

**The manifestation of Speech Fillers
in the Interview with Marianne Williamson
for her 2024 Campaign**

Asst. Prof. Imad Hayif Sameer (Ph. D)

Department of English-
College of Education for Humanities-
University Of Anbar
ed.emad.samir@uoanbar.edu.iq

Abstract:

This study investigates speech fillers (SFs) used by Marianne in the interview for her 2024 campaign, focusing on gender differences. Data was analyzed using the theories of Rose's (1998) and Stenstrom's (1994). The study also analyzed the functions of SFs based on Stenstrom's (1994) research. The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative analysis to analyze functions of SFs and their usage. It revealed that planning time was crucial, especially when discussing difficult topics. Participants (the interviewer and interviewee) used SFs with most of their types. The interviewer and the interviewee used all functions of SFs proposed by Stenstrom except the function of shift marker and sequencer. They were breathing, hesitation mark, filling pause, starter, empathizing, shift marker, mitigating, time creating device, holding the turn, editing term and sequencer. Holding the Turn appeared as the dominate function among SFs that the participants used with vast distinction compared to other functions. In contrast, Empathizing occupied the last rank in the order. Shift marker and sequencer were not used in this interview.

Keywords: discourse markers, speech fillers, mitigating, empathizing, shift marker.

Discourse Analysis

Language is essential for daily life, as it helps in formulating and enforcing laws, obtaining and spreading resources, developing relations in two fields personal and public, teaching children the ways of doing the things, thinking, being something, participating in academic levels, maintaining the historical period, and preparing the future. Helping in making relations with friends, laughing, expressing the disagreement with others, enjoying

nice times, and mourning sad or unhappy people. In essence, language is the foundation for a wide variety of activities and contributes to the preservation of people and cultures.

Discourse analysis (henceforth DA) is a branch of linguistics whose function is to examine language use regardless of the form of the sentence or the clause. Linguistics, traditionally, views sentences as the restriction or the limitation of the language system. The focus of DA is on language in its all forms starting with sounds as the smallest units in the language moving to morphs, words, phrases, and sentences, but does not investigate the use of language in context. Recently, it goes "above" the sentence by analyzing units such as speakers, listeners, and situations.

Fasold & Connor-Linton (2006, p.170) state that DA focuses on language use regardless the form of the sentence. Linguists traditionally focused on the form of language and did not pay any attention to the investigation of the manner by which the addressee has an idea about the interpretation of the language in specific context. Discourse analysts go "above" the sentence by analyzing units greater than a sentence, such as speakers, listeners, and situations. This approach allows DA to explore the meaning of language in various contexts.

Gee (2011, p.12) highlights that DA is a widely used in the academic field whose focus is on creating meaning and interacting across different social and cultural classes by the people. Studying language-in-use, examining the use of language for interacting, supporting others, cooperating, and building reputations, expressing the procedures of marriages and ideologies that occurred in institutions is the interest of DA, not just to say something.

Johnstone (2008, P.1) explains that scholars across various academic departments and fields use the term "discourse analysis" to describe their work, methods, or both. Most scholars have some linguistic experience and describe themselves as linguists, while others associate themselves with other disciplines.

Yule (2010, P. 142) states that discourse analysis (DA) is a field that focuses on analyzing language in texts and discussions, extending beyond the sentence. DA emerged from work in fields like semiotics, anthropology, linguistics, psychology, and sociology in the 1960s and early 1970s. The main task of Discourse analysts is to investigate language in use in written and spoken text or data. McCarthy (1991, p. 5) affirms that Harris' 1952 paper, "Discourse analyses," focused on the distribution of linguistic elements and the relationship between two related components represented by text and its social condition.

Priatmoko (2013, p. 12) affirms that DA (Differential Analysis) is a field that examines the structure of paragraphs, text composition, and typical conversational patterns. It also examines text-based vocabulary forms and how items like pronouns such as "it" and "he" refer to something mentioned before or after the noun in a text.

Yule (1996, p. 83) states that DA usually involves a various and wide range of practices, from investigating everyday language usage to studying a culture's dominant ideology in political or educational activities. The restriction of linguistic matters shows that the focus of DA is on recording the way by which language is used to achieve its task which is reflected by the intention of the speaker, whether written or spoken.

Discourse Markers.

Recent research has emphasized the importance of markers found in the discourse from different linguistic perspectives. Muller (2005) carried out a study in which he examined the use of discourse markers (DMs) in question in non-native and native speech. Chapeton, in his work, presented in (2009) studied these functions in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom interaction. Hellerman & Vergun (2007) investigated the frequency and functions of particular discourse markers, such as "you know" and "well," in classroom and home interactions. The study found that students who use DMs are armed with techniques that make their speech more reliable than those who do not use these SMs.

DMs are used to arrange turns, hold them, and signal borders in conversations. They help speakers regulate speech, initiate discussions, present and mark the end of subjects, add digressions, continue previous subjects, and mark the end of a discussion. Richard & Schmidt (2010: 175) state that DMs can be defined as a group of expressions consisting of words, phrases, and clauses that regulate the content of discourse. DMs do or perform many functions in spoken conversation, including indicating openings, topic boundaries, closure, and reflecting the ongoing conversation between presenter and listener. They also serve as a means to add digressions and mark the continuation of previous subjects.

Jucker & Ziv (1998, p.4) analyze text structuring devices (DMs) as markers for speech units, modalities, speaker-listener intents, and directions on interpreting utterances. DMs are grammatically optional and semantically blank, but pragmatically perform pragmatic functions. Brinton (1996, p.35) classified DMs into two key aspects: the textual one that involves the speaker whose objective is to create meaning as text and construct cohesive paragraphs, and the aspect of interpersonal which denotes or refers to the essence of social interaction, including the speaker's role and the listener's

role. DMs are not optional or surplus, but rather perform pragmatic functions.

Brinton's (1996: 33-35) characteristics of DMs

Discourse markers (DMs) are a characteristic of oral discourse, often found in written or formal speech. They are often stylized and negatively evaluated due to their frequency and oral nature. DMs are short, phonologically or unstressed items, and are restricted to the initial position of the sentence. They have little or no prepositional meaning, and are difficult to be lexically identified. DMs are optional components but not inescapable factors and they have multifunction occurred in local and global levels. There is controversial assumption that shows that the use of discourse markers is the common characteristic of women's speech than men's, as they reflect the meaning of powerlessness or tentativeness.

Speech Fillers

Jonsson (2016, p. 4) affirms that native speakers often struggle with expressing themselves in conversations, and their less proficiency leads to more conversation problems. To address this, they use Communication Strategies (CSs) to meet their intentions. CSs are devices that speakers use to solve difficulties in formulating intended meanings. Linguistic fillers are one of CS that are used to achieve the aforementioned purpose.

Stenstrom (1994, p.1) suggests that SFs are a type of hesitation phenomenon, involving verbal fillers and filled and silent pauses. Some speakers don't directly relinquish their turn but use stalling devices like filled pauses and verbal SFs when they don't have adequate preparation. They show their intention to say something and struggle to express it, which in turn results in violating the 'global planning area' at the turn's opening, in which the tough planning of the entire utterance occurs.

Types of SFs

SFs can be classified into simple words, phrases, and clauses based on their word structure. Simple word fillers consist of a single word, while phrases can be a phrasal group without a subject or a verb. Clausal SFs contain both subject and predicate. Stenstrom (1994) classified SFs into the silent and filled pause types and lexical or verbal speech fillers. Rose (1998) also divided SFs into unlexicalized SFs and lexicalized SFs. Stenstrom (1994) and Rose (1998) have different approaches to classifying SFs, that is to say, Stenstrom focuses on pauses and Rose focuses on verbal speech fillers.

A pause

A pause is a silenced period during a conversation, often during a speaker's turn or change of direction. It is used for various reasons, such as planning for future words or when there is inability by the speaker to produce and say more words due to lack of air or lack of ideas. Szezepek Reed (2010: 162) affirms that a pause is a case in which there is speech absence, and empirical studies show that speakers decide or plan where to pause, according to constraints such as speech rhythm. Stenstrom (1994) and Richards & Schmidt (2010: 424) affirm that both filled and silent pauses are used or manifested.

Silent pauses

Richards and Schmidt (2010, p. 424) affirm that Silent pauses (SPs) are silent breaks between words which emerge in strategic places and speakers are provided with the help to plan their next words. They can be timed or momentary, and are typically used for dramatic emphasis. SPs are prevalent in various rhetorical styles, including political discourse and storytelling, and can be timed to longer than a second.

Brown and Yule (1983, p. 163) affirm that speech fillers are extended pauses, typically lasting in a period of 3.2 to 16 seconds, used by speakers

to provide sufficient information to the listener. They are empty of any sound or word. Al Khalifawi (2018, p.48), state that people use SPs due to careful word choice or speaking slowly to make themselves more understandable. The extent of intelligibility among speakers seeks promoting the use of SPs in the process of ensuring and organizing comprehensibility.

Filled pauses

Richards and Schmidt (2010, p. 424) mention that filled pauses (FPs) are gaps in speech filled with certain expressions like er, mm, and um. Quick speakers often use fewer pauses than slower speakers do. FPs can be regarded as hesitations in natural speech that are taken up, either wholly or partially, by resorting to sounds like err, ah, uh, and often appear or emerge in the form of a word or even a sound and in some sentences.

Lexical or Verbal SFs

Rose (1998) identifies two types of FPs: unlexicalized FPs, which can be filled with phonetic combinations like "a, am, u, um, e, em, m" and lexicalized FPs.

Rose (1998, p.8) and Baalen (2001) argue that lexicalized FPs are short phrases or words that are SFs in the form of phrases or words. Stenstrom (1994) states that one type of SFs is verbal filler, similar to lexical speech fillers, such as "well, I mean, and sort of."

Brown and Yule (1983, P.106) state that phrases (FPs) can be lexicalized to appear with expressions like "well, so, okay, and let's see." However, not all FPs are lexicalized FPs. Researchers distinguish lexicalized FPs as short moments that the speakers resort to make decisions that draw or determine the next word or speech organization. Various types of SFs, such as "well,

umm, you know, er," can co-occur with topic-shift, indicating that FPs are not all instances of pauses.

Functions of SFs

Stenstrom (1994) identifies various functions of SFs, which vary depending on the speaker's situation, including holding the turn, filling pauses, hesitation marks, time creating devices, empathizing, mitigating, editing terms, shift markers, starters, sequencers, and breathing.

Filling pauses

FPs indicate or refer to the situation in which the speaker prepares something to say next, not relinquishing their turn.

Hesitation mark

Stenstrom (1994) explains that a hesitation mark is a function of SFs, which refer to pauses that occur in a sentence that increase when speakers face a difficulty in the decision of using a word. Foss and Hakes (1978, p. 184) clarify that the SFs in question occur when speakers need to stop or to think about their next words or when putting a sentence together. Most FPs (Factors) are exploited as breathing pauses, usually referring to semantic-syntactic boundaries, and are used for the hesitation ends in sentences.

Holding the turn

Stenstrom (1994) defines "hold the turn" as continuing to talk, but speakers may need to pause and re-plan halfway through the turn due to insufficient preparation and difficulty in planning and speaking simultaneously.

Empathizing

Stenstrom (1994: 64) empathizes on a technique used by speakers to establish a relationship with their listener. It involves inviting the listener to participate in the speaker's speech, making them feel part of the

conversation. Empathizing can occur at the beginning and/or at the end of a turn or when the speaker requests feedback. For example, a lecturer might say, "You know, if you see, you know and you see," which can prompt listener feedback. This approach helps the speaker feel more connected and engaged in the conversation. This technique can be used to make the listener feel more involved and engaged.

Mitigating

Stenstrom (1994) suggests that certain phrases like "actually" and "I think" can be used as a hedge to form a modification and mitigation of an utterance. Baalen (2001, p.128) suggests that fillers can help avoid hurting the listener's emotions and serve as a solidarity marker or to be a device for politeness. SFs like "well," "ehm," "eer," and "ok" can also serve as devices to mitigate or achieve politeness.

Editing Term

Baalen (2001, p.88) affirms that SFs can correct speech errors in speakers' utterances, as long as they are aware of the correction. For example, "I mean, um, ehm, uh, huh, ee" can indicate miss-arranged words. Speakers may repeat or said the speech error in direct way.

Time Creating Device

Stenstrom (1994) explains that sentence fragments (SFs) are used as a time-creating device to allow speakers to think about their next words. The most common form of SFs is lexical repetition, which involves two types: single word repetition and partial clause repetition. These repetitions allow speakers to formulate their next words.

Shift Marker

Stenstrom (1994, p.156) defines a shift marker as a function of SFs, allowing the speaker to move from one topic to another or from one level or aspect of the immediate topic to another. The phrase "by the way" is used or exploited as a shift marker in majority of cases.

Sequencer

Fraser (1996, p.169) suggests that SFs serve as a sequencer, signaling the next segment to that serves as interpretation to the conclusion of the discourse.

Starter

Stenstrom (1994, p. 70) states that an introductory device is used by speakers to initiate their turn, with some using it more frequently than others. 'Well' is the typical starter, which helps initiate a speech by sticking an initial label on the back of the speaker's mouth.

Breathing

Breathing is another function of FSs and it serves as breathing pause for allowing the speaker to take a breath (Stenstrom, 1994: 7).

Causes of SFs

Speech disfluencies, including slips of the tongue, long pauses, false starts, and filler words, are caused by infrequent words, divided attention, and nervousness. These activities can increase verbal disfluency, leading to interruptions of speech with filler words (Duvall et al., 2014: 37).

Divided Attention

Duvall et al (2014: 37) affirm that divided attention happens when a speaker tries to focus on multiple points whose benefit is to get an interest simultaneously, often during speeches with dispersed audience members or unexpected events. The speakers briefly redirect their attention, sometimes using filler words to fill the space left by non-fluent speech.

Oomen & Postma's (2001:1003) study found that divided attention and distractions increase the use of filler words and pauses in speech. Participants significantly increase the number of filler words used in situations where their attention is divided. This decreases the number of attentional capacities that speakers allocate to their speech, leading to more frequent pauses (FPs) and repetitions.

Infrequent Words

Duvall et al. (2014, p.37) state that filler words are words that are seldom used in conversation, often causing pauses in speech. These words are unfamiliar to our mental dictionaries and are often used when processing a word is difficult. Filler words are often used when the brain cannot find a word that would cause pause, often replacing it with an um or a synonymous word before it is used in speech.

Nervousness

Goldwater et al. (2010), cited in Duvall et al. (2014), state that nervousness and infrequent use of words in speech can lead to the production of filler words. Goldwater et al. find that infrequent words and speaking too fast can result in greater production of filler words. When speakers are nervous, they may use uncommon words, as their mind is focused on the listener's opinion rather than their own words. This can lead to a more engaging and effective discourse.

Duvall et al (2014, p.57) state that Glossophobia and public speaking anxiety are social phobias that can cause nervousness in speech. This anxiety can lead to a dysfunctional speech disorder, resulting in a vibrant voice, repetitions, and vocalization pauses. This can decrease the speaker's credibility, making the listener uninterested and aggravate their nervousness. The disorder is manifested as a vibrant voice, leading to repetitions and filler words, which can further exacerbate the speaker's nervousness.

Adopted Model

This study uses the theory of Rose (1998) that focuses on SFs with their types and Stenstrom's (1994) model that is design for analyzing eight selected episodes from the Conflict Zone show on Deutsche Welle. Stenstrom's model is regarded an advantageous as it can be applied in easy way to different forms of spoken discourse. Stenstrom categorizes SFs into two types: pauses (filled & silent) and lexical or verbal SFs, while Rose divides SFs into unlexicalized and lexicalized SFs. Both models offer valuable insights into the nature and functions of SFs in various forms of spoken discourse.

Rose (1998, p.7) and Stenstrom (1994, p.27) discuss the role of lexical SFs in speech. Rose argues that these short phrases, like "sort of," positively influence speech flow by helping speakers take turns, hold them, and seek feedback. Stenstrom also identifies SFs as a type of hesitation phenomenon. Both perspectives highlight the importance of lexical SFs in effective communication.

Pauses and verbal fillers are useful when speakers take turns without being prepared, indicating they intend to say something but take more time to express it. They can be combined with silent and filled pauses, playing the same role in the discussion.

Stenstrom (1994) identifies functions of SFs that vary to include holding the turn, filling pause, time creating device, starter, empathizing, mitigating, shift marker, breathing, editing term and sequencer. The focus of Stenstrom and Rose (1998) models is on types of SFs, but the first also addresses the functional side, incorporating specific ideas taken from sources like Brown & Yule, Fraser, Baalen. Wu, Foss & Hakes,

Data Analysis

After reading the interview many times, the researcher analyzed the data and colored the functions of speech fillers in the interview. He attached the analysis in a link which appears in Appendix (A). He drew the following table that shows the frequencies of speech fillers in the data in question. The results come to clarify that the function of Holding the turn comes in the highest frequency with a number of 118 and a percentage of 51.30%. It was noted from the interview that females preferred to use this function through which they could stop to think and choose the suitable vocabularies and items. They used this function with high rates because it gave them the opportunity to acquire more time to think. The researcher thinks that the use of this function is intrinsic feature in human beings where they prefer to stop before making a mistake. The second function in the order was that of Time Creating Device. It was used with a number of (42) and percentage of (18.26%). It was normal that the speakers resorted to more than one technique because they were aware that depending on one technique might generate boredom for this reason the interviewee resorted to this function by which she repeated many items many times for the purpose of acquiring time to think. She was skillful knowing that depending on repetition can make her speech boring for this reason she depended on two forms of repetition which are single word repetition and clause partial repetition. The third step in the ladder of analysis is that of

mitigating that comes with a number of (30) and percentage of (13.04%). The indicators of this function were "actually" and "I think" "well," "ehm," "eer," and "ok". The interviewee knew that this interview has unforgettable effect on her future because it preceded the period of 2024 elections and all the world may watch or listen to her speech. The fourth item of the analysis was represented by Editing Term that came with a number of (17) and percentage of (7.39%) where the researcher depended on the following items "I mean, um, ehm, uh, huh, ee" to reflect this function. Starter has the fifth value where it was used with the number of (14) and a percentage of (6.08%). Hesitation mark (Filling pauses) occupied the sixth rank, it was reflected by this indicator 'Breathing' to provide her with a minute or less than a minute to think. It has the number of (5) in the analysis and a percentage of (2.17%). Empathizing that has the number (4) in the analysis with a percentage of (1.73%) occupied the last rank in the order. The interviewee reflected this device by two phrases which were 'you know' and 'you see'.

Sequencer and shift Marker were not found in this interview because both of them (the interviewer and the interviewee) knew that they should be restricted to one topic and they were in position that did not give them the power or authority to conclude something in the future.

Table (1) the frequencies of speech fillers in Marianne's interview

Order	Function	Indicator	Frequencies	Percentage
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1	Starter	Well	14	6.08%
2	Sequencer	Conclusion	0	0%
3	Shift Marker	By the way	0	0%
4	Time Creating Device	single word repetition and clause partial repetition	42	18.26%
5	Editing Term	"I mean, um, ehm, uh, huh, ee"	17	7.39%
6	Mitigating	"actually" and "I think" "well," "ehm," "eer," and "ok"	30	13.04%
7	Empathizing	You know- you see	4	1.73%
8	Holding the turn	to pause and re-plan halfway	118	51.30%
9	Hesitation mark Filling pauses	Breathing	5	2.17%
Total			230	100%

Conclusion:

The researcher concluded that life is based on communication. The tool of this communication is the language whose structure plays a major role in persuading the other. Therefore, those speakers who belong to the political institutions do their best to say what is correct and avoid committing any mistake. For this reason, they depend on specific devices by which they can acquire more time to think. These devices or techniques are used with different rates. They are highly used by females than males who have a hesitation and because of their intrinsic weakness. These devices are reflected here by the use of speech fillers. The first one of them is that of

Holding the turn. Time Creating Device comes to occupy the second rank in the interview. The third technique is that of mitigating. The other types appeared with less rates except the function of shift marker and sequencer were not found in this interview due to the nature of interview.

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Appendix (A)

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