



Sudan University of Science and Technology

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Investigating Problems Facing EFL Students in Using Gap-Fillers

**(A case Study of Elementary 3 Communication Level at
American Discussion Club, Khartoum Locality)**

**تقصي المشكلات التي يواجهها طلاب اللغة الانجليزية لغة أجنبية في استخدام
علامات الخطاب**

**A thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for M.A in English Language (linguistics)**

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الاستهلال

(قُلْ لَوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَاداً لِكَلِمَاتِ رَبِّي لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنْفَدَ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّي وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِ مَدَدًا)

صدق الله العظيم

سورة الكهف الآية (109)

DEDICATION

To the late teacher Ahmed Alkhair Ahmed, to my family and my friends.

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First and most all praise be to Allah the Almighty for his blessings and for giving me the ability to accomplish doing this humble work that came to light as a result of a hard work assisted by many people whose support is evident and without it I wouldn't be able to succeed. Thus my thanks and gratefulness goes to my supervisor Dr. Hillary Marino for his continuous support and profound feedback. I am thankful to the referees Dr. Ahazeej, Dr. Alsadiq, and Dr. Alnorany who gave me feedback and motivation , I would like to say big thank you. I would also like to thank the library staff at SUST for their patience. My thanks and gratitude goes to Dr. Abobaker Alyasa and Mr. Hussam Abdulazeem at the American Discussion Club for their support and inspiration in this work from its very inception.

ABSTRACT

This study aims at investigating problems encountered by EFL students in using gap-fillers. The researcher adopts a descriptive method for the study and used a test and questionnaire for data collection. The sample of the study is drawn from elementary 3 students at ADC (The American Discussion Club, Khartoum Locality. The students who participated in this study are 30 students of both genders (male & female) for the test besides, 20 questionnaires are administered to teachers of English communication. The sample of the study is selected through using the simple random sampling technique from the wide population of the study. The research concluded that, EFL learners are not able to use gap-fillers correctly and that teachers do not use gap-fillers when teaching speaking in the classroom besides, Communication text-books seem to lack activities related to gap-fillers and this impede both teachers and students. Accordingly, the researcher recommended that, Teachers should teach the different types of gap-fillers to students and use exercises that include different types of gap-fillers and that, communication text books should be provided with audio-visual materials of conversations and speaking practice related to gap-fillers learning and acquisition in order to help teachers and enhance students in understanding gap-fillers. Moreover, gap-fillers should not be overused in a way that affects the fluency in speaking.

ABSTRACT (Arabic Version)

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء المشكلات التي يواجهها طلاب اللغة الانجليزية لغة أجنبية في استخدام علامات الخطاب. وقد استخدم الباحث المنهج الوصفي ممثلاً في استخدامه لاثنين من أدوات جمع المعلومات- اختبار تم توزيعه علي 30 طالباً من طلاب المرحلة الأولية في النادي الأمريكي للمخاطبة, محلية الخرطوم وشملت الدراسة كلا الجنسين كما استخدم الباحث أيضاً استبانة تم توزيعها علي 20 معلماً ومدرّباً لمهارات المخاطبة من أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية بالنادي الأمريكي للمخاطبة, محلية الخرطوم. تم استخراج العينة عشوائياً من مجتمع الدراسة ومن ثم تم تحليلها إحصائياً وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن الطلاب يواجهون صعوبات في فهم واستخدام علامات الخطاب بجانب أن معظم الطلاب لا يستطيعون التعرف علي الأنواع المختلفة من علامات الخطاب, بالإضافة إلى أن معظم أساتذة المخاطبة الانجليزية لا يستخدمون علامات الخطاب أثناء تدريس المخاطبة في الفصل الدراسي وعليه فقد توصل الباحث الي بعض التوصيات أهمها علي معلمي اللغة الانجليزية التركيز علي تدريس الأنواع المختلفة من علامات الخطاب مع مزيداً من التمارين. كما أوصى الباحث أيضاً بتزويد مناهج المخاطبة الانجليزية بالمواد السمعية والبصرية التي تحتوي علي حوارات ومحادثات متعلقة ب تعلم علامات الخطاب لمساعدة معلمي اللغة الانجليزية. علاوة علي ذلك لا يجب الإكثار من استخدام علامات الخطاب حتى لا تؤثر علي فصاحة التخاطب.

Table of Contents

Items NO.	Topics	Page NO.
1	الاستهلال	I
2	Dedication	II
3	Acknowledgements	III
4	Abstract	IV
5	Abstract (Arabic Version)	V
6	Definitions of Terms	VI
7	Table of Contents	VII
8	List of Tables	XI
9	List of Figures	XII
CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION		
1.0	Background of the Study	1
1.1	Statement of the Study	2
1.2	Questions of the Study	3
1.3	Hypotheses of the Study	3
1.4	Objectives of the Study	3
1.5	Significance of the Study	4
1.6	Methodology of the Study	4
1.7	Limits of the Study	4
CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW AND PREVIOUS STUDIES		
2.0	Introduction	5

2.1	Definition of Filler Words	5
2.2	Definition Discourse Markers	7
2.3	Types of Filler-Words	9
2.4	Impact of Filler-Words in Conversation	13
2.4.1	Impact on the Speakers' Credibility	13
2.4.2	Impact on the Listener	14
2.5	Definition of Fluency	14
2.5.1	Components of Fluency	14
2.6	Definition of Text	15
2.6.1	Definition of Textuality	16
2.7	Types of Text	17
2.7.1	Written Text	17
2.7.2	Spoken Text	17
2.8	Previous studies	17
CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY		
3.0	Introduction	24
3.1	Methodology of the Study	24
3.2	Population of the Study	24
3.3	Data collection Tools	25
3.4	Validity and Reliability of the Test and the Questionnaire	25
3.4.1	Apparent Validity and Reliability	25
3.5	Statistical Validity and Reliability	25

3.5.1	Validity of the Study	26
3.5.2	Reliability of the Study	27
3.6	Statistical Instruments	28
CHAPTER FOUR DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION		
4.0	Introduction	29
4.1	Analysis of the Test	29
4.1.1	Results of the First Hypothesis	29
4.1.2	Results of the Second Hypothesis	30
4.2	Analysis of the Questionnaire	31
4.2.1	Results of the Third Hypothesis	31
4.2.2	Verification of the Third Hypothesis	40
CHAPTER FIVE MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES		
5.0	Introduction	47
5.1	Main Findings	47
5.2	Conclusion	48
5.3	Recommendation	49
5.4	Suggestions for Further Studies	49
References		50
Appendices		

List of Tables

Table No.	Table Topic	Pages
(4.1)	The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers to the question No.(1)	29
(4.2)	The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers to the question No.(2)	30
(4.3)	The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers to the question No.(1)	32
(4.4)	The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers to the question No.(2)	33
(4.5)	The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers about question No.(3)	34
(4.6)	The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers about question no.(4)	35
(4.7)	The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers about question no.(5)	36
(4.8)	The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers about question no.(6)	37
(4.9)	The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers about question no.(7)	38
(4.10)	The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers about question no.(8)	39
(4.11)	The median of the respondents' answers to the questions of the first hypothesis	41
(4.12)	Chi-square test results for respondents' answers to the questions of the first hypothesis	44

List of Figures

Figure No.	Figure Topic	Pages
(4.1)	The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers to the question No.(1)	29
(4.2)	The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers to the question No.(2)	30
(4.3)	The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers to the question No.(1)	32
(4.4)	The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers to the question No.(2)	33
(4.5)	The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers about question No.(3)	34
(4.6)	The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers about question no.(4)	35
(4.7)	The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers about question no.(5)	36
(4.8)	The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers about question no.(6)	37
(4.9)	The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers about question no.(7)	38
(4.10)	The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers about question no.(8)	39

Definitions of Terms

Discourse markers (DMs) are expressions such as *now, well, so, however, and then*, which signal a sequential relationship between the current basic message and the previous discourse.

Filler words/ Gap-fillers: are words or phrases that create transitions in writing or speaking.

Cohesion: how texts are structured and linked. In other words the grammatical unity of a text.

Informativity: effects the reader beneficially e.g. new information.

Prosody: Prosody is the ability to read with expression and with reading that sounds like speaking.

Accuracy: is the ability to speak easily and correctly without mistakes.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

Among the many different language skills, performing a conversation is taking a leading position in the process of learning a language. To engage in a conversation fluently, listeners and speakers have to grasp a minimal use of conversational techniques; in other words, by using conversation fillers, fluency can be attained. Hasselgren (2002:148) has dwelt on fluency as the ability to contribute to what a listener would normally perceive as coherent speech which can be understood without undue strain and is carried out at a comfortable pace not being disjointed by excessive hesitation.

Now the talk will lead us to identify the concept of gap-fillers; the use of gap fillers or DMs (discourse markers) is a key feature of spoken English. The use of some DMs eg.(well you know and I mean..etc.) are constantly used by speakers and play a significant role in speech in particular spontaneous speech. Crystal (1988) maintains that if used appropriately DMs refine the interactions between speakers and that DMs should not be associated with an undesirable and overused style of speaking. Whether an individual is talking to a friend, attending a lecture or listening to a public speech, he or she is likely to hear some type of fillers. A filler is a word or sound that interpolates the main message of the speaker. Words such as like, um, you know are considered filler-words. Repetition is also considered a type of fillers.

Despite the various causes of these words, every interpolation has an impact on the credibility of the speaker and on the comprehension of the listener. Fillers

therefore improve credibility whenever are used appropriately in such situations when slowing down, pausing to collect thoughts, or enhancing preparations beforehand. Knowing how to use fillers is an important thing for speakers to realize when they are preparing for a public speech engagement. For listeners and even readers ,some strategies for improving comprehension when faced with a frequent users of filler words to glean the most important points and summarizing by rewriting the speech in their minds.

The current study however tries to investigate the problems that encounter EFL learners in using gap-fillers in texts.

1.1 Statement of the Study

Throughout my work as an instructor of English and a discussion organizer I have come to realize that a considerable number of students encounter some difficulties in using gap-fillers in writing and speaking and there is a lack of using fillers or discourse markers in organizing their speech and writing as well. For instance; instead of engaging word such as (you know, I mean, let me guess) they tend to pause, stop talking or even finalize their discussion topics early and unexpectedly before making clear points or statements. Meanwhile, some students seem to be confused or rather misuse lots of gap-fillers in different situations and contexts whether that be as listeners or as speakers eg. When they mix up the fillers said by speakers with the ones that are used by listeners or even worse when they overuse them, a matter that negatively affects the fluency and the flow of the conversation. Accordingly the topic of gap-fillers, their functions and use and the kind of problems that are related to and frequently encountered by EFL learners is what this current study is trying to investigate.

1.2 Questions of the Study

1-To what extent are EFL students able to identify different types of gap-fillers?

1-To what extent are EFL students able to use gap-fillers in texts correctly?

3-What role can be played by English teachers in solving problems of gap-fillers?

1.3 Hypotheses of the Study

1-EFL students are not able to identify the different types of gap-fillers.

2-EFL students are not able to use gap-fillers in texts correctly.

3-English teachers can play an important role in solving problems related to gap-fillers.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The research objectives include the following:

1-To investigate the problems that encounter EFL learners in using gap-fillers.

2-To analyzing the types of English gap-fillers and why students find it difficult in using them.

3-To investigate whether EFL learners are capable of using gap-fillers or not.

4-To find out the role played by teachers in solving the problem of gap-fillers.

5-To investigate the impact of the overuse of gap-fillers in fluency.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant to EFL students as it helps to shed lights on the use of gap fillers by EFL learners in conversation certainly, nowadays English learners are much interested in acquiring a more fluent and native-like speech manners that distinguishes them as good or expert users of English language. In addition to its significance in the field of discourse analysis as the study leads to more research on this field. This study also in many ways helps decision-makers especially communication instructors to include the use of gap-fillers in communication courses for their students in order to attain more fluency and native-like speech performance in conversations and in any speaking activity in general.

1.6 Methodology of the Study

This current study by its nature adopts the descriptive methods. A test and questionnaire are used as tools for data collection. The population of the study is limited to EFL students, communication class at ADC (American Discussion Club). The researcher used the simple random sampling in the data collection process.

1.7 Limits of the Study

This study is limited to investigating of the problems of using gap-fillers encountered by EFL students. The population of the study is exclusively drawn from elementary 3 communication class at ADC (American Discussion Club) (2019). On the other hand the study approaches the use of DMs/gap-fillers in terms of learning and therefore it excludes any investigation related to teaching methods or methodology.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

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LITERATURE REVIEW AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two parts, part one includes literature review that contains five sub titles as follows; definitions of the concept of filler-words, types of filler-words, the impact of filler-words on speakers credibility, the impact on the listeners and fluency, definition of text and types of texts while part two discusses some relevant previous studies concerning gap-fillers, being listed to stress the similarities and differences.

2.1 Definition of Filler-Words

The first researchers who conducted studies on fillers, specifically on *Uh* and *Um*, were psycholinguists. Stenström (1990), was among the first scholars who conducted corpus-based studies on the topic, pointed out that they are *filled pauses* (Tottie, 2011, p.174). Clark & Fox Tree (2002) called them *fillers* while Corley & Steward (2008) referred to them as *hesitation disfluencies*. The definition or categorization of fillers is seemingly a vague issue. However in this research, the term filler will be used in the point of views of some linguists.

As it is clearly been stated above that gap- fillers seem to have a wide range of definitions from different scholars and that can refer to the fact that different definitions account for the way those scholars have perceived the concept of filler words; most of the definitions are closely linked to the functions of fillers.

Accordingly different various functions entail various definitions as we have seen the case with Clark(2002) and Steward(2008).

Fillers are discourse markers speakers use when they think and/or hesitate during their speech. Clark and Fox Tree (2002, p.97) claimed that fillers served a communicative function, having a place in the speaker's vocabulary. Nonetheless, they are not for primary message in a communication. They rather convey collateral messages. In other words, the use of a filler only helps the meaning. It's not the meaning in the communication. Nevertheless, according to Clark and Fox Tree (ibid), fillers can be used to convey a variety of interpersonal messages such as 'holding the floor'. However, according to Corley and Stewart (2008, p.592), considering fillers in the sense of communication function is not that certain. Fillers are used when the speaker is uncertain about his next utterance or he has choices to make in his utterance, but this does not prove that the speaker signals there will be a delay in his speech due to an uncertainty.

Leech and Svartvik (ibid.: 23) also stated that” we also often use words and phrases like well, you see and kind of which add little information, but tell us something of the speaker's attitude to his/her audience and to what he/she saying

They also state that “we often hesitate, or fill in gaps with hesitation fillers like er and um while we think of what next to say. We may fail to complete a sentence or lose a track of our sentence and mix up one grammatical construction with another. All these features do not occur in writing “.

Discourse markers are defined by the American journal of speech- language pathology (1996) as expressions used to organize conversational interaction,

are widely used by speakers in social conversation. An ethnographic investigation of compensatory strategies employed in natural communication by two aphasic subjects revealed a variety of behaviors fulfilling the requirements of discourse markers. The role of discourse markers as compensatory strategies to promote conversation in aphasia is discussed, with descriptive examples drawn from the ethnographic study.

Discourse markers are also defined by the journal of pragmatics (1990) as expressions such as *now*, *well*, *so*, *however*, and *then*, which signal a sequential relationship between the current basic message and the previous discourse. The purpose of the present paper is to propose that discourse markers be considered a well-defined pragmatic category within the grammar of a language.

A framework for sentence meaning is presented within which discourse markers are analyzed as a class of commentary pragmatic markers. The claim that marker meaning is that of the expression when used as part of sentence content (e.g., as an adverbial) is rejected, and a minimal pragmatic core meaning for each discourse marker is proposed. Finally, discourse markers are distinguished from other types of commentary markers, from vocatives, interjections, and from expressions such as *oh*, *y'know*, *I mean*, and *because*, often treated as a part of this group.

2.2 Definition of Discourse Markers

According to De Fina (1997), there is still a less agreement on what to be defined as DMs (Yang, 2014). There are many definitions concerning discourse markers and this includes connectives, (Knott and Dale, 1994), discourse connectives (Blakemore, 1987 (Blakemore, 1992 (Blakemore, 2002),

discourse operators, pragmatic operators, pragmatic expressions, discourse devices and discourse connectives.

What we can see here is that discourse markers are called in some contexts as filler-words and that the difference is only in the naming nothing more and nothing less. In other words the same functions in either spoken or written texts remain the same.

Schiffrin (1987) maintains that "except for oh and well ... all the markers I have described have meaning" (1987: 314) and she suggests in several places that each DM has a 'core meaning', although she doesn't expand on this notion. Examining only 11 expressions, she realized that her focus is somewhat narrow and suggests a number of other cases which bear consideration as DMs: perception verbs such as see, look, and listen, deictics such as here and there, interjections such as gosh and boy, meta-talk such as this is the point and what I mean is, and quantifier phrases such as anyway, anyhow, and whatever. (1987: 328) Her primary interest is the ways in which DMs function to "add to discourse coherence" (1987: 326). She maintains that coherence is "constructed through relations between adjacent units in discourse" (1987: 24), and claims that there are five distinct and separate planes, each with its own type of coherence (1987: 24-25, adapted): "Exchange Structure, which reflects the mechanics of the conversational interchange (ethnomethodology) and shows the result of the participant turn-taking and how these alternations are related to each other; Action Structure, which reflects the sequence of speech acts which occur within the discourse; Ideational Structure, which reflects certain relationships between the ideas (propositions) found within the discourse, including cohesive relations, topic relations, and functional relations; Participation Framework, which reflects the ways in which the speakers and

hearers can relate to one another as well as orientation toward utterances; and Information State, which reflects the ongoing organization and management of knowledge and metaknowledge as it evolves over the course of the discourse." She then proposes that DMs typically provide contextual coordinates for an utterance by: (i) locating the utterance on one or more planes of talk of her discourse model (outlined above); (ii) indexing the utterances to the speaker, the hearer, or both; and (iii) indexing the utterances to prior and/or subsequent discourse. She sees DMs as serving an integrative function in discourse and thus contributing to discourse coherence. Schiffrin pointed out that some discourse markers relate only the semantic reality (the 'facts') of the two sentences while others, including *so*, may relate sentences on a logical (epistemic) level and/or a speech act (pragmatic) level. She wrote (1987):

2.3 Types of Filler-Words

Stenström (1994: 64-65) uses her own terminology, she divides lexical items into these categories:

Empathizers	(e.g. <i>you see, you know</i>)
Hedges	(e.g. <i>actually, I think, really, sort of</i>)
Stallers	“are those items which are followed by a long pause when speaker is at a loss” (ibid.) (normally, they are hedges).
Fillers	– “In some cases, it is not at all obvious what the items are doing” (ibid.).
Interjections)	(e.g. <i>oh, er</i>).
Greetings/farewells	(e.g. <i>hi, hello</i>).
Discourse markers	(e.g. <i>well, so, you know</i>).

Response getters	(e.g. <i>okay?</i> , <i>alright?</i>).
Attention getters	(e.g. <i>hey</i>).
Response forms	(e.g. <i>right</i> , <i>absolutely</i>).
Polite forms	(e.g. <i>thank you</i> , <i>you are welcome</i>).
Expletives	(e.g. <i>damn</i> , <i>blimey</i> , <i>f-words</i>) –“usu ally taboo words” (ibid.), which can cause offense.

McCarten (2007: 8) holds the view that “vocabulary items that contain more than one word are sometimes called „chunks“, „lexical bundles“, or clusters“”, which are basically fillers. She also calls them „fragments“, or “bits of language that do not have a meaning as expressions in their own right” (ibid.). She believes that some fillers “are much more frequent than every-day basic, single words. Fillers such as *I mean*, *I don’t know*, and *or something* are more frequent than words like *woman*, *six*, and *black*” (ibid.: 9). She strongly stresses that one must take fillers “seriously as vocabulary items” (ibid.). This is important since she claims that lexically, fillers are equal to others words, used in every-day situations.

Actually

Actually as a filler is used by the speaker in order to emphasize what he/she says.

Its main function is to stress the important information and organize one’s thoughts as well.

Basically

As a filler is used by the speaker in order to sort out his/her thoughts.

The main function is, however, different. *Basically* tends to be used as a good beginning of a sentence, separated with a comma which in the transcription indicates a pause

In fact

As a filler is used by the speaker in order to stress important information.

I think

The main function of *I think* is to express one's opinion, usually without knowledge whether this opinion is true or not. It is a polite way of expressing opinions.

Like

It can be used in several ways. In the example above, *like* is used as an auxiliary element that helps the speaker to express his thoughts and his opinions on a given problem. *Like* as a filler has been studied in the work of Sýkorová (2010), the name of her publication is "*Like as a Filler in Academic Spoken English*". She found out (ibid.: 101) that "like is used mainly by the youngest group between age 17-23 and that it is the most frequent filler in comparison to other fillers".

Now

It indicates the situation that is to happen in order to prepare the addressee to a situation. It is important to notice that *now* in initial position has a different meaning when placed in final position. *Now* in initial position represents

uptake, something is planned to happen, whereas *now* in final position is usually the adverbial of time.

I don't know

It means that the speaker and the listener do not have the same opinion on a discussed matter. Povolná (2010: 104) labels its pragmatic function as that of **marker of certainty**, or, more specifically **marker of lack of certainty**. It also give the speakers more time to organize their speech.

I mean

I mean is used by the speaker as a self-corrector, i.e. the speaker needs time to think what s/he has said and possibly wants to correct the piece of information that has already been said. Edmondson (1981) places *I mean* among the so-called **let-me-explains**, which are used to communicate to the hearer something the speaker already knows.

Well

The speaker wants to indicate that something is to be introduced and wants to get attention of the addressee(s).

The primary position of *well* is the initial position. *Well* usually expresses hesitation or surprise. Also, the speaker might want to gain some time before he actually answers, which is the main function of fillers *you know* represents a similar function, yet, the position is not final. The speaker also relies on the fact that the addressee is familiar with the topic and knows the crucial information.

Both *hm* and *mm* are fillers with the same discourse function, they express reflection of one's thoughts but agreement as well.

Oh occurs only when the speaker is surprised and/or experience something Unexpected.

Um clearly expresses hesitation and agitated thoughts. In order to formulate one's thoughts, *um* is likely to appear. This filler can be placed into both initial and medial position but cannot occur in final position.

2.4 Impact of Fillers on Conversation

2.4.1 Impact on Speakers Credibility

The majority of scholars agree that the credibility of the speaker decreases with the increase of filler words (Conrad et al. 2013), suggest that filler words positively affect credibility of the speaker Yet still others believe that filler words have absolutely no effect on a speaker's credibility. This can be achieved if speakers use filler words correctly for if they are not good users of filler words they may cause some distractions and misunderstanding to their listeners.

Frederick Conrad et al. (2014) said Credibility of a speaker can be positively impacted by the use of filler words when in non-formal settings and when gauging honesty. The more rehearsed speech is, the less likely filler words are to appear. That means the spontaneous speech would hardly contain the use of filler words, something which we find it excluding the situations where formal speech is done or spoken.

2.4.2 Impact on the Listener

(Pytko and Reese (2013)). In several studies, subjects were given instructions to complete a basic task, and the results reflected that the instructions with filler words caused less or incorrect understanding. Accordingly the use of filler words by speakers might definitely cause some problems to the listener regarding the message addressed in any given speech. Or even cause some sort of distractions to the meaning of the communicated message and might possibly mislead the receiver and the reader in conversations.

2.5 Definition of Fluency

Fluency is a key contributor toward independent and successful reading and is comprised of three components: accuracy, rate, and prosody (expression).

2.5.1 Three Components of Fluency

1 -Accuracy

Accuracy is the ability to effortlessly name words or to draw on a mediated process when unfamiliar words cannot be automatically recognized (Evanchan, 2010). A secure knowledge of phonemic awareness, letter-sound knowledge (alphabet and phonics), sight words, and high-frequency words supports speakers to become accurate.

2- Rate

Reading rate is comprised of the speed and fluidity a reader uses as he/she reads a text” (Evanchan, 2010, p. 12). However , fluency is not just about reading faster because emphasizing speed may give students the impression that it is the ultimate aim of reading- at the expense of comprehension. Perhaps

this is related to reading yet we can ascribe it to speaking in the way that speed is commonly considered as a fluency factor.

3- Prosody

Prosody is the ability to read with expression and with reading that sounds like speaking (Evanchan, 2010, p. 12). Prosody is HOW words are read and interpreted and so can have a direct impact on whether students understand what they are reading or have read. Kuhn & Rasinski (2011) suggest that it is adept use of prosody that provides the nuances and interpretations when reading . In the meantime animating our language will definitely lead to more understanding in conversations between speakers.

2.6 Definition of Text

The word text derives from the Latin word texere to weave.

Thornbury (2005) has put forward some characteristics for texts and stated, texts are;

- Self-contained
- Well-formed
- Hang together (cohesive)
- Make sense (coherent)
- Have a clear communicative purpose
- Are recognizable text types
- Are appropriate to their contexts of use.

2.6.1 Definition of Textuality

According to De Beaugrade and Dressler (1981) textuality is determined by some factors which depends on the participants, the intended message and the setting of occurrence and they have organized these factors in seven standard of textuality in which they can fulfill the communicative purpose of any text.

Cohesion: how texts are structured and linked. In other words the grammatical unity of a text.

Coherence: the writer's text world and its relation to our experience of the phenomenal world depends less on covert markers more on the situation described and sequenced.

Acceptability: readers of a text receive that texts for various purposes, reading a text means expecting something from that. It is all about matching the expectations of the reader.

Intentionality: is reflected in the writer's manipulation of rhetorical devices, commands, questions and suggestions.

Informativity: effects the reader beneficially e.g. new information.

Situationality: recognizes the appearance of a text at a given time or in a context. It influences the interpretation of the reader.

Intertextuality: recognizes that all texts contain traces of other texts. Writers may wish to emit echoes of certain texts or thoughts. When writers borrow certain phrases or concepts from other works then they are using intertextuality. According to Fairclough (1992) intertextuality "points to how

texts can transform prior texts and restructure existing conventions to generate new ones".

2.7 Types of Text

2.7.1 Written Text

Written texts include stories comic strips, instructions, recipes presentations..etc. When people are writing to each other, their interactions may be made up of series of sentences, paragraphs and connected ideas.

2.7.2 Spoken text

Spoken text includes oral stories, interviews, dialogues, phone conversations ...etc. When people are speaking to one another their interactions are made up of series of utterances such as questions, replies, comments, and suggestions.

Halliday (1978) said "spoken text is simply what is said in a piece of written discourse and a spoken discourse can be encoded in written text" we can state that text is not only a written form of language but it is a spoken form of language too.

2.8 Previous Studies

This part is composed of some relevant recent studies that were conducted on the topic of fillers, their functions and their impacts on speaking performance.

There are some comments made by the researcher on areas of similarities and differences regarding the research topic and the kind of methodology used to obtain data for the sake investigations in addition to the most important findings reached. There are 7 studies compiled in order.

2.81 Study (1)

This study was conducted by Emily, Robins and et al (2014) titled Exploring Filler Words and their Impact. The purpose of this study was to analyze filler words in order to explain and correct the phenomenon of filler words in English .In other words it explores the causes of filler words (such as divided attention, infrequent words and nervousness),their impact on the credibility of the speaker, their impact on the comprehension of the listener and possible ways for improving communication (for both the listener and the speaker).the researcher used a corpus-based method in order to collect the required data for the study .The overall finding is in the conclusion that not using filler words or excessively using filler words can cause harm to speaker's credibility in that case the speaker can be seen as unprepared or inexperienced . Moreover the most effective speech occurs when filler words are used moderately.

In terms of methodology, (Emily, Robins and et al) used a different methodology but this current study is using an observation method to collecting data from the population of the study. On the other hand, this study is similar in the way that it discusses the impact of filler words on the speaker and the listener.

2.8.2 Study (2)

The second study is done in (2013) by the department of foreign languages at Osmangazi University Turkey. The aim of this paper was to emphasize the importance of using filler words to students in EFL/ESL classrooms and investigate whether students use filler after they have been taught and if so, which fillers they tend to use and why. Although there might be no teaching issues for acquisition of fillers, being spoken discourse markers, the aim was

rather increasing the learner's awareness of filler words when they hesitate in the foreign language which is actually the very nature of speaking. The method of this study was two speaking session recording conducted with 7elementary level classes at Osmangazi University (2014). Filler words were taught in between the sessions and the filler use of students was investigated before and after teaching. The whole process was conducted in 5week-time. Through the voice recordings and related transcriptions, the result basically revealed that the students used fillers in the second session after they were taught and were provided with related activities to practice filler words. The conclusion was that in the case students are aware of filler words they can use them effectively.

The method of this study was recording sessions to collect data for the investigations.

2.8.3 Study (3)

This study was done in (2017) by Alajab Abdulgadir titled investigating the difficulties that encounter EFL learners in using discourse markers in written texts. The study was done at department of English language, Sudan University of Science and Technology, third year students. The researcher used descriptive analytical method to collect data randomly. The study covered 30 students and 15 teachers. A test for students and a questionnaire for teachers. The study concluded that most of the university EFL learners made errors in using discourse markers in written texts and the discourse markers usage creates some difficulties to university EFL learners which lead to distortion of meaning in written texts.

2.8.4 Study (4)

A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Lan-Fen Huang titled *Discourse Markers in Spoken English*(2011)

This thesis explores the use of discourse markers (DMs) in the speech of Chinese non-native speakers (NNSs) of English and native speakers (NSs), using corpus methodologies, the *Linear Unit Grammar* analysis (Sinclair and Mauranen 2006) and text-based analyses. It reports that the DMs for analysis, *like, oh, well, you know, I mean, you see, I think* and *now*, occur more frequently in the dialogic genres than in the monologic genres extracted from the three corpora, SECCL, MICASE and ICE-GB. The co-occurrence of DMs is taken as evidence to determine the categories for discussion with the suggested functions being secondary interpretations. Surprisingly, there are similarities in the use of DMs between Chinese NNSs and NSs. For the differences, some require NSs to become more tolerant and inclusive of the versions of English and some require pedagogical interventions for the Chinese NNSs. This thesis demonstrates that the use of DMs correlates with the genre, context, type of activity and identity of the speaker. All such factors affect the speakers' choice of a DM to use when giving priority to discourse organisation, fluency, the engagement of the listeners, the construction of the speaker's persona and the creation of solidarity.

This study is similar to in the way that it discusses the topic of DMs or fillers and how they are used by Chinese none native speakers of English and used corpora based methodology in the investigations, thus it is different from my method which is observation sessions.

2.8.5 Study (5)

This study is done by Loretta Fung and Ronald Carter (2007). The study examines and compares the production of discourse markers by native speakers and learners of English based on a pedagogic sub-corpus from CANCODE, a corpus of spoken British English, and a corpus of interactive classroom discourse of secondary pupils in Hong Kong. The results indicate that in both groups discourse markers serve as useful interactional manoeuvres to structure and organize speech on interpersonal, referential, structural, and cognitive levels. The Hong Kong learners are found to display a liberal use of referentially functional discourse markers (and, but, because, OK, so, etc.) but a relatively restricted use of other markers (yeah, really, say, sort of, I see, you see, well, right, actually, cos, you know, etc.). Native speakers are found to use discourse markers for a wider variety of pragmatic functions and the study therefore also discusses some possible pedagogical implications involved in preparing learners to become more interactionally competent speakers.

This study is different in the way that it uses a different methodology besides It includes the approach of pedagogical implications regarding the use of filler words which is an area out of my research limitations.

2.8.6 Study (6)

In study written by Charlyn, M.Lasemal .etal(2014) published in Journal of Language and Social Psychology. Titled Who Like Says You Know: Filler Words Use as a Function of Age, Gender and Personality. The writer approached the topic of filler words as follows;

Filler words (I mean, you know, like, uh, um) are commonly used in spoken conversation. The authors analyzed these five filler words from transcripts

recorded by a device called the Electronically Activated Recorder (EAR), which sampled participants' language use in daily conversations over several days. By examining filler words from 263 transcriptions of natural language from five separate studies, this study attempts to clarify the psychometric properties of filler words. An exploratory factor analysis extracted two factors from the five filler words: filled pauses (uh, um) and discourse markers (I mean, you know, like).

Overall, filled pauses were used at comparable rates across genders and ages. Discourse markers, however, were more common among women, younger participants, and more conscientious people. These findings suggest that filler word use can be considered a potential social and personality marker. The one similarity in this study is that it includes the above mentioned filler words and how they are used by speakers of different age, gender and personality.

2.8.7 Study (7)

Oskar Jonsson (2016) conducted a study titled *We Need to Talk About erm Linguistic Fillers*, and has presented a case study based on participant observation of a group of Swedish secondary school students' interaction in English. The study focused on what is commonly referred to as communicative competence, or more specifically strategic competence, which represents how language speakers overcome linguistic breakdowns or gaps in their communicative skill. The aim of the study was to better understand how students use linguistic fillers in different situations. By observing students in two different situations, one stressful and one regular conversational situation, it was found that when in a stressful situation, students are more likely to use linguistic fillers in general and also that some students rely on their first

language, Swedish, when using linguistic fillers. In this case study, it was found that some students experience difficulties in using English linguistic fillers.

Based on these findings, there is a need for teachers to address this problem if students are to develop confidence and skill in using them. For this reason, there is a need for further research on developing and testing different teaching methods on the use of linguistic fillers.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter begins by introducing some relevant literature review as a theoretical base for this study. The researcher tried to provide some definitions, classifications and importance of discourse markers /gap-fillers in texts and conversations. The researcher also compiled some relevant previous studies in a way that supports the proposition of the study. And perhaps the most notable difference is that these studies used different methodology mainly interviews and recordings while this current study adopts a descriptive methods namely a test and questionnaire.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology that has been used in this research. Moreover it provides full description of the instrument which was employed to collect the needed data. In relation to the data analysis, the reliability of this instrument has been confirmed.

3.1 Methodology of the Study

The researcher has adopted mixed analytical descriptive method to conduct the present study which aims to analyze the difficulties that encountered by EFL learners in using gap fillers. This chapter describes and explains the methods and procedures of the research that used to collect data. It also describes the design of the study sampling techniques, data collection and data analysis procedures.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study is confined to EFL learners and the kind of problems that encounter them in using gap-fillers. The students who participated in this study are 30 students (male/female) of communication classes at ADC (American Discussion Club), Khartoum locality. In addition to 20 teachers of English. the researcher assumes that the findings of the study are applicable to the target population.

3.3 Data Collection Tools

The instruments used to collect the data, are a test which was prepared by the researcher, for the first hypothesis and it contains a text that has 10 gaps to be filled with the proper use of some gap-fillers given.

In addition to match (A) with(B) task for the second hypothesis that contains 8 types of gap-fillers to be matched with 8 examples of gap-filers. Regarding the third hypothesis, the researcher designed a questionnaire of 8 statements to be answered by teachers of English.

3.4 Validity and Reliability of the Test and the Questionnaire

3.4.1 Apparent Validity and Reliability

In order to check the apparent validity for the study questionnaire and validation of its statements according to the formulation and explanation, the researcher showed the questionnaire to the (5) of the Ph.D. holding referees whom they are specialists by the study field. Some of the referees make some suggestions, and others were agreed that the questionnaire is suitable. In any way, the researcher studied all suggestions, and some corrections on his questionnaire have been done. The following table is showing the referees and their jobs and places of work.

3.5 Statistical Validity and Reliability

It is meant by the reliability of any test, to obtain the same results if the same measurement is used more than one time under the same conditions. In addition, the reliability means when a certain test was applied on a number of individuals and the marks of every one were counted; then the same test applied another time on the same group and the same marks were obtained;

then we can describe this test as reliable. In addition, reliability is defined as the degree of the accuracy of the data that the test measures. Here are some of the most used methods for calculating the reliability:

1. Split-half by using Spearman-Brown equation.
2. Alpha-Cronbach coefficient.
3. Test and Re-test method
4. Equivalent images method.
5. Guttman equation.

3.5.1 Validity of the Study

On the other hand, validity also is a measure used to identify the validity degree among the respondents according to their answers on certain criterion. The validity is counted by a number of methods, among them is the validity using the square root of the (reliability coefficient). The value of the reliability and the validity lies in the range between (0-1). The validity of the questionnaire is that the tool should measure the exact aim, which it has been designed for.

The researcher calculated the validity statistically using the following equation:

$$\text{Validity} = \sqrt{\text{Reliability}}$$

The researcher calculated the reliability coefficient for the measurement, which was used in the questionnaire using (split-half) method. This method stands on the principle of dividing the answers of the sample individuals into two parts, i.e. items of the odd numbers e.g. (1, 3, 5, ...) and answers of the even numbers e.g. (2,4,6 ...). Then Pearson correlation coefficient between the two parts is calculated.

3.5.2 Reliability of the Study

Finally, the (reliability coefficient) was calculated according to Spearman-Brown Equation as the following:

$$\text{Reliability Coefficient} = \frac{2 \times r}{1 + r}$$

r = Pearson correlation coefficient

For calculating the validity and the reliability of the questionnaire from the above equation, the researcher was distributed about (15) questionnaires and (5) test to respondents. In addition, depending on the answers of the pre-test sample, the above Spearman-Brown equation was used to calculate the reliability coefficient using the split-half method; the results have been showed in the following table:

The statistical reliability and validity of the pre-test sample about the study questionnaire and test

	Reliability	Validity
Questionnaire	0.86	0.93
Test	0.77	0.88

Source: The researcher from applied study, 2016

We note from the results of above table that all reliability and validity coefficients for pre-test sample individuals about each questionnaire's theme, and for overall questionnaire, are greater than (50%), and some of them are nearest to one. This indicates to the high validity and reliability of the answers, so, the study questionnaire is valid and reliable, and that will give correct and acceptable statistical analysis.

3.6 Statistical Instruments

In order to satisfy the study objectives and to test its hypotheses, we use the following statistical instruments:

1. Graphical figures.
2. Frequency distribution.
3. Person correlation coefficient.
4. Spearman-Brown equation for calculating Reliability coefficient.
5. Median.
6. Non-parametric Chi-square test.
7. One sample t –test.

Summary of the Chapter

In order to obtain accurate results, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. In addition, to design the graphical figures, which are needed for the study, the computer program (Excel) was also used. The statistical findings of the preliminary samples showed that the test and the questionnaire are valid and proved to be carried on.

CHAPTER FOUR
DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

In the last chapter the researcher has conducted the process of data collection using a test and a questionnaire, thus after data has already been collected now it is the need for conducting a statistical analysis and discussions to verify the earlier proposed hypotheses of the research. This chapter is concerned with the use of SPSS for data analysis and discussions.

4.1 Analysis of the Test

4.1.1 Results of the First Hypothesis

The first hypothesis in this study states the following:

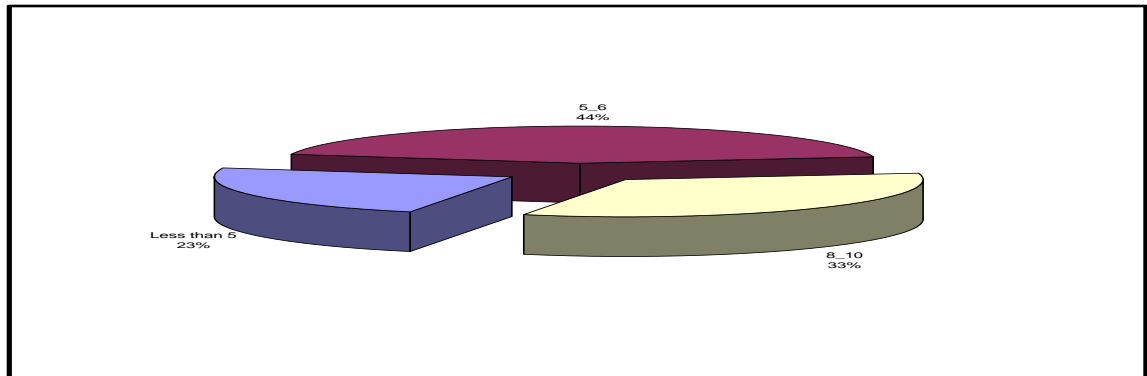
“EFL learners are not able to use gap-fillers in texts correctly”

Table No.(4.1): The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers to the question No.(1)

Answer	Number	Percent
Less than 5	7	23.3
7-5	13	43.3
10-8	10	33.3
Total	20	100.0

Source: The researcher from applied study, 2019

Figure No.(4.1) The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers to the question No.(1)



One-Sample Test

Test Value >5						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
A1	-20.931	29	.000	-2.90	-3.18	-2.62

From above table, it is shown that the P-value of t-test (.000) is less than significant level (0.05) that mean grad than 4.

4.1.2 Results of the Second Hypothesis

The second hypothesis in this study states the following:

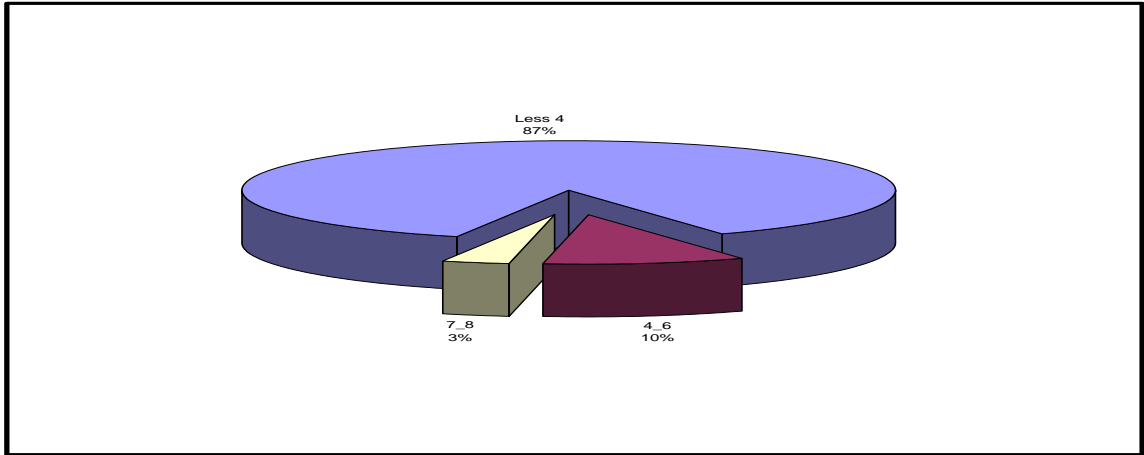
“EFL learners are not able to identify the different types of gap-fillers”

Table No.(4.2):The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers to the question No.(2)

Answer	Number	Percent
Less 4	26	86.7
6-4	3	10.0
8-7	1	3.3
Total	20	100.0

Source: The researcher from applied study, 2019

Figure No.(4.2) The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers to the question No.(2)



One-Sample Test

Test Value > 4						
	t	df	P-value	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
B1	-33.654	29	.000	-2.83	-3.01	-2.66

From the above table, it is shown that the P-value of t-test (.000) is less than significant level (0.05) that mean grad than 4 .

4.2 Analysis of the Questionnaire

4.2.1 Results of the Third Hypothesis

The third hypothesis in this study states the following:

"English teachers can play an important role in solving problems related to gap-fillers."

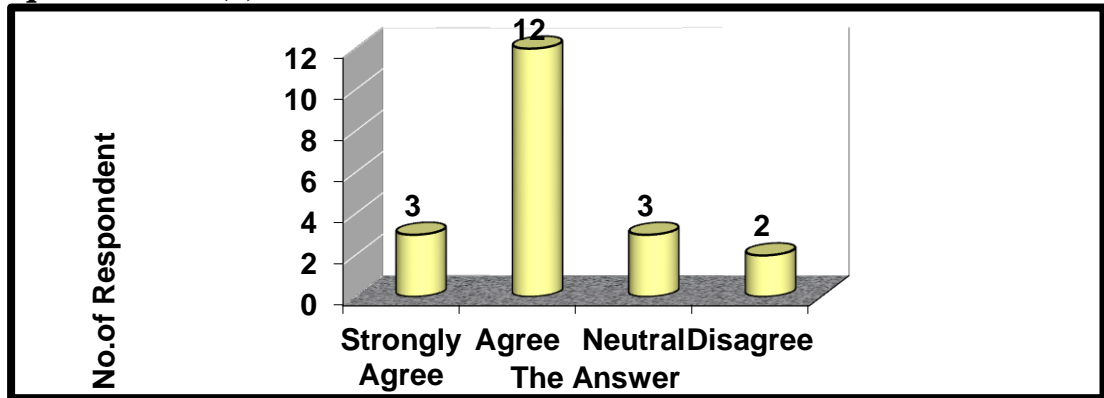
Question No.(1):Teacher do not use gap-fillers when teaching speaking in the classroom.

Table No.(4.3): The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers to the question No.(1)

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	3	15.0
Agree	12	60.0
Neutral	3	15.0
Disagree	1	10.0
Total	20	100.0

Source: The researcher from applied study, 2016

Figure No.(4.3): The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers to the question No.(1)



Source: The researcher from applied study, Excel Package, 2019

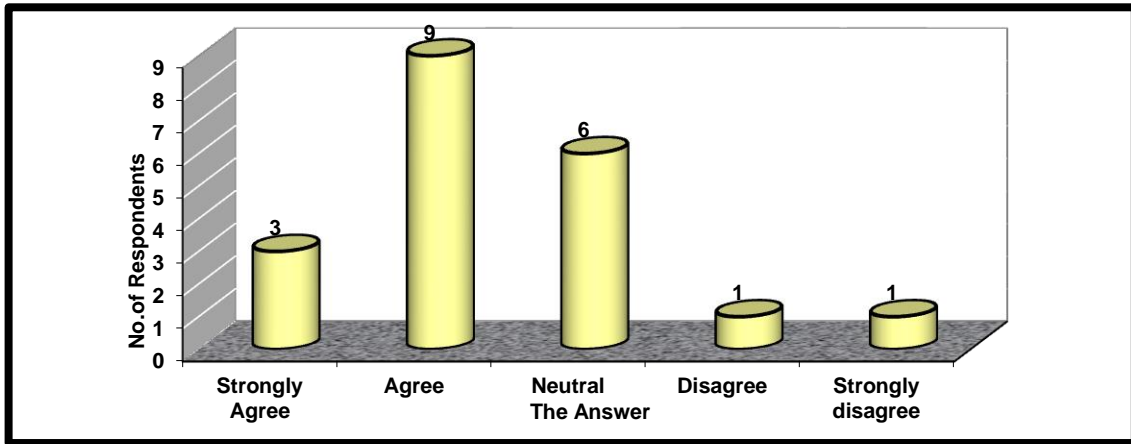
It is clear from table no.(4.3) and figure (4.3) that there are (3) persons in the study's sample with percentage (15.0%) have strongly agreed with "Teacher do not use gap-fillers teaching speaking in the classroom". There are (12) persons with percentage (60.0%) have agreed on that, and (3) persons with percentage (15.0%) have neutral about that, and (2) persons with percentage (10.0%) have disagree about that.

Question No.(2):Teachers are not acquainted with the use of gap-fillers.
Table No.(4.4): The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers to the question No.(2)

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	3	15.0
Agree	9	45.0
Neutral	6	30.0
Disagree	1	5.0
Strongly disagree	1	5.0
Total	20	100.0

Source: The researcher from applied study, 2019

Figure No.(4.4): The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers about question No.(2)



Source: The researcher from applied study, Excel Package, 2019

It is clear from the table No.(4.4) and figure (4.4) that there are (3) persons in the study's sample with percentage (15.0%) have strongly agreed with " Teachers are not acquainted with the use of gap-fillers ". There are (9) persons with percentage (45.0%) have agreed on that, and (6) persons with percentage (30.0%) have neutral about that, and only one person with percentage (5.0%) have disagree about that, while only one person with percentage (5.0%) have strongly disagree about that.

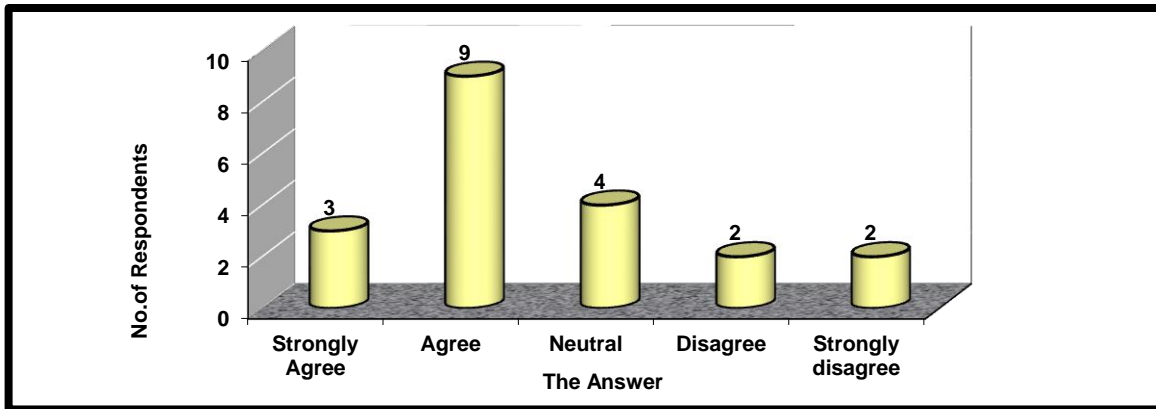
Question No.(3):Some gap-fillers are complex in the way we use them in different contexts.

Table No. (4.5): The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers about question No.(3)

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	3	15.0
Agree	9	45.0
Neutral	4	20.0
Disagree	2	10.0
Strongly disagree	2	10.0
Total	20	100.0

Source: The researcher from applied study, 2019

Figure No.(4.5): The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers about question No.(3)



Source: The researcher from applied study, Excel Package, 2019

It is clear from the table No.(4.5) and figure (4.5) that there are (3) persons in the study's sample with percentage (15.0%) have strongly agreed with " Some gap-fillers are complex in the way we use them in different contexts". There are (9) persons with percentage (45.0%) have agreed on that, and (4) persons with percentage (20.0%) have neutral about that, and (2) persons with percentage (10.0%) have disagree about that, while (2) persons with percentage (10.0%) have strongly disagree about that.

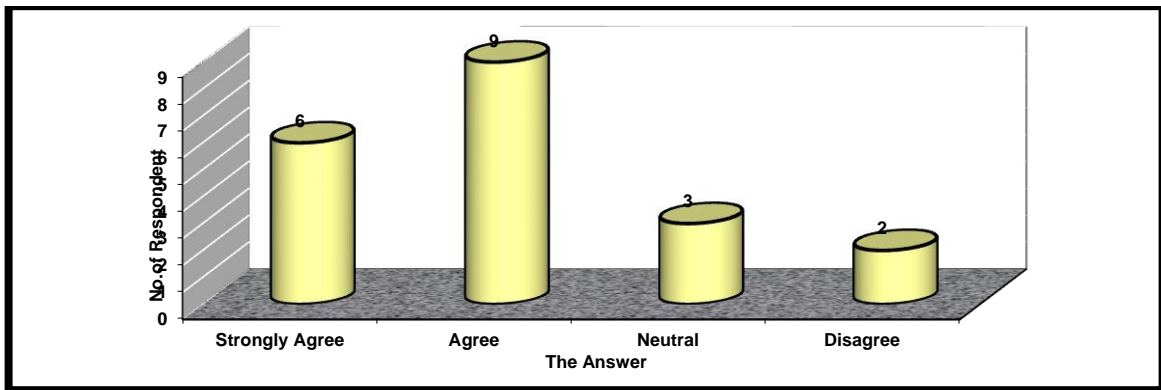
Question No.(4):Teacher can help a lot when explaining the use of gap-fillers in different contexts.

Table No.(4.6): The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers about question no.(4)

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	6	30.0
Agree	9	45.0
Neutral	3	15.0
Disagree	2	10.0
Total	20	100.0

Source: The researcher from applied study, 2019

Figure No.(4.6):The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers about question no.(4)



Source: The researcher from applied study, Excel Package, 2019

It is clear from the table No.(4.6) and figure No. (4.6) that there are (6) persons in the study's sample with percentage (15.0%) have strongly agreed with "Teacher can help a lot of when explaining the use of gap-fillers in different contexts ". There are (9) persons with percentage (45.0%) have agreed on that, and (3) persons with percentage (15.0%) have neutral about that, and (2) persons with percentage (10.0%) have disagree about that.

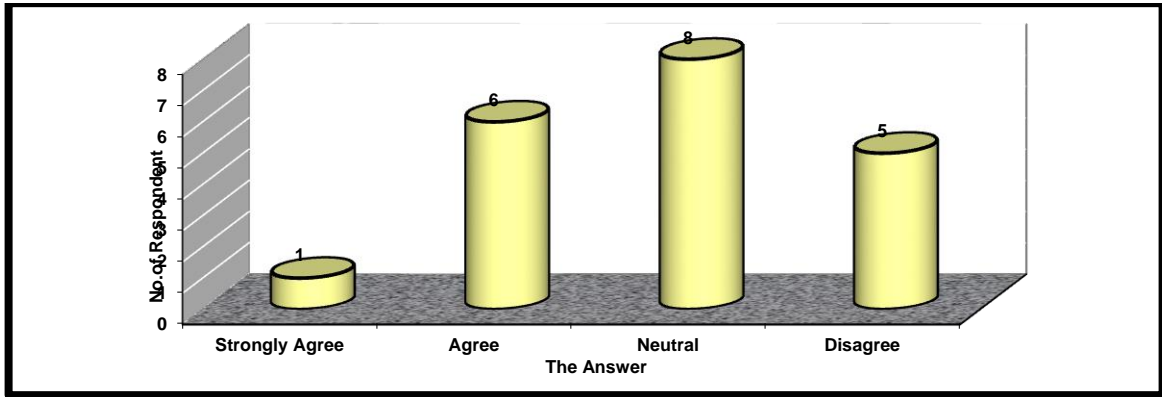
Question No.(5):Gap-fillers have no effect on meaning therefore teachers over look teaching them in spoken communication.

Table No. (4.7): The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers about question no.(5)

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	1	5.0
Agree	6	30.0
Neutral	8	40.0
Disagree	5	25.0
Total	20	100.0

Source: The researcher from applied study, 2019

Figure No. (4.7): The frequency distribution for the respondents' answers about question no.(5)



Source: The researcher from applied study, Excel Package, 2019

It is clear from the table No. (4.7) and figure No. (4.7) that there are only one person in the study's sample with percentage (5.0%) have strongly agreed with " Gap-fillers have no effect on meaning therefore over look teaching them in spoken communication ". There are (6) persons with percentage (30.0%) have agreed on that, and (8) persons with percentage (40.0%) have neutral about that, and (5) persons with percentage (25.0%) have disagree about that.

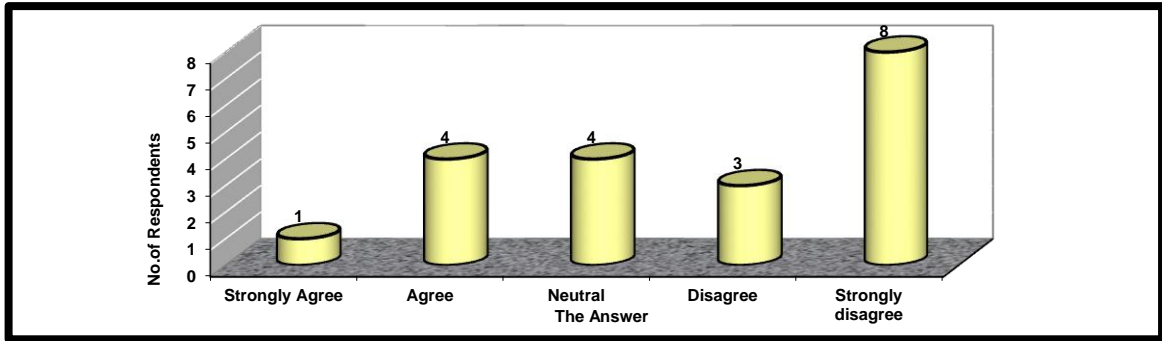
Question No.(6):Gap-fillers have no effect on meaning therefore teachers over look teaching them in spoken communication.

Table No. (4.8): The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers about question no.(6)

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	1	5.0
Agree	4	20.0
Neutral	4	20.0
Disagree	3	15.0
Strongly disagree	8	40.0
Total	20	100.0

Source: The researcher from applied study, 2019

Figure No. (4.8): The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers about question no.(6)



Source: The researcher from applied study, Excel Package, 2019

It is clear from the table No. (4.8) and figure No. (4.8) that there is only one person in the study's sample with percentage (5.0%) has strongly agreed with " Gap-fillers have no effect on meaning therefore teachers over look teaching them in spoken communication". There are (4) persons with percentage (20.0%) have agreed on that, and (4) persons with percentage (20.0%) have neutral about that, and (3) persons with percentage (15.0%) have disagree about that, while (8) persons with percentage (40.0%) have strongly disagree about that.

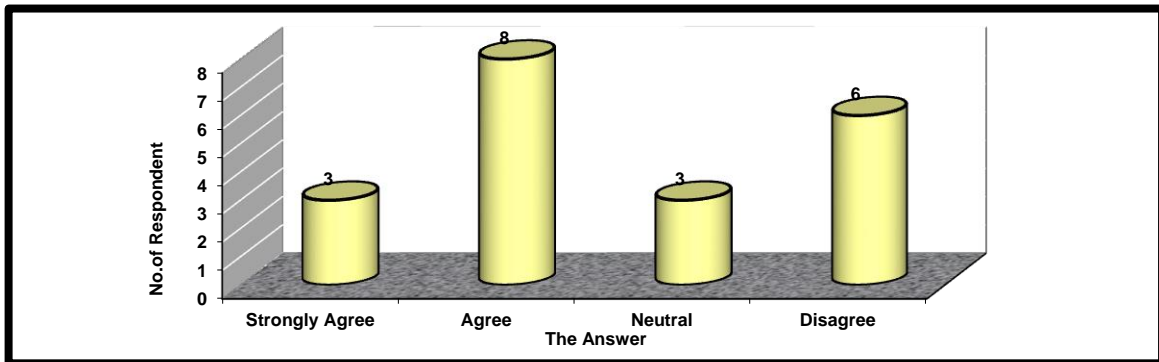
Question No.(7):The overuse of gap-fillers can be misleading and may negatively affect the message in texts. Accordingly teachers teach gap-fillers only in speaking.

Table No. (4.9): The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers about question no.(7)

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	3	15.0
Agree	8	40.0
Neutral	3	15.0
Disagree	6	30.0
Total	20	100.0

Source: The researcher from applied study, 2019

Figure No. (4.9): The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers about question no.(7)



Source: The researcher from applied study, Excel Package, 2019

It is clear from table No. (4.9) and figure No. (4.9) that there are (3) persons in the study's sample with percentage (15.0%) have strongly agreed with " The overuse of gap-fillers can be misleading and may negatively affect the message in texts. Accordingly teachers teach gap-fillers only in speaking ". There are (8) persons with percentage (40.0%) have agreed on that, and (3) persons with percentage (15.0%) have neutral about that, and (6) persons with percentage (30.0%) have disagree about that.

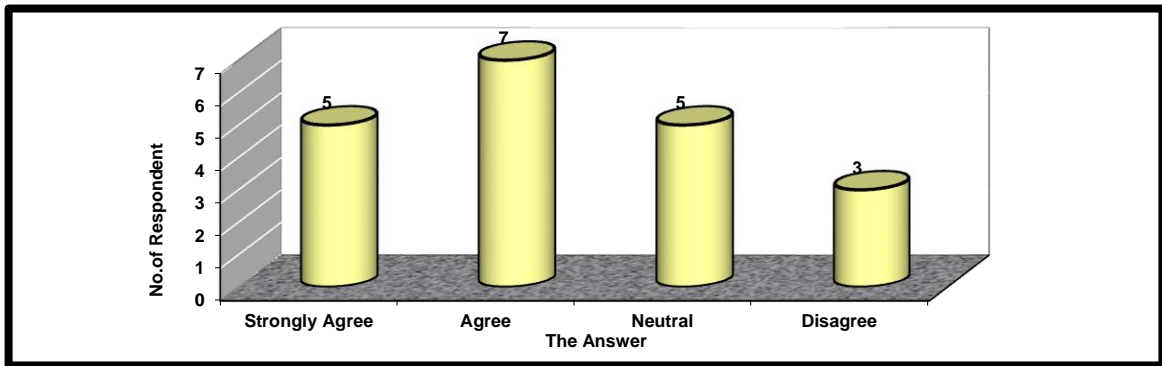
Question No.(8):Communication text-books seem to lack activates related to gap-fillers that is why teachers should provide students with supplementary materials of gap-fillers .

Table No. (4.10): The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers about question no.(8)

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Agree	5	25.0
Agree	7	35.0
Neutral	5	25.0
Disagree	3	15.0
Total	20	100.0

Source: The researcher from applied study, 2019

Figure No. (4.10): The frequency distribution for the respondents’ answers about question no.(8)



Source: The researcher from applied study, Excel Package, 2019

It is clear from the table No. (4.10) and figure No. (4.10) that there are (5) persons in the study's sample with percentage (25.0%) have strongly agreed with Communication text-books seem to lack activates related to gap-fillers that is why teachers should provide students with supplementary materials n gap-fillers ". There are (7) persons with percentage (35.0%) have agreed on that, and (5) persons with percentage (25.0%) have neutral about that, and (3) persons with percentage (15.0%) have disagree about that.

4.2.2 Verification of the Third Hypothesis

The third hypothesis in this study states the following:

“English teachers can play an important role in solving problems related to gap-fillers”

The aim of this hypothesis is to show that English teachers can play an important role in solving problems related to gap-fillers.

To test this hypothesis, we must know the trend of respondents' opinions about each question from the hypothesis's questions, and for all questions. We compute the median, which is one of the central tendency measures, that uses to describe the phenomena, and it represents the centered answer for all respondents' answers after ascending or descending order for the answers.

Table No. (4.11): The median of the respondents’ answers to the questions of the third hypothesis

No	Question	Median	Result
1	Teachers do not use gap-fillers when teaching speaking in the classroom.	4	Agree
2	Teachers are not acquainted with the use of gap-fillers.	4	Agree
3	Some gap-fillers are complex in the way we use them in different contexts.	4	Agree
4	Teachers can help a lot when explaining the use of gap-fillers in different contexts.	4	Agree
5	Gap-fillers have no effect on meaning therefore teachers over look teaching them in written communications.	3	Neutral
6	Gap-fillers have no effect on meaning therefore teachers over look teaching them in spoken communications.	1	Strongly disagree
7	The overuse of gap-fillers can be misleading and may negatively affect the message in texts. Accordingly, teachers teach gap-fillers only in speaking.	4	Agree
8	Communication text-books seem to lack activities related to gap-fillers, That is why teachers should provide students with supplementary materials on gap-fillers.	4	Agree
	Overall	4	Agree

Source: The researcher from applied study, 2016

From the table (4.11), it has shown that:

The calculated value of the median for the respondents’ answers of the 1st question is (1). This value means that, most of the respondents’ are agreed with that “Teachers do not use gap-fillers when teaching speaking in the classroom”.

The calculated value of the median for the respondents' answers of the 2nd question is (4). This value means that, most of the respondents' are agreed with that "Teachers are not acquainted with the use of gap-fillers".

The calculated value of the median for the respondents' answers of the 3rd question is (4). This value means that, most of the respondents' are agreed with that "Some gap-fillers are complex in the way we use in different contexts".

The calculated value of the median for the respondents' answers of the 4th question is (4). This value means that, most of the respondents' are agreed with that "Teachers can help a lot when explaining the use of gap-fillers in different contexts".

The calculated value of the median for the respondents' answers of the 5th question is (4). This value means that, most of the respondents' are agreed with that "Gap-fillers have no effect on meaning therefore teachers over look teaching them in written communications".

The calculated value of the median for the respondents' answers of the 6th question is (4). This value means that, most of the respondents' are disagreed with that Gap-fillers have no effect on meaning therefore teachers over look teaching them in spoken communications".

The calculated value of the median for the respondents' answers of the 7th question is (3). This value means that, most of the respondents' are agree with that "The overuse of gap-fillers can be misleading and may negatively affect the message in texts. Accordingly, teachers teach gap-fillers only in speaking".

The calculated value of the median for the respondents' answers of the 8th question is (4). This value means that, most of the respondents' are agreed with that "Communication text-books seem to lack activities related to gap-fillers, That is why teachers should provide students with supplementary materials on gap-fillers".

The calculated value of the median for the respondents' answers about the all questions that related to the first hypothesis is (3). This value, in general, means that most of the respondents' have agreed with all what mentioned about the first hypothesis

above results do not mean that all the respondents in the sample have agreed with the questions because as mentioned in the tables from no.(1) to no.(8) there are some respondents who were disagreed with the questions. So, to test the statistical significance of the differences among the answers of the respondents for the first hypothesis, the chi-square test will used to indicate the differences for each question of the first hypothesis. Table no.(10) explains the results of the test for the questions as follows:

Table No. (4.12): Chi-square test results for respondents' answers to the questions of the third hypothesis

No	Questions	Degree of freedom	Chi-square value
1	Teachers do not use gap-fillers when teaching speaking in the classroom.	3	27.39
2	Teachers are not acquainted with the use of gap-fillers.	4	18.04
3	Some gap-fillers are complex in the way we use them in different contexts.	4	17.47
4	Teachers can help a lot when explaining the use of gap-fillers in different contexts.	3	45.65
5	Gap-fillers have no effect on meaning therefore teachers over look teaching them in written communications.	3	17.09
6	Gap-fillers have no effect on meaning therefore teachers over look teaching them in spoken communications.	4	19.04
7	The overuse of gap-fillers can be misleading and may negatively affect the message in texts. Accordingly, teachers teach gap-fillers only in speaking.	3	20.13
8	Communication text-books seem to lack activities related to gap-fillers, That is why teachers should provide students with supplementary materials on gap-fillers.	3	20.65

Source: The researcher from applied study, 2019

According to the table, we can demonstrate the results as follows:

The calculated value of chi-square for the significance of the differences for the respondents' answers in the 1st question was (27.39) which is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square at the degree of freedom (4) and the significant value level (1%) which was (13.28). According to what mentioned in table

no.(1), this indicates that, there are statistically significant differences at the level (1%) among the answers of the respondents, which support the respondents who have agreed with that “Teachers do not use gap-fillers when teaching speaking in the classroom”.

The calculated value of chi-square for the significance of the differences for the respondents’ answers in the 2nd question was (18.04) which is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square at the degree of freedom (4) and the significant value level (1%) which was (13.28). According to what mentioned in table no.(2), this indicates that, there are statistically significant differences at the level (1%) among the answers of the respondents, which support the respondents who have agreed with that “Teachers are not acquainted with the use of gap-fillers”.

The calculated value of chi-square for the significance of the differences for the respondents’ answers in the 3rd question was (18.50) which is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square at the degree of freedom (4) and the significant value level (1%) which was (13.28). According to what mentioned in table no.(3), this indicates that, there are statistically significant differences at the level (1%) among the answers of the respondents, which support the respondents who have agreed with that Some gap-fillers are complex in the way we use them in different contexts”.

The calculated value of chi-square for the significance of the differences for the respondents’ answers in the 5th question was (17.09) which is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square at the degree of freedom (3) and the significant value level (1%) which was (13.28). According to what mentioned in table no.(5), this indicates that, there are statistically significant differences at the level (1%) among the answers of the respondents, which support the

respondents who have agreed with that “Teachers can help a lot when explaining the use of gap-fillers in different contexts”.

The calculated value of chi-square for the significance of the differences for the respondents’ answers in the 6th question was (19.04) which is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square at the degree of freedom (3) and the significant value level (1%) which was (11.34). According to what mentioned in table no.(6), this indicates that, there are statistically significant differences at the level (1%) among the answers of the respondents, which support the respondents who have agreed with that “Gap-fillers have no effect on meaning therefore teachers over look teaching them in spoken communications”.

The calculated value of chi-square for the significance of the differences for the respondents’ answers in the 7th question was (20.13) which is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square at the degree of freedom (4) and the significant value level (1%) which was (13.28). According to what mentioned in table no.(7), this indicates that, there are statistically significant differences at the level (1%) among the answers of the respondents, which support the respondents who have agreed with that “The overuse of gap-fillers can be misleading and may negatively affect the message in texts. Accordingly, teachers teach gap-fillers only in speaking”.

The calculated value of chi-square for the significance of the differences for the respondents’ answers in the 8th question was (19.48) which is greater than the tabulated value of chi-square at the degree of freedom (3) and the significant value level (1%) which was (13.28). According to what mentioned in table no.(8), this indicates that, there are statistically significant differences at the level (1%) among the answers of the respondents, which support the respondents who have agreed with that “Communication text-books seem to

lack activities related to gap-fillers, That is why teachers should provide students with supplementary materials on gap-fillers”.

From above results, we see that the third hypothesis that states “**English teachers can play an important role in solving problems related to gap-fillers**” is fulfilled.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter is composed of analysis and discussion based on the data collected in chapter (3) .After the statistical findings and analysis, the three hypothesis were proved to be accepted as proper answers to the problems of gap-fillers.

CHAPTER FIVE

**MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSION,
RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR
FURTHER STUDIES**

CHAPTER FIVE

MAIN FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

5.0 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the finding of the research that were reached after the SPSS analysis procedures in chapter four. This chapter starts in listing the reached findings, recommendations, suggestions for further studies.

5.1 Main Findings

Based on the data analysis procedures, the researcher has obtained the following findings:

- 1-EFL learners are not able to use and identify the types of gap-fillers correctly.
- 2-Teachers do not use gap-fillers when teaching speaking in the classroom.
- 3-Communication text-books seem to lack activities related to gap-fillers.
- 4-Teachers can play an important role in solving problems related to gap-fillers.
- 5-The proper use of gap-fillers accounts for the fluency in speaking.

5.2 Conclusion

Chapter one introduced the phenomenon of the study and put forward the hypotheses of the research problem which is the problems that encounter EFL students in using Gap-fillers. Chapter two included the theoretical frame work; where definitions and classification of Gap-fillers were compiled and paraphrased besides, some relevant previous studies of about 6 national and international certified published studies collected to support the study. Chapter three contained the tools for data collection procedures, two tools were used to carry out the process; a test done by 30 students of elementary level at American Discussion Club, Khartoum Locality. And a questionnaire directed to teachers of English language communications in American Discussion Club. Chapter four is composed of the data analysis methods in which SPSS is used to verify the hypothesis and reach out accurate findings through statistical analysis. The three hypothesis proposed in chapter one were accepted. Chapter five is concerned with the findings and recommendations. The study concluded that, EFL students are not able to use and identify the different types of gap-fillers correctly furthermore, Communication text-books seem to lack activities related to gap-fillers. Moreover, the proper use of gap-fillers accounts for the fluency in speaking. On the other hand some recommendations were made most importantly; Teachers should pay a great attention to teaching gap-fillers for students to enhance their understanding and use.

5.3 Recommendations

With reference to the findings mentioned above, the researcher has put forward the following recommendations:

1-Teachers should pay a great attention to teaching gap-fillers for students to enhance their understanding and use.

2-Teachers should use gap-fillers when teaching communication to allow a chance for students to learn.

3-Communication text books should be provided with audio-visual materials related to gap-fillers learning and acquisition in order to help both teachers and students.

4-Gap-fillers should not be overused in a way that affects the fluency in speaking.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

Following the lines of this study, the researcher suggests the following research topics for further relevant studies of the same area of enquiry:

1-Exploring the impact of gap-fillers in the fluency of conversations.

2-Investigating the impact of gap-fillers in speakers' credibility.

3-Ways to decrease the overuse of gap-fillers in speaking.

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APPENDICES

Appendix (1)

Sudan University of Science and Technology

College of Graduate Studies

Students' Test

A diagnostic test for elementary 3 students: this is a part of M.A research in English language (linguistics) concerning the Problems facing EFL learners in Using Gap-fillers in texts.

You are kindly requested to respond honestly to the questions.

Your response will be purely for research purpose and will be treated confidentially.

Thanks in advance

The Research Questions

- 1 To what extent are EFL learners able to use gap-fillers in texts correctly?
- 2 To what extent are EFL learners able to identify different types of gap-fillers?
- 3 What role can be played by English teachers in solving problems of gap-fillers?

The Research Hypotheses

- 1 EFL learners are not able to use gap-fillers in texts correctly.
- 2 EFL learners are not able to identify the different types of gap-fillers.
- 3 English teachers can play an important role in solving problems related to gap-fillers.

The Research Objectives

The research objectives include the following:

- This study attempts to investigate the problems that encounter EFL learners in using gap-fillers.
- The study also aims at analyzing the types of English gap-fillers and why students find it difficult in using them.
- The study also tries to investigate whether EFL learners are capable of using gap-fillers or not.
- Moreover this study attempts to find out the role played by teachers in solving the problem of gap-fillers.

Test: (A)

Hypotheses (1)

1-EFL learners are not able to use gap-fillers in texts correctly.

Use the following gap-fillers in the conversation below:

well	um	you know	I mean	okay	let me say	I guess	in
	fact	really	alright	basically	err		

A – Hello, how are you?

B-Hi, I am fine thanks and you?

A- pretty good.

B-these days I am taking vacation and I am thinking of flying to Cairo, what do you think?

A-yeah.....I think it is a good idea. At least you can get the chance to chill out.

B- Sorry, pardon.

A-Iyou can cheer up and enjoy your time.

B-..... I got it, even I am planning to see the opera house and the pyramids that were said to be the oldest human civilization on earth.

A-...I think , the Sudanese pyramids,are considered to be older than the Egyptian ones.

B- Oh..... I didn't know this before.

A-..... ...,butpeople don't know this historical fact.

B-you are right. Bye.

A-Bye.

Test (B)

Hypothesis (2)

2- EFL learners are not able to identify the different types of gap-fillers.

Match list (A) with list (B):

	List (A)	List (B)
	Types of gap-fillers	e.g.
1	Empathizers	oh, err
2	Interjections	you see, you know
3	Greetings/farewells	hello, goodbye
4	Attention getters	damn, f-words
5	Expletives	Hey
6	Response forms	thank you, you are well come
7	Polite forms	okay, alright
8	Response getters	alright, absolutely

Appendix (2)

Sudan University of science and Technology

College of Graduate Studies

Teachers' Questionnaire

A questionnaire for Teachers of English: this is a part of M.A research in English language (linguistics) concerning the Problems facing EFL learners in Using Gap-fillers in texts.

You are kindly requested to respond honestly to the questions.

Your response will be purely for research purpose and will be treated confidentially.

Thanks in advance

Hypotheses (3)

3-English teachers can play an important role in solving problems related to gap-fillers.

The statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
1-Teachers do not use gap-fillers when teaching speaking in the classroom.					
2- Teachers are not acquainted with the use of gap-fillers.					
3-Some gap-fillers are complex in the way we use them in different contexts.					
4-Teachers can help a lot when explaining the use of gap-fillers in different contexts.					
5-Gap-fillers have no effect on meaning therefore teachers over look teaching them in written communications.					
6-Gap-fillers have no effect on meaning therefore teachers over look teaching them in spoken communications.					
7-The overuse of gap-fillers can be misleading and may negatively affect the message in texts. Accordingly, teachers teach gap-fillers only in speaking.					
8-Communication text-books seem to lack activities related to gap-fillers, That is why teachers should provide students with supplementary materials on gap-fillers.					