

# An Analysis Of Students' Speaking Hesitation In EFL Virtual Classroom

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## ABSTRACT

*Speaking skill has extensively expanded in line with the advancement of online and hybrid learning. Thus, researching factors related to speaking skill in virtual setting is nowadays considered prominent. This research was to reveal types speaking hesitation, as well as factors that affect students' speaking hesitation in virtual classroom. This research adopted qualitative descriptive method. The research was based on the observation and interview conducted in SMA Negeri 1 Bone, South Sulawesi, in May 2023. The research subjects were 35 second-grade students academic year 2022-2023. To collect the data, the researcher observed and recorded 3 meetings of English subject classroom via Zoom meeting. Following this, the researcher conducted interview to 8 students who produced the most hesitation during the observation. The data were analyzed by using qualitative data analysis technique that consisted of 3 main steps: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The result showed that there are 7 types of speaking hesitation produced by students in EFL virtual classroom. They are fillers, stutters, repeats, silent pauses, false starts, interjections, and corrections. Further, 4 factors that made students hesitant to speak English in virtual classroom are nervousness, family/environment interference, lack of vocabulary, and poor network. Finding of this research was significant in expanding ideas and insight about speaking hesitation, particularly in virtual classroom.*

*Keterampilan berbicara telah berkembang pesat seiring dengan kemajuan pembelajaran daring dan hybrid. Oleh karena itu, penelitian terhadap faktor-faktor yang berkaitan dengan keterampilan berbicara dalam setting virtual saat ini dianggap penting. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap jenis keragu-raguan berbicara, serta faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi hesitasi berbicara siswa di kelas virtual. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Penelitian ini didasarkan pada observasi dan wawancara yang dilakukan di SMA Negeri 1 Bone, Sulawesi Selatan, pada bulan Mei 2023. Subjek penelitian adalah 35 siswa kelas II tahun ajaran 2022-2023. Untuk mengumpulkan data, peneliti mengamati dan mencatat 3 kali pertemuan kelas mata pelajaran bahasa Inggris melalui Zoom Meeting. Setelah itu, peneliti melakukan wawancara kepada 8 siswa yang paling banyak menimbulkan hesitasi selama observasi. Analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan teknik analisis data kualitatif yang terdiri dari 3 langkah utama: kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan/verifikasi. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa ada 7 jenis hesitasi berbicara yang dihasilkan oleh siswa di kelas virtual EFL. Itu adalah filler, gagap, pengulangan, jeda diam, permulaan yang salah, kata seru, dan koreksi. Lebih lanjut, 4 faktor yang membuat siswa ragu untuk berbicara bahasa Inggris di kelas virtual adalah rasa gugup, faktor keluarga/lingkungan, kurangnya kosa kata, dan jaringan yang buruk. Temuan penelitian ini signifikan dalam memperluas ide dan wawasan tentang hesitasi berbicara, khususnya di kelas virtual.*

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## 1. Introduction

Speaking fluently is consistently listed as one of the skills that presents the greatest challenge to students of foreign languages. According to Bueno, Madrid, and McLaren (2006), many students report that they have spent several years studying the English language, yet they are unable to speak it in a way that is suitable and understandable. People have a tough time picking up a second language, as stated by Carrol (1985), which was mentioned in Novvytasari (2018). In addition, he claims that the reason for this is that individuals are required to give more thought to the structure and the pronunciation. Learners of English often get the pronunciation of words, particularly the vowel sounds, wrong. This is especially true when it comes to pronouncing vowels. It is due to a number of different issues.

In order to communicate smoothly, students in this situation should try to keep speaking consistently. Another problem of speaking is found by Shalihah (2022) that students often did silent pause, fillers such as ehmm.../uhmm..., repeats, false start (retraced/un-retraced) such correction of a wrong word that they have uttered word or correction of word also included the repeating word of one or more words before the corrected words. Then sometimes the students also did correction, interjection, stutter, and slip of tongue. Those all are called types of hesitation. The primary roles of various types of hesitation techniques have been linked to challenges with speech planning or accessing speech (Derwing et al., 2004).

There are various aspects that influence students' ability to speak English fluently. They are concerned about making blunders when speaking. They are also unable to communicate themselves effectively or properly due to a lack of enough and appropriate language (Taly & Paramasivam, 2020). Another reason is that students are hesitant to talk in English that they are bashful and frightened. They are afraid to speak English in front of others because they lack confidence in their own ability (Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021). As a result, it is critical to use supportive words to help students overcome their worry, uncertainty, and dread.

Several studies on hesitation have been undertaken by researchers. Tree (2001) maintained that speakers' usage of um and uh has a very helpful purpose in aiding listeners' online processing of spontaneous speech; as a result, um and uh will make listeners more likely to detect new incoming words that speakers will utter. Further, Corley and Stewart (2008) evaluated the study with an emphasis on the meaning of um. The study looked into the role of hesitation in human communication, with a focus on fillers and the communicative goals they can serve. The study's findings revealed that fillers appear in speakers' utterances while engaged in dialogue, indicating that they are not unsure about articulating the next word. It indicates that when providing fillers in communication, speakers may have doubts about whether or not their next statements are correct. As a result, people choose to fill uh and um before saying the utterances. This in line with the findings of Wieling et al (2016) who investigated the variation and change in the use of hesitation markers in Germanic languages.

Furthermore, Roza and Rosa (2013) broadened the research to show that filled pause is a sort of hesitating occurring commonly utilized by the characters in the film *Akeelah and the Bee*. According to the study's findings, there are 22 fillers out of 80 data points. According to the data, it is approximately 27.5%. It's because all of the characters are native English speakers. Fillers are commonly used by native speakers in their hesitations. The researcher will gain a fresh emphasis in this scenario. The researcher does not only analyze fillers in classroom presentations, but also all types of hesitation such as silent pause, fillers, repeats, false start (un-retraced), false start (retraced), correction, interjection, stutter, and slip of tongue in students' speaking based on Clark and Tree's (2002) theory. It also discusses some of the variables that impact students' reticence to speak up.

With the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2019, tremendous changes happened in the realm of education, with the entire school system going online. Teachers must be able to adapt to these changes by modifying teaching strategies, learning materials, instructional activities, and other

teaching elements to allow them to be delivered online. However, as the situation improved, the Covid-19 restriction was lifted, and educational institutions returned to the offline or blended learning approach. This makes teachers must readjust their teaching to a learning method that no longer require a fully online system. Surprisingly, by the exposures of many virtual learning platforms for both teachers and students during the pandemic, virtual meeting eventually become an alternative event after the pandemic is over (Santos, 2022; Jones & Sharma, 2020).

Considering the significance of hesitation in speaking skill, as well as the condition of today education that are not only limited to offline mode anymore, the researcher was interested to find out student's hesitancy in speaking, particularly in virtual classroom. The researcher wanted to reveal types of hesitation that occurred most often in students' speaking during virtual classroom, and the factors that make students hesitate in their speaking. Therefore, this research was conducted under the title "An Analysis of Students' Speaking Hesitation in EFL Virtual Classroom".

## **2. Method**

### **2.1. Type of Research**

This study employed qualitative method, particularly descriptive research, because it allows the researcher to capture naturally occurring interactions among the participants. In this case, this study attempts to see natural phenomena of classroom interaction. This study was designed to identify and describe the types of speaking hesitation, as well as the factors that affect the students' speaking hesitation in EFL virtual classroom setting.

### **2.2. Time and Place of Research**

This research was carried out at SMA Negeri 1 Bone which is located in Tanete Riattang Barat District, Bone Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The Research was conducted from May 2 to 23, 2023. The participants involved in this study were the second-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Bone academic year 2022-2023 that consisted of 35 students.

### **2.3. Procedure of Research**

The researcher observed and recorded the classroom learning process via Zoom meeting to find out the types of speaking hesitation made by the students. The learning process recorded were in three meetings of English subject. Further, to find out the factors affecting the hesitation, the researcher conducted interview to 8 students who made the most frequent hesitation during the observation.

### **2.4. Instrument of Research**

The data of this research were collected through observation and interview. the observation was executed to find out the types of speaking hesitation used by students during the virtual meeting, while the interview was carried out to find out the factors that contributed to the students' hesitation when speaking.

### **2.5. Technique of Data Analysis**

The data obtained in this research were analyzed through qualitative approach, particularly with descriptive analysis that aims to describe the types of speaking hesitation used by students during the virtual meeting, as well as the factors that contributed to the students' hesitation when speaking. The data collected from audio recorder was converted into written form (transcripts) then to be analyzed by using qualitative data analysis technique that consisted of 3 main steps: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

## **3. Findings and Discussion**

### **3.1 Types of Students' Speaking Hesitation in Virtual Classroom**

The researcher observed and recorded the online speaking activities of 35 second-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Bone from May 2 to 23, 2023, in order to determine the types of hesitation that occurred most frequently in students' virtual speaking classes. The researcher's observation

revealed that students in Speaking class exhibited seven types of hesitation: fillers, stutters, repeats, silent pauses, false starts, interjections, and corrections.

### Fillers

The researcher discovered 13 fillers in the students' speeches during virtual English classes. The following observation result proves the researcher's finding:

**Table 1.** Total of fillers in the students' speeches

No.	Utterances
1	I live in Bajoe street, <b>e...</b> near Mandiri Bank
2	Okay, <b>e...</b> I want to introduce myself
3	I have <b>e...</b> two brothers and <b>e...</b> one sister
4	Well, <b>uh...</b> I suppose it's my turn to, <b>um...</b> introduce myself
5	Hey guys, I'm <b>e...</b> Nur Ikma Aldha. I'm from <b>um...</b> SMPN 1 Bone.
6	My favorite subject is <b>um...</b> mathematics.
7	My address is [...] on <b>e...</b> street Ahmat Yani, Number 15
8	I'm <b>um...</b> Rahmadani Sahati. I was born in <b>e...</b> 2007.
9	Um, hello everyone. My name is <b>e...</b> Andi Achmad Ikhsan Yamani. I enjoy <b>aa...</b> playing basketball.
10	My <b>e...</b> favorite color is blue.
11	I have <b>aa...</b> one sister and three brothers.
12	I enjoy playing <b>um...</b> the piano in my free time.
13	I live in Bajoe street, <b>e...</b> near Mandiri Bank

Table 1 shows that there are 13 utterances of fillers produced by the students during the three meetings of virtual classroom. Besides, there are 4 types of fillers identified, which are **e...**, **uh...**, **um...**, and **a...**. Among the four types of fillers, filler **e...** is identified as the most frequent filler produced by the students during the virtual classrooms.

### Stutters

Based on the observation, the researcher identified two stutters in students' speeches that emerged on the following utterances:

**Table 2.** Total of stutters in the students' speeches

No.	Utterances
1	My father is farmer and my mother is <b>h..h..</b> housewife
2	In the future, I want to be an <b>ar..ar..</b> architect

The students stutter as they have trouble saying the first letter of a word and have to repeat it in order to move on to the next syllable. Students in the table above repeated the first letter of the phrase because they were having problems pronouncing it before moving on to the next syllable.

### Repeats

The researcher discovered repeats in the student's speaking in this study. Many students repeat several words in their speech as they consider what to say next. The researcher obtained the following examples:

**Table 3.** Total of repeats in the students' speeches

No.	Utterances
1	My hobby is playing badminton <b>and..and</b> playing volley ball.
2	Well, <b>let me..let me</b> introduce myself.
3	I was born in <b>Watampone..Watampone</b> .
4	<b>My father's job..My father's job</b> is police and my mothers job is teacher
5	<b>My favorite color..favorite color</b> is yellow.
6	I have <b>one sister..one sister</b> and one brother.
7	<b>My address..My address</b> is on Sukawati street.

Table 3 illustrates that there are 7 words or phrases when the students produced repeats. The words or phrases are **and**, **let me**, **Watampone**, **my father's job**, **my favorite color**, **one sister**, and **my address**. It is also identified that all repetitions occurred by repeating the words/phrases not more than twice.

### Silent Pauses

Based on the findings of the observation, the researcher discovered that the student's speech was punctuated by a great deal of pauses. This can be seen on some utterances below.

**Table 4.** Total of silent pauses in the students' speeches

No.	Utterances
1	My father [...] passed away and my mother is [...] teacher
2	My address is [...] on e... street Ahmat Yani, Number 15
3	My [...] favorite color is red.
4	I live in Samballogge street and [...] near the bridge.
5	My favorite subject [...] is history.
6	I have [...] one brother
7	My favorite foods are [...] meatballs and noodles.
8	I hope to [...] become a doctor someday
9	I want to be [...] a teacher
10	My favorite color is [...] purple.
11	My favorite subject is [...] sports.
12	My hobbies are [...] painting and [...] reading.
13	I live on Hos Cokro [...] street
14	My favorite food is [...] rendang
15	I want to be a [...] lecturer.
16	My birthday is [...] on August 15th
17	My favorite [...] subject is [...] islamic religion.
18	My fathers job is [...] businessman and my mothers job is [...] housewife

Table 4 indicates that the students produced silent pause in 18 utterances. This is counted as the most frequent type of hesitation produced by the students in virtual classrooms. It is also identified that silent pauses produced by the students were commonly located after to be. It shows that silent pause was used by the students to take time thinking about idea they would say next.

### False Starts

The researcher discovered three different utterances. They appeared as a result of observation during the student's speaking. The following are the three utterances:

**Table 5.** Total of false starts in the students' speeches

No.	Utterances
1	<b>My hobbies is... my hobbies are</b> watching TV and reading novel
2	I and my family <b>live not together... not live together</b>
3	In the future, <b>I can to be...I want to be</b> a doctor or a nurse
4	I live <b>on.. in</b> Bone Indah Permai
5	<b>My favorite foods is... My favorite foods are</b> noodles and fried chicken.

Based on table 5, the researcher identified 5 utterances that contain false starts. Among the 5 utterances, 4 are identified as retraced false starts, that the students corrected a word that included one or more extra words repeated before the corrected word, while only 1 utterance which is identified as un-retraced false start, that the student corrected the word without repeating the previous words.

### Interjection

The researcher discovered only two expressions that contain interjection used by students in their discourse. The following are examples of interjection:

**Table 6.** Total of interjection in the students' speeches

No.	Utterances
1	About my siblings, I have 5 <b>eh</b> 4 brothers and no sister
2	My favorite food is fried rice <b>eh</b> fried noodle

Table 6 shows that the 2 utterances occur when the student must consider what to say next. They choose a specific interjection to indicate why they must halt. The researcher concluded, based on the data in the table above, that the students used remarking signals **eh**, which refer to referent selection. For instance, she said **my favorite food is fried rice** and then altered it to my **favorite food is fried noodle**, but she used interjection **eh** before making the correction.

### Correction

There are two un remarking signal devices that speakers can use to stop in the middle of their speaking: the interjection (oh, well, eh, etc.) and the correction (I mean, that is, well, etc.). Speakers can stop speaking for a variety of reasons, including forgetting to say something, looking for the right word, or choosing examples to use.

**Table 7.** Total of correction in the students' speeches

No.	Utterances
1	I also live with my cousin <b>I mean</b> my nephew

Table 7 above indicates that there was only 1 utterance identified as correction in students' speech during virtual classroom. In this case, the student used signal **I mean** to correct what they wanted to say.

## 3.2 Factors Affecting Students' Speaking Hesitation in Virtual Classroom

The researcher conducted an interview with the students on May 24, 2023, to learn more about the causes influencing their hesitation to speak English in virtual classroom. The interview was addressed to eight students who made hesitation most frequently in speaking during the researchers' observation in virtual classroom. According to the result of interview, the researchers discovered that there are 4 factors that can make students hesitant to speak English in virtual classroom. They are nervousness, family/environment interference, lack of vocabulary, and poor network.

### Nervousness

The result of the interview revealed that the major reason of students' hesitation in speaking during virtual classroom is feeling nervous and shy. This is reflected in students' responses below.

*“saat disuruh berbicara bahasa Inggris di kelas online, hm... saya selalu merasa tidak pede. Kayak deg-degan begitu, Bu. Takutnya salah Bahasa Inggrisku”* (when I am asked to speak English in online class, hm... I always feel unconfident. I feel nervous, Ma'am. I am afraid of making mistake in speaking English).

*“pastinya nerves, Bu. Kadang juga malu-malu. Apa lagi teman-teman saya bagus-bagus semua Bahasa Inggrisnya dibandingkan saya”* (absolutely I feel nervous, Ma'am. Sometimes I also feel shy. Moreover, my friends have better English than mine).

### **Family/Environment Interference**

Another major factor that affects students' speaking hesitation in virtual classroom is interference from family or environment. This is because the students generally joined the virtual classroom at their home. So, interference from family or neighbour noises cannot be avoided, and might disturb the students' focus and concentration during speaking.

*“kalau saya pribadi, Bu, yang buat saya susah speaking di kelas online karena di rumah saya itu selalu ribut. Belum lagi kalau ada suara ayamnya tetangga saya. Itu biasa buat saya susah konsentrasi”* (For me myself, what makes me difficult to speak English in online class is because my home environment is always noisy. Moreover, if the chickens in my neighbors are squawking. It always makes me difficult to concentrate).

*“... Banyak gangguan dari orang rumah juga, eh.... Kadang juga tetangga putar musik besar-besar. Jadinya kurang bisa speaking dengan baik saat zoom”* (... A lot of interference from people in my home as well, eh.... Sometimes my neighbor play music so loudly. That is the reason why I cannot speak well when having Zoom meeting).

### **Lack of Vocabulary**

The researchers also found that lack of vocabulary comes as the reason students made hesitation in speaking during virtual classroom. This is illustrated in the following students' responses.

*“saya rasa kosa kata Bahasa Inggris saya sedikit sekali, Bu. Jadi, susah untuk berbicara Bahasa Inggris, jadi terbata-bata dan tidak lancar kalau bicara Bahasa Inggris”* (I feel like my English vocabulary is very limited, Ma'am. So, I get difficulties to speak English, I get hesitate and not fluent when speaking English).

*“iya, Bu. Bahasa Inggris saya tidak lancar itu karena terkadang saya mau menyampaikan misalnya suatu hal, tapi saya lupa apa Bahasa Inggrisnya. Saya rasa memang susah menghafal kata-kata Bahasa Inggris, Bu”* (yes, Ma'am. My English is not fluent because sometimes I want to say something but I do not know how to say it in English. I feel difficult to memorize English words).

### **Poor Network**

Some students also admitted that poor network connection affect their speaking performance in virtual classroom. They described that poor network leads them to be hesitate in speaking English. This is shown on the students' answers below.

*“Sebenarnya, saya rasa speaking English saya bagus, Bu, kalau langsung berbicara di dalam kelas. Tapi beda kalau lewat Zoom, Bu karena terkadang jaringan jelek, jadi kadang harus mengulang-ulang, dan jadinya tidak bisa konsentrasi karena harus memeriksa terus jaringan apakah tersambung atau tidak”* (Actually, I feel my English speaking is good, Ma'am, if I speak directly in the classroom. However, it is different in Zoom meeting, Ma'am, because the network is sometimes bad. So, sometimes, I have to repeat what I say, and it makes me hard to concentrate as I have to always check the network to make sure it is connected)

*“... Masalah jaringan juga, Bu. Di rumah saya jaringan itu selalu jelek. Itu juga yang buat saya kadang kurang lancar berbicara dan terbata-bata saat kelas online”* (Network problem as well, Ma'am. In my home, the network is always in bad condition. It is also the reason that makes me less fluent and hesitate when speaking in online class).

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that there are seven types of speaking hesitation made by students in EFL virtual classroom. They are fillers, stutters, repeats, silent pauses, false starts, interjections, and corrections. The most frequent type of hesitation committed by students in virtual classroom is silent pause, followed by fillers and repeats. On the other hand, the least type of hesitation committed by students in virtual classroom is correction.

There are four main factors that affect students' speaking hesitation in virtual classroom. Most of the students agree that nervousness comes as the major reason of making hesitation when speaking in virtual classroom. Besides that, family and environment interference also emerged frequently in students' answers. It is inevitable as virtual classroom takes place in students' own homes which are not specially designed to be place for studying, different from school environment. The other factors are lack of vocabulary and poor network connection.

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