not only make their speech more fluent but also keep them from losing the floor or causing interactional breakdowns. In light of this, the following research questions are being addressed:

1- What are the trajectories of disfluency among EFL learners in Soran

University?

2- What interactional implications do these disfluencies have in

communication?

3-What are the exigencies as well as contingencies of these disfluencies?

when it comes to the context?

Literature Review

The study of disfluency arose in the field of psycholinguistics. One of the pioneers of the field is Goldman-Eisler (1958), who focused on the function of hesitation pauses in speech. His major concern was the theoretical significance of hesitation pauses. The pauses were viewed as the increasing information in speech and as tools assisting the acts by which speakers made a choice. The researcher concluded that hesitancy was related to uncertainty in speech. The work in the field of disfluency made much progress with Maclay & Osgood (1959) who came up with an essential classification of disfluency or the hesitation phenomena regarding the work of Mahl's (1956). Their major concern centered around the following; aspects of filled pauses, unfilled pauses, false starts,

and repeats. Based on their analysis, filled pauses were considered "hesitation devices" due to their close link with uncertainty. On the other hand, unfilled pauses contained "silences of unusual length" and "non-phonemic lengthening of phonemes." Given that, both filled pauses and unfilled pauses were viewed as unusual hesitation markers. Moreover, repeats were not given significant attention as they were considered to be insignificant semantically. False starts were seen as incomplete utterances. Given such analysis, it transpires that disfluencies were viewed negatively by the authors, whose focus was based on abnormal aspects of disfluency, linking it with negative terms such as "insignificant" or "unusual length." However, viewing disfluency took on a new form after a few decades with the advancements in technology, which gave a different explanation for disfluency at a much larger scale (Kosmala, 2021). The current part will concentrate on the theoretical framework and will provide a quick overview of their theoretical and methodological approaches to disfluency.

Furthermore, Maclay & Osgood (1959) indicated that fillers occurred at the beginning of an utterance or phrase result of planning and processing load. Similarly, Beattie (1979) & Barr (2001) arrived at the same conclusion about the place in which fillers occur. It can be asserted that cognitive load is one of the major reasons for disfluency, such a view is largely supported by Oviatt (1995) & Shriberg (1996) who found that disfluencies occur more often before "longer utterances". Researchers have presented their ideas on how disfluencies occur before longer utterances, it is also important to know the places in which such occurrences are marked. Maclay &

Osgood (1959); and Levelt (1983) found that disfluencies mostly occur before the "content words". Nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are frequently used as content words. To put it another

way, content words provide us with the most crucial information. Nevertheless, Beattie and Butterworth (1975) arrived at a different conclusion concerning the distributional properties of disfluencies through several recordings of two-person conversations. Their findings suggest that content words were likely preceded by hesitations such as fillers. In light of that, they agreed that disfluencies were not an outcome of the processing load but due to an element of choice in selecting words with "low contextual probability", and were more likely to be disfluent for this reason. Given such contrasting findings, we might assume that processing load and choice are two different things. The number of choices that a speaker has might lead to an increased level of processing load as suggested by (Oomen&Postma, 2001). It is important to mention that Smith and Clark (1993) suggested a similar argument asserting that fillers were more widespread in a situation where speakers had more than a choice to make. Given all the above, it can be concluded that disfluencies are not always natural regarding cognitive load. There are times when speakers can be more disfluent given the context in which they are communicating (Corley & Stewart, 2008). As discussed earlier, Maclay & Osgood (1959) depended on the categorizing of disfluency or the hesitation phenomena depending on the work of Mahl (1956). In contrast, Blankenship and Kay (1964) largely follow Mahl's classification similarly, but omitting, like Maclay and Osgood, the last three categories, instead adding "word change" and "non-phonemic lengthening of phonemes". Moreover, Johnson (1961) conducted a study indicating a list of eight categories of 'disfluency' such as; interjections of sounds, syllables, words or phrases (including, for example, 'uh' and 'well'), Part-word repetitions, Word repetitions, Phrase repetitions, Revisions, Incomplete phrases, Broken words, prolonged sounds. apart from the mentioned categories, Levelt (1983) provided some insight into substitutions, repetitions,

deletions, and insertions. He explained that some part of the speaker's speech was either rejected or replaced. He went on to provide a way to describe the structure of such utterances, and some of his terminologies are in regular use. For replacement and repair, he made use of two terms. When the string was replaced, he adapted the use of the term "Reparandum" and the string that was replacing it was called "Repair", and for the words that followed the repair "continuum" was used. This can be observed in the speech of the participants which they follow up the repair by adding more statements to proceed with their speech.

Disfluency has been linked to three different fields: clinical psycholinguistics, second-language acquisition, and computational linguistics, (Grosman, 2018, p. 7). Thus, several different approaches to disfluency have arisen, each with a different theoretical perspective on the same phenomenon. Disfluency has been studied extensively over the last sixty years by a variety of academic disciplines, including speech pathologists, speech scientists, phoneticians, and psycholinguists (Goldman-Eisler, 1958; Johnson, 1961; Lickley, 2015; Maclay & Osgood, 1959; Shriberg, 1994; to name but a few). Given that, we need to know what is the most crucial thing about disfluency to understand the different approaches that scholars in the field have used to view the phenomenon. For the likes of (Heeman, 1997; Levelt & Cutler, 1983) disfluency is illustrated as a means by which speakers use to correct themselves. Based on their views, disfluency is recognized as a natural part of the conversation. On the other side, (Allwood et al., 1990; Clark & Wasow, 1998; Schegloff et al., 1977) viewed disfluency in terms of a pragmatic or a communicative function.

The study of disfluency, or speech, errors, has been of special interest in the field of psycholinguistics since it sheds light on how speakers' brains generate and comprehend meaningful language

based on a variety of speech production models (Menn & Tronkers, 2016). These theories combine multiple levels of processing, including conceptual, functional, positional, and phonological (Men & Dronkers, 2016). Before speaking, speakers must pick the type of information they will convey, which requires them to go through many stages of preparation and execution. Nonetheless, in many cases, the latter leads to disfluency in speech. There are various cases by which disfluencies occur as the result of processing burden. The stages by which learners attempt to find the required information might lead to disfluencies such as those of hesitation markers.

When speakers converse, their primary objective is to make the most acceptable speech possible in terms of both content and form (Hieke, 1981, p. 150). Despite their efforts to maintain control of the communication channel and remain understandable, speakers are frequently forced to pause, retrace, or halt their current planning, which frequently results in utterances that are markedly different from their initial intended delivery (Hieke, 1981). In such cases, speakers are forced to reorganize what they had planned to communicate, and this may lead to a sort of production in a speech that is less likely to be free from disfluencies. One of the reasons is that the speaker could be distracted and thus produce several speech disfluencies. Given the changing character of speech production (going back and forth between conceptualization and articulation), it appears at first glance that the construct of disfluency was founded on a reflection of speech's non-linearity, but also on a departure from the ideal delivery. Indeed, Ferreira and Bailey (2004, p. 234) defined disfluency as "any deviance from the ideal delivery of a speech." Additionally, they asserted that certain disfluencies (such as repetitions, abandonments, and repairs) result

in ungrammatical utterances, implying that disfluency is a deviance from an ideal, grammatical, and well-formed utterance.

Methodology

Participants

The participants in the study are Soran University fourth-year students in the Department of English. A total of 30 students were selected. After explaining the research aims and objectives to the students, they were asked to agree to participate in the study. Their age ranged between 22-26 years old. Their level of competence is supposedly advanced.

Method

The current study adopts a qualitative approach to data analysis. This method involves the analysis and collection of non-numerical data. It can be used to gain an in-depth understanding of a problem or generate new research ideas (Bhandari, 2020). This method employs open-ended questions that allow participants to express themselves. Furthermore, Qualitative research is inherently 'exploratory,' in that it seeks to characterize, comprehend, and explain a specific social phenomenon (Gagliardi & Dobrow, 2011). Notably, qualitative research entails the investigation and depiction of social processes using depth, complexity, and detail (Mason, 2002). People create meaning in their lives and communicate their perceptions of those meanings to others (Blaikie, 2010). Similarly, face-to-face contact with participants is used in qualitative research to elicit and negotiate meanings. In other words, meaning that is hidden 'within' the participant is brought to the surface through the communicative and interpretative process of deep thought. Thus, the importance of the connection between researcher and

participant distinguishes qualitative research methods from quantitative approaches.

Instrument

Semi-structured interviews are used by the researcher to collect data. In a semi-structured interview, questions are asked in any order and any phrasing. These interviews are commonly referred to as "qualitative" in an academic setting (George, 2022). Furthermore, the semi-structured interview's adaptability and usefulness are two of the main reasons why it has become such a common method for collecting data. Its stiffness can be adjusted by the study's aim and research objectives, and it can be used in tandem with both individual and group interview techniques (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, Kelly 2010). One of the main benefits of the semi-structured interview method is that it allows the interviewer to improvise follow-up questions based on the participant's responses (Hardon et al. 2004, Rubin & Rubin 2005, Polit & Beck 2010) and that it leaves room for participants' verbal expressions.

Procedure

The procedure of the study was recording the interviews. The period devoted to the interviews was two weeks. The range of the interviews was between 10 to 30 minutes. The researcher utilized non-random sampling, which is a type of sampling that does not permit the selection of participants at random. Also, non-random sampling occurs when researchers select elements for the sample based on selection criteria. Furthermore, non-probability sampling is frequently related to qualitative and case study research designs. Regarding the latter, case studies tend to concentrate on small samples and are designed to explore a real-world phenomenon, not

to draw statistical conclusions about the larger population (Yin, 2003).

Purposive or judgmental sampling is an approach in which specific situations, people, or events are purposefully chosen to offer crucial information that cannot be obtained through other options (Maxwell, 1996). It is when a researcher adds cases or individuals to the sample because they believe they are important enough to include. Fourth-year students are expected to be fluent English speakers on this basis. As a result, the researcher decided to adopt such a sampling method.

Data Analysis and Results

Pre-verb disfluency:

Disfluencies happen for different reasons in a disfluent speaker's conversation. One of the common occurrences of disfluencies is pre-verb disfluencies. Interestingly, such occurrences require more prudence in which case disfluent speakers might not have accumulated skills to cope with such perturbations. For example,

Researcher: When you finished here you want to teach at school?

Student: no no I mean that when I am a student, when I was a student I like to [e:: study e:] Soran University English Department.

The above instance shows that the speaker hesitates to come up with the right verb and produces a filled pause. This is a clear case that shows how EFL speakers can get disfluent due to the great amount of effort that the verbs require. According to Gentner

(1982), English verb inflexions include tense, person, number, and some aspect inflexions, such as the progressive which is the reason for the complicated nature of verbs. The speaker's hesitation also displays his search for the right form or tense of the verb to be. Undoubtedly, the content is fine to some extent as well as understandable. However the speaker seems discontent with his performance. The speaker's attempt to articulate the correct form is part of his acquisition of the target language.

Filled pauses:

It is common knowledge that filled pauses are language-specific, ranging from the English "uh" or "um" and the French "euh" to the Spanish "pues" and the Japanese "eeto" (see Clark and Fox Tree, 2002). As demonstrated by Zhao and Jurafsky (2005) for English and Mandarin, the use and selection of filled pauses may also vary significantly from one language to another. Similarly, discourse markers appear to have multiple linguistic equivalents, indicating language-specific functions (Aijmer and Simon-Vandenberg, 2006). In addition, it appears that the use and selection of filled pauses in the Kurdish language differ from other languages. In contrast to "uh" and "um," which are frequently used by native English speakers, Kurdish speakers use "e" and this is to some extent evidence of Kurdish EFL learners' incompetence in adapting to the use of native English speakers signs of filled pauses that are "uh" and "um". One place where 'e' takes place is a word search, where a speaker searches for a contextually suitable candidate, he may get disfluent.

RESEARCHER: You have secrets as well, ok? So what makes her different from others?

STUDENT: [um](...) she is younger than me but [uh] somehow how can I say she is [e] she have many experiences.

It should also be noted that many filled pauses occur at the beginning of utterances. In the example provided above, the filler and silent pauses at the beginning of the speaker's turn indicate that she is either gathering her thoughts to formulate a response or that she needs additional time to do a better job. At least in the culture of the Kurds, turn initials are a natural breeding ground for disfluency. Students demonstrate disfluency once more at the beginning of the second sentence. In this second sentence, the student begins with "uh" followed by "somehow," which is ineffective. She gives up and says, "How can I say it?" All of this suggests that she is searching for a word whose retrieval is difficult for her, or that she is gathering herself to put together a variety of suitable pieces to formulate the idea she is seeking.

Repetition:

Data shows that repetition is one of the recurrent patterns of disfluency in this study. Repeats occur as speakers attempt to recycle constituents, particularly important ones like noun phrases, verb phrases, prepositional phrases, clauses, and sentences. Such constituents have long been considered to be the main planning units (Clark & Wasow, 1998).

RESEARCHER: Yeah, where did you live and go to school?

STUDENT: (...) [e:::] (..) I lived, first of all I born I have born in Kirkuk then I transferred to Hawler lived there two years and then I transferred to: I [transferred transferred] to here.

As shown by delays, repetitions, or fillers like "uh," speakers are more likely to say "thee" when they are having trouble planning

an upcoming segment (Clark & Wasow, 1998; Clark & Fox Tree, 2002;). Given that new referents have not yet had as recent access to conceptual, lexical, and phonological representations as given referents, referring to something new is likely to be more challenging than referring to something given. The speaker reformulates his utterance through repetition. He is trying to articulate where he was born. Firstly, he says 'I born' then he says 'I have born' which is again not successful. Then he has two attempts to say that he moved to here. Certainly, this repetition signals a problem the speaker has or he is taking it to get something done be a mistake or anything else.

Prolongation:

These disfluencies can be interpreted as a sign that the respondent is temporarily confused and having trouble coming up with the correct response. Now, he is making use of the conversational flow (time) to come up with a potential or appropriate response. This is an illustration of both sequence and pre-beginning (pre-answer). He prolongs the beginning

RESEARCHER: What are your plans for the future after you graduate?

STUDENT: actually, I have some plans [e:::] (..) me (..) my personality ii in my opinion [e:::] living in villages and being away from cities and the the we can say the calm of the cities is very great and one of my plans is [e:::] to try I wanna try e to find a school in a: very far e village and I want of course marry the girl whom I love and take her with me there.

pre-answer here means what it takes for the respondent to provide the information required by the previous question. Before

arriving at the information usually respondents start with pre-beginnings which enable them arrive at the answer. In this example, the pre-beginning has multiple phases. First of all, the speaker starts with a discourse marker 'actually'. He then produces 'I have some plans' which does not constitute what the question was about. Then he resorts to a long pause 'e:::' followed by an unfilled Overall, the respondent takes us through clusters of speech to give the answer.

Accuracy issues cause speakers to pause and prolong more often, which prevents "formulaic chunks" from being realized as a single unit. These in turn have an impact on the fluent runs' overall distribution of pauses and prolongations (Gurbuz, 2017). The respondent here has interpreted the question as a literal yes or no question. Therefore, he initially responded with yeah (yeah I remember). By saying "about my childhood", he specifies the domain of information that he has also prolonged, and he will continue to speak about it. We observe numerous turn initials: (Yea e: about my childhood, or I want to give an example for you). All of these indicate that he is having difficulty formulating his response. Eventually, he begins to tell a story.

RESEARCHER: Do you remember anything about your childhood?

STUDENT: yea, [e:] about my [childhood:d] is just [i want to say an example] for you e about [my childhood e: e:] three days ago e I went to the river for swimming.

Some aspects of prolongation involve the search for a word. This is also observed in other types of disfluency discussed previously. Lack of vocabulary may be the cause of such linguistic irregularities. In reality, the majority of English as a Foreign

Language (EFL) students struggle with vocabulary proficiency. As a result, it creates a barrier to communication among EFL students (Halik & Jayasundara, 2021). In the following instance, the student ends his turn searching for a word but without reaching a proper vocabulary.

RESEARCHER: Do you think students should all wear uniforms?

STUDENT: No, it's not I think [e::]

Discourse Markers:

Traditionally, the two concepts of discourse markers and disfluency have been treated as distinct entities in academic research. Language acquisition and psycholinguistics have both become major trends in the field of linguistics. As the term "discourse markers" indicates, these are sequentially interdependent elements of an utterance (Schiffrin 1987). The speaker-hearer relationship and so-called "planes of talk," i.e. generic functional domains such as content or attitude, are all examples of how discourse markers contribute to coherence by punctuating segments and providing instructions on how to interpret the current utterance about previous or forthcoming material. One instance where speakers get disfluent is a word search, where they are lost for a word or get out of words. And one interactional way to bridge any conversational breakdown and to sound fluent is to use 'you know'.

RESEARCHER: everything?

STUDENT: Yeah and do you know all your all [yyyyou know] each other's secrets

Code-switching:

Another way to interactally handle speech disfluency and overcome any breakdown is to switch the code as sociolinguists say. Indeed, code-switching is a frequent way to maintain fluency. Speakers use multiple methods for doing so. One way is to switch the code by themselves. Another is to ask the interlocutor questions like (how do you say X? or if we say) in Kurdish or English.

RESEARCHER: something more historical that you think is gonna be in history?

STUDENT: OK, I III will tell you something which is somehow (unclear voice) because I never forget it. E once e I wanna tell you that, my uncle ee my uncles a:re living with us in village and also my [نه‌گەر بێن خال]

A common assumption to explain this case in which the speaker switches the code saying (نه‌گەر بێن) is that speakers alter the code when they do not know the word in one language after they presumably exhaust their self-search for it. As a result, they use the other language. But assuming that each instance of this kind of code switch is due to a lack of proficiency in one of the languages is incorrect. Students sometimes find it difficult to find the right word for a concept in the language being used, but they can more easily find it in the other language (Reyes, 2004).

Sometimes the speaker searches for a word, and fails to find it. Thus, he switches the code and asks for help from the interlocutor saying (عجول جی پیگوتریت به ئینگلیزی).

RESEARCHER: My brothers and I

STUDENT: yes my brothers and I we were let's say we were [
بئنی بریارمان داوه (...)] [e:::] [تهگه ربتین we were [e:::] (...)] [بئنی بریارمان داوه ...].

RESEARCHER: Could you please tell me a little bit about your
childhood?

STUDENT: e::: my childhood time was so good, and I hopeful
to come back to that times and I was [عجول چی پیگوتریت به نینگلیزی؟]

Silent pauses:

Silent pauses, also known as gaps in the utterance, are likely the most fundamental method for addressing issues related to the formulation of a statement. Instead of trying to find inappropriate candidates that may need further work, speakers choose to remain silent (Wang, 2021). The effects of silent pause disfluencies on listeners' language processing and recognition memory are comparable to those seen with filled pauses as discussed in the previous section. It would be incorrect to conclude from this that silence and filled pauses have completely equivalent purposes in human discourse. Studies on listeners' perceptions of speakers have suggested that filled and silent pauses are different: when hesitation is silent as opposed to when it is filled, listeners are more likely to judge speakers as being confident in their answers to general knowledge questions (Brennan & Williams, 1995), but the use of silent pauses as opposed to filled pauses make speakers seem less comfortable (Christenfeld, 1995). In interactional linguistics, long silent pauses are considered abnormal and conversationalists tend to handle it in different ways. One such way is to redesign or restart the utterance as in the example below. This means that the speaker did not succeed in his first attempt and did not want to prolong the already prolonged pause. This happens quite often in second language acquisition

RESEARCHER: How well do you manage your money?

STUDENT: oh, actually: (...) even though I don't think of that but if I had if I have a money (.) of course I I keep some of them and use some of them.

Here after a pre-beginning which seemingly did not get the speaker anywhere, he came to pause speech. The silent pause may not be a good solution for speech disfluency, but it is often recurrent.

Repair:

It is widely acknowledged that speakers "repair what they say and how they say it" in both L1 and L2 (Levelt 1989). Repair is an essential executive function that aids in adapting, anticipating, learning, fixing, and repairing the consequences of actions (Ganushchak & Schiller 2006). According to Levelt (1989), speakers typically consider the message or idea they wish to convey, how they wish to say it, whether or not it adheres to social norms, and whether or not they are employing the proper lexicon.

Another instance of disfluency is what is called in the conversation analytic tradition repair. According to Schegloff et al. (1977) "repair" refers to the treatment of problems in interactive language use or "a mechanism that operates in conversation to address difficulties in speaking, hearing, and understanding the talk in conversation." It includes processes for mutual comprehension, such as word search, in addition to a replacement or correction of hearable errors or mistakes (Hoa & Hanh, 2019). There are typically three stages in a repair process: repairable (i.e. the source of the problem), repair initiation, and outcome. As an utterance, the trouble source is repairable. The next step is repair initiation, which

can be carried out either by the speaker (self-initiation) or by the interlocutor(s) (other-initiation). An initiation results in one of two outcomes: self- or other-repair, or no repair at all (Shehadeh, 1991).

The current study's transcribed data reveals a wide variety of repairs in the speech of the speakers. The researcher's goal is to look into some of the more common instances of repair. According to Schegloff et al. (1977), "self-initiated self-completed" repairs are preferred over other types of repairs in conversations. Linguistic or content issues have been linked to types of repair, according to Schegloff et al. (1977) and Kasper (1985). There can be "grammatical, morphological, lexical, or phonological" causes of linguistic problems. In the following example "repairable" (trouble-source) "have a lot of" is syntactically replaced with "had a lot of" which is an example of grammatical repair.

RESEARCHER: Well, how do you like your experience in university?

STUDENT: University? Well, I have a lot of [– **I had a lot of**] experience.

On the contrary, there are times when self-initiated, self-completed repairs fail to eliminate the source of the problem. In the following example, the repair is initiated and completed which is repair by insertion by the speaker, but the trouble source is not successfully resolved. The speaker replaces (I born), which is grammatically incorrect, with (I have born), which is also syntactically incorrect.

RESEARCHER: Yeah, where did you live and go to school?

STUDENT: I lived, first of all I born [– **I have born**] in Kirkuk then I transferred to Hawler lived there two years.

According to Schegloff et al. (1977) and Kasper (1985), repair can be linguistic or content-based contributors to the trouble source. As with linguistic trouble sources, "self-initiated self-completed" repairable can be associated with the content. There are also several types of lexical repairs that originate from lexical trouble-sources such as lexical choice and word replacements stated in the "pre-verb" pattern, the content word (spent) is replaced with (build) because verbs require greater awareness of the language and carry more semantic meanings. This self-initiated self-completed repair is therefore unsuccessful. In the following instance of repair by replacement (self-repair), the speaker must have used the past tense of the word which is (build). This is because English has multiple verb forms that can be difficult to manage, particularly irregular verbs.

RESEARCHER: OK, how about the amount you have?

*STUDENT: yes, I: I spent [– **I: build**] e: house.*

False starters:

People do not adequately plan the delivery of the articulation of each word or sentence they utter in everyday conversation. Therefore, spoken language is characterized by an abundance of false starts, pauses, repetitions, and restarts. Given this, it is reasonable to assume that such disruptions can impede meaning and slow comprehension. According to Fox Tree (1995), false starters occur when speakers begin to speak but then decide to abandon their utterances and start again. The discarded information

will be known as a "false start," while the new information will be recognized as a "fresh start."

RESEARCHER: OK, you did some projects like what?

STUDENT: e: in the covid [during the covid] e:: I started to reading.

Disfluencies like false starts do not always hinder comprehension (Fox Tree, 1995). This is dependent on the type of disfluency and its location within the sentence. Despite the speaker's false start, the meaning and overall comprehension of the sentence remain intact in this instance of disfluency false start (self-repair). This can be viewed as an improvement to the statement. Without a doubt, the second option is far superior to the first. Overall, this does not hinder the listener's ability to comprehend the sentence; both (in the COVID) and (during the COVID) are perfectly understandable.

Turn-beginnings:

In a conversational turn, it is possible to repeat re-say or recycle a portion of an utterance, either briefly or more fully. Turn beginnings, in which speakers who do it are beginning their talk, are a common place for them to occur, with strings of some length recycled or repeated and almost identically repeated. From the perspective of turn-taking organization, there are reasons to believe that the beginnings of turns are sequences that are structurally significant locations in conversation (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974).

Researcher: How about students, do you think they should wear a uniform?

Student: والله actually I don't know but (...) I don't know everyone have our opinion.

There are some common occasions where disfluencies occur specifically in the beginning of turns, sentences, and clauses. This happens for the most part when the student is asked a question, then he or she tries to borrow some time to formulate his or her thoughts. Interestingly, disfluencies are occasionally launched in the turn initial positions which is also an instance of projecting a turn. Disfluencies occasionally occur in the turn-beginnings or turn medial positions. The above example demonstrates a lapse which is a sort of extended pause that takes place between turns. There are two turn constructional units (wallahi) and (actually, I do not know but). The long pause resides in the third turn constructional unit which is a turn-medial position, a place between two turn constructional units (the second turn constructional unit is the last sentence). Because he cannot provide further information, he restarts the sentence with, this time, an increment (everyone has our opinion).

DISCUSSION

This study improves learners' comprehension of the common disfluencies discovered in the data of Soran University's English department/Faculty of Arts students. The participants were asked a series of questions to assess their English language proficiency. In addition, an attempt was made to evaluate the spoken language of the learners to determine the trajectory of disfluencies present in their speech. This was done in light of Buffy and Nicholson (2007), who identified two primary causes for disfluencies. The first factor relates to the speaker, who may be accountable not only for these inconsistencies but also for how they are dealt with as well. The second possible explanation is the cognitive load in addition to the

load of the organization of conversation such as responding properly and timely to questions. Thus, the stress that learners experience when speaking a foreign language may be attributable to their lack of fluency. The results of the study reveal that university students at Soran University exhibit a variety of speech disfluencies. In addition, there are several indicators of disfluency in the students' speech, including repetition, prolongation, silent/filled pauses, pre-verb disfluencies, repair, discourse markers, and code-switching. These indications can serve as recurrent patterns of disfluency that signal issues with speech. The students' use of filled pauses was determined to be the most prevalent type of disfluency in comparison to the other disfluency patterns. Even though discourse markers and code-switching serve as indicators of cohesion in fluent speech, the data indicates that Soran University students use discourse markers infrequently, while code-switching for the appropriate word, difficulty expressing the same idea in English, seeking assistance, and inability to find equivalent idiomatic expressions occurs frequently.

Furthermore, a great deal of the examples show that speakers suffer disfluency at the beginning of their turns or they are turn-initial disfluencies. This involves, no doubt, speech preparation. And the limitations of the speech production system. Disfluencies also provide valuable information to the listener, informing them of the speaker's planning troubles and allowing them to take turns. Furthermore, typical disfluencies convey to the listener the speaker's level of confidence (Smith et al., 2022). This investigation found that the data was recursive and required turn-taking. The questions were posed by the interviewer, and the participants responded in several ways. To ensure the integrity of the data, the interviewer interrupted and corrected the participants as needed. Furthermore, participants were allowed to commence

and, if possible, correct themselves. As a result, participants were able to repeat, repair, and pause their speech. Pauses were believed by GoldmanEisler (1958) to be the accumulation of information in speech and as assistance to the decision-making processes of speakers. Furthermore, Mahl's (1956) study sheds light on spoken disfluencies. Both filled and unfilled pauses, in his opinion, were unusual symptoms of reluctance. Repeats were not given much weight because they were judged semantically irrelevant. False starts were considered incomplete utterances. Smith et al. (2022) discovered, however, that repetition can also provide the speaker more time to prepare. It can also be used as a self-correction, allowing the speaker to rectify a misspoken word during the same turn.

Participants in the study either had difficulty planning their tasks or sent uncertainty or other metalinguistic information to the listener, according to the findings of the current study. The topic of the talk is an additional factor that should be considered while arranging the volume of words (Schachter., et al 1991). It was revealed that participants would make a false start, repeat themselves, and then fix their speech if the topic changed. This illustrates that it is difficult for students to retain coherence in their speech over a wide range of topics.

Disfluencies are more prevalent towards the beginning of utterances for a variety of reasons, including the fact that individuals utilize them to coordinate their interaction with one another (Shriberg, 1996). Shriberg discovered that there was no association between the frequency of filler words and the length of the sentence, suggesting that they may not be related to the planning load in the same manner as other disfluencies. Consequently, speakers may use fillers to alert the listener to a delay in the formation of a word or phrase or to prevent, remedy,

control, or handle lengthier (marked) pauses or gaps in discourse. Additionally, fillers can be employed to control bigger pauses in dialogue (Clark and Smith, 1993). This was the most common symptom of disfluency observed in this study, which demonstrates how speakers can become disfluent in adapting filled pauses, which can serve their original purpose only when used spontaneously. The study demonstrates how speakers can become disfluent while adjusting filled pauses, which can perform their original purpose only when employed spontaneously. Listeners can use this metacognitive display to evaluate if the speaker knows the correct response (Brennan & Williams, 1995), and survey interviewers can use it to detect if respondents are likely to misinterpret a question. Both of these applications are useful for comprehending the nature of the observed occurrence (Bloom & Schober, 1999).

Overall, disfluencies are widely regarded to be "intended signals" that display to listeners a problem with the speaker's speech output. One of the most important conclusions of the current study is about disfluencies, which are widely believed to be "deliberate signals" (Finlayson & Corley, 2012). This is something that may be observed in the speech of those who are learning a language as well as native speakers. In that instance, two alternative consequences might be examined about disfluency. One is that native speakers may apply the usage of such signals to alert the listener that they need assistance in recalling a particular word or statement. But in the case of people who are still learning a language, the presence of disfluencies may be attributable to the difficulties that they have in producing language. In light of that, the data demonstrates that the usage of hesitation markers, filled/unfilled pauses, repeats, repair, and false starts all have to do with the speaker's lack of proficiency in employing such signals

more spontaneously and naturally other than showing a sign of disfluency.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to determine the trajectory of speech disfluencies in the oral English communication of Soran University's faculty of arts/English Department students. It revealed that the speech of EFL students at Soran University is characterized by several recognizable practices such as hesitations, false starts, filled and unfilled pauses, as well as numerous restarts and self-corrections or repairs. In addition to using filled and silent pauses, the learners at Soran University employed repetitions of a word or part of a word, and sometimes an entire phrase, to obtain time to explain their ideas. In particular, prolongation, pre-verb disfluencies, discourse markers, and code-switching were frequently seen in the oral communication of Soran University students. In addition, students at Soran University typically switched codes to seek assistance and used fewer discourse markers, which can sometimes be seen as evidence of fluency rather than disfluency if they are employed by a native speaker's competence. Students should be aware of the many sorts of disfluencies and the non-fluent use of pauses or discourse markers to prevent their use in speaking. It is also proposed that university professors should inform students about the roles of the temporal characteristics of disfluency and how these characteristics influence the perceptions of listeners. Learners should be provided with the opportunity to improve both accuracy and fluency in English by informing them of the importance that both of these concepts play in increasing the English language's oral competency.

RECOMMENDATION

This study is intended to clarify the nature of disfluency in the speech of Soran University's fourth-year students. The study made a deliberate effort to evaluate the trajectory of speech disfluencies noticed in oral English communication among students in the English Department at Soran University.

Regarding the study's limitations, only several students from Soran University were included in the data. As the participants' speaking abilities were being assessed, there was also another component of stress, which might have had an impact on their overall performance and fluency. The results of this study may only be useful in comprehending the participants' oral communication at Soran University's participants' speech disfluencies. In light of this, it could be beneficial to carry out additional research that can examine more speech disfluencies. Disfluency can also be studied from a variety of angles. For instance, comparing fluency and disfluency studies may shed light on how pause patterning in the mother tongue affects the temporal factors that lead to disfluency in a foreign language. The question of whether language-specific or universal markers of fluency and disfluency apply to fluency and disfluency. The influence of cultural factors on disfluency in terms of the tolerance of prolonged pauses, the expected listener participation in conversations, and the acceptable overlaps and interruptions in conversations, all of which show cross-linguistic variations, could be yet another fruitful area to investigate. It is crucial to find out if students are aware that a lot of disfluencies in their speech can influence the listener's overall impressions. Learners frequently take filled pauses and protracted silent pauses, as this study's findings have shown. Examining what makes these disfluencies so clear to the listener might be one way to address it. Finally, Kurdish syllabus designers must understand how crucial it

is to create a curriculum that can significantly improve speaking fluency among university students.

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پوخته

ناپهوانى له قسه كردن شتيكه ناتوانين خوى لى به دور بگرين. دهربرينه كانى رږژانه چهندين جورى ناپهوانى له خو دهگرن وهكو: راست كړدنه وه، دوباره كړدنه وه، پرکه ره وه، وه ديارده كانى ترى پارايى. ناپهوانى له قسه كردن وا داده نريت كه برىتى بيت له دهره نجامى نه و كيشانه كه په يوه نديان هيه به پلان دانانى قسه كردن، خو ناماده كردن، وه بارگرانى زهنى.

نهم تويزينه وهيه هوليكه بو ليكولينه وهى له ناپهوانى له قسه كردن له نيوان فيرخوازانى زمانى ئينگليزى له زانكوى سوران.

له كاتيكدا سروشتى ناپهوانى له قسه كردن و جورناسيه كهى بيرو بچونى جياوازيان له سهره به پيى ليكولينه وه كانى پيشو، به جيبه جى كړدى پرنسيپه كانى زمانه وانى تيكه لبون زوربهى نه و جياوازيه ده توانريت بگه رينريت وه بو قسه كه ر خودى خوى. ميتودى به كارها تو برىتیه له ميتودى چونايه تى وه بو كوكرنه وهى زانيارى پشت به ستراره به چاوپيکه وتنى نيمچه ريخراو كه تييدا ۳۰ قوتابى له به شى زمانى ئينگليزى/فاكه لتى ئاداب/ زانكوى سوران به ژداريان كړدوه كه ته مه نيان له نيوان ۲۲-۲۶ ساله. دهره نجامه كان نه وه ئاشكرا ده كه ن كه فيرخوازان چون مامه له له گهل دهر كه وتنى ناپهوانيه كان ده كه ن. وه هه روه ها دوزينه وه كان نه وه مان پيده لى كه ناپهوانى له قسه كردن شتيكه ناتوانين خومانى لى به دور بگرين. جوړه دوزراوه كانى نارونى برىتين له؛ دوباره كړنه وه، دريژ كړنه وه، وه ستانى بيده نگ، چا كړدنه وه، پيش كار له گهل وه ستانى پر كراوه. وه ستانى پر كراوه به تاييهى جوړى زاله به به راورد له گهل جوړه كانى تر.

وشه سه ره كيه كان: ناره وانى، فيرخوازانى زمانى ئينگليزى،
فيرخوازانى سوران، زمانى ئينگليزى.

الملخص

الدراسة الحالية هي محاولة للتحقيق في عدم إتقان التحدث بين متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في جامعة سوران. نظرًا لأن طبيعة عدم الطلاقة وتصنيفها كانا نقطة متباعدة للبحث السابق ، فمن خلال تطبيق مبادئ علم اللغة التفاعلي ، يمكن إرجاع الكثير من هذا الاختلاف إلى المتحدث نفسه. الطريقة التي استخدمت هي الطريقة النوعية. لجمع البيانات ، تم استخدام المقابلة شبه المنظمة التي شارك فيها ثلاثون طالبًا من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية / كلية الآداب / جامعة سوران تتراوح أعمارهم بين ٢٢-٢٦ عامًا. تكشف النتائج أنه من الجوهرى أن نرى كيف يتعامل المتحدث نفسه مع الأحداث الفعلية لعدم الطلاقة. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أيضًا أن عدم الطلاقة أمر لا مفر منه بين متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. كشفت البيانات عن الأنماط المتكررة التالية التي تُظهر عدم الطلاقة بين المشاركين: التكرار ، والإطالة ، والتوقف الصامت ، والفعل المسبق ، والإصلاح. تم إدراك فترات التوقف المملوءة ، على وجه الخصوص ، باعتبارها النوع السائد من عدم الطلاقة مقارنة بباقي أنماط عدم الطلاقة الأخرى

