PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS AND SPEAKING STRATEGIES OF FILLERS IN TAAPSEE PANNU'S SPONTANEOUS SPEECH

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the types and functions of filler expressions and to analyze their role as speaking strategies and pragmatic tools in Taapsee Pannu's spontaneous speech. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected by documenting and observing a YouTube video of her speech. The analysis applied the classifications by Rose (1998) and Stenström (1994). The findings revealed a total of 143 filler expressions, consisting of 93 non-lexical fillers (such as "uh" and "um") and 50 lexical fillers (such as "I mean," "like," and "you know"). These fillers performed five out of seven functions proposed by Stenström: hesitating, reformulating, initiating, linking, and emphasizing. To ensure the reliability of the analysis, an inter-rater test was conducted using the percentage agreement formula. The agreement between two raters reached 88.8% (127 agreements and 16 disagreements) for filler types, and 79.0% (113 agreements and 30 disagreements) for filler functions. These results indicate that the classification process was consistent and dependable. While non-lexical fillers occurred more frequently, lexical fillers were often used for more complex pragmatic purposes, including clarifying meaning and managing transitions. The study shows that filler expressions are not simply signs of disfluency, but they play important roles in maintaining fluency, organizing discourse, and creating a natural conversational flow. From a pragmatic viewpoint, fillers also reveal the speaker's awareness, spontaneity, and ability to engage the audience effectively. These results highlight the communicative value of fillers in everyday spoken language.

Keywords: Filler Expressions, Speaking Strategies, Pragmatic Functions

Introduction

Speaking is one of the fundamental aspects of human life that enables people to express their ideas, emotions, and intentions effectively. Clear and correct speaking allows the speaker's message to be understood by the listener as intended (Hastensi, 2020). In both formal and informal communication, speaking plays a crucial role in shaping social interactions. However, spontaneous speech often involves natural pauses, hesitations, and adjustments as speakers organize their thoughts in real time.

These interruptions, commonly known as filler expressions or fillers, are short utterances such as "uh," "um," "like," and "you know" that occupy pauses in speech. It introduces the rationale, objectives, significance of the article, and covers recent and relevant previous studies.

Although fillers have often been perceived as signs of hesitation or lack of fluency, recent studies show that they serve important communicative and cognitive functions. According to Wigati and Indriani (2021), fillers bridge silences and facilitate speakers' cognitive processing without disrupting the flow of conversation. Ong and Fermano (2023) further argue that fillers evolve from casual habits into systematic strategies that help speakers structure their spoken content. Sarira et al. (2023) emphasize that fillers ease transitions from written to oral expression, especially in academic and professional settings. Similar findings by Yulpia (2021) and Wang (2021) reveal that language learners use fillers to maintain audience connection while managing internal processing. Other studies, such as those by Grieve et al. (2021) and Dinkar et al. (2023), highlight the role of fillers in ensuring coherence in spontaneous interaction. Even prominent public figures like Elon Musk naturally use fillers in impromptu speech (Tabitha & Bram, 2024), confirming their universality and communicative significance.

Besides their discourse functions, fillers also play psychological roles, especially for speakers facing anxiety or cognitive pressure. Syamsudin (2024) finds that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners use fillers as coping mechanisms to boost confidence and manage nervousness. Awang et al. (2022) support this by showing fillers help maintain fluency during demanding speaking tasks. Metwally and Alabdaly (2023) report that non-native postgraduate students rely on fillers to formulate ideas under time constraints. In high-pressure contexts like job interviews, fillers aid in organizing responses (Hassan et al., 2021). Anggrarini et al. (2024) also find fillers help students maintain continuity during classroom presentations. These findings reveal fillers as subconscious tools to reduce psychological tension, sustain verbal engagement, and prevent loss of conversational floor.

Many researchers have compared spontaneous and prepared speech, showing that fillers appear more often in unscripted communication because of limited time to plan. Seals and Coppock (2022) found that unscripted scientific presentations contain more fillers, reflecting the cognitive demands of real-time speech production. Nurrahmi et al. (2021) observed increased filler use in anxious or unprepared student presentations. Studies by Pardede et al. (2020) and Rahmawati and Noor Farida (2025) also documented fillers among Indonesian celebrities and skilled debaters in spontaneous speech. Research consistently shows that fillers make speech more relatable and authentic in unplanned contexts (Juliano et al., 2022; Aliyah & Hestrian, 2021; Lomotey, 2021).

Although many studies have examined fillers, most research focuses on formal settings like political speeches or classrooms, mainly involving Western or native

English speakers. Few explore filler use by non-Western celebrities, particularly in Indian entertainment, where English is used in public communication. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing filler expressions in the spontaneous speech of Taapsee Pannu, a popular Indian actress known for engaging public speaking in English.

Taapsee Pannu's speech at Coalescence 2015 provides rich data of semi-formal, spontaneous public speaking. Unlike scripted speeches, this event features minimal editing and natural flow, making it ideal for analyzing filler use as speaking strategies and pragmatic tools. By focusing on this speech, the research contributes unique insights into filler use in non-Western celebrity contexts, enriching the literature on discourse and pragmatics.

The objectives of this study are to identify the types of fillers used by Taapsee Pannu and to analyze their pragmatic functions in her speech. The research offers theoretical contributions by expanding knowledge on spontaneous public speaking across cultures. Practically, it benefits English learners, educators, and communication professionals by showing how fillers facilitate natural speech and audience connection. It also encourages further research on filler use in diverse cultural and informal settings, moving beyond perspectives that mainly focus on Western contexts.

Theoretical Framework

Classification of Fillers
This study uses Rose's (1998) classification as the main framework to analyze filler expressions. Rose categorizes fillers into two major types: non-lexical fillers and lexical fillers. Non-lexical fillers are sounds or vocalized pauses such as "uh," "um," and "er," which occur involuntarily when the speaker experiences hesitation or searches for the appropriate word. These fillers do not have lexical meaning but indicate cognitive load during speech production. On the other hand, lexical fillers consist of actual words or short phrases like "like," "you know," and "I mean." Though these have meaning in other contexts, in spontaneous speech they function to manage the flow of conversation, delay the speaker's next idea, or soften statements. This distinction is crucial in identifying the form of fillers in Taapsee Pannu's speech and understanding their pragmatic role.

Functions of Fillers
Stenström's (1994) theory on filler functions provides a comprehensive framework to analyze the pragmatic roles of fillers in spoken discourse. According to this classification, fillers serve seven functions: hesitating, editing, reformulating, initiating, linking, marking hesitation, and emphasizing. Hesitating fillers signal pauses while the speaker formulates ideas. Editing fillers help repair or correct speech without breaking the flow. Reformulating fillers prepare listeners for rephrased or clarified statements. Initiating fillers serve as verbal launchpads to start

utterances, especially under pressure. Linking fillers connect ideas or clauses to maintain coherence. Marking hesitation expresses uncertainty or lack of commitment, while emphasizing fillers highlight the importance or emotional weight of a point. Applying these functions to Pannu's speech helps reveal how fillers operate beyond mere pauses, supporting effective communication.

Pragmatic Perspective on Fillers
From the lens of pragmatics, fillers are not meaningless interruptions but intentional communicative acts that contribute to managing interaction. Pragmatics, as defined by Yule (2020), studies how context influences meaning beyond the literal content of utterances. Fillers function as pragmatic devices to maintain conversational turns, signal politeness, and soften potentially abrupt statements. They also help speakers navigate cognitive demands during real-time speech production (Erman, 2007, as cited in Xie et al., 2023; Ong & Fermano, 2023). This approach supports analyzing fillers in Taapsee Pannu's semi-formal speech as strategic tools that enhance naturalness, audience connection, and pragmatic competence.

Speaking Strategies and Fillers in Taapsee Pannu's Speech
In this study, filler expressions are interpreted as part of Taapsee Pannu's broader speaking strategies. Speaking strategies involve conscious or unconscious techniques used to overcome communication challenges, maintain fluency, and engage listeners (Tarone, 1980, as cited in Haryani et al., 2025; Bialystok, 1990, as cited in Littlemore, 2015). Specifically, fillers are regarded as achievement strategies that help speakers manage cognitive load and organize speech during unscripted delivery (Nakatani, 2006, as cited in Rayati et al., 2022). Examining Pannu's filler use highlights how these expressions sustain interaction, buy thinking time, and foster a conversational atmosphere. This makes her public speaking appear more relatable and effective.

Method
This study uses a qualitative descriptive design with a pragmatic approach to analyze filler expressions as speaking strategies in spontaneous speech. The pragmatic method fits because it focuses on understanding the meaning and function of fillers, not just counting them. This design helps explore how fillers contribute to real-time communication and interaction. By interpreting how fillers work in context, the study aims to reveal the speaker's intentions and communicative goals. The focus is on depth rather than quantity, which suits the nature of spontaneous speech analysis.

The data were taken from a public speech by Taapsee Pannu at Coalescence 2015, held at BITS Pilani Goa Campus. This speech is semi-formal and spontaneous, delivered in English, which makes it appropriate for studying natural filler use. The primary data sources include the YouTube video and a verbatim transcript created by the researcher. The transcript captures pauses, hesitations, and filler expressions in detail. This combination allows for thorough analysis of both the speech content and its contextual cues.

Data collection involved several steps to ensure accuracy and relevance. First, the researcher selected the video based on its spontaneous nature and clear use of English. Then, the entire speech was transcribed verbatim with attention to non-fluency features such as pauses and fillers. Fillers were identified and classified according to Rose's (1998) framework, separating non-lexical and lexical types. Finally, utterances containing fillers were isolated along with their surrounding context for precise pragmatic interpretation.

The data analysis process applied Rose's (1998) classification for filler types and Stenström's (1994) model for their functions. Each filler was analyzed to understand its role in managing real-time speech, such as hesitation, emphasis, or holding the floor. The analysis also considered the context of each utterance, including speaker intention and audience reaction, to reveal pragmatic purposes. Findings were organized in descriptive text and tables to clearly present patterns and dominant functions of fillers. This method allowed for a comprehensive understanding of fillers as strategic tools in spontaneous speaking.

To maintain trustworthiness, the researcher employed multiple strategies. Credibility was ensured by carefully transcribing and repeatedly reviewing the data for accuracy. Dependability was achieved by documenting all research steps transparently. Confirmability was strengthened by involving a second rater who reviewed and discussed coding decisions. Transferability was addressed by choosing a rich, public speech context and providing detailed descriptions, allowing others to relate findings to similar communication settings. These measures enhance the study's validity and reliability.

Findings and Discussion

Types of Fillers
Based on Rose's (1998) classification, a total of 143 filler expressions were identified in Taapsee Pannu's spontaneous speech. These were divided into two main types: non-lexical fillers, such as "uh" and "um," and lexical fillers, such as "like," "you know," and "I mean." Non-lexical fillers, which occurred 93 times, were more dominant and mainly functioned to signal hesitation, provide thinking time, and maintain the speaker's conversational turn. Their use reflects the cognitive processing involved in real-time speech. Lexical fillers, appearing 50 times, were used more strategically. These included discourse markers and expressions that helped structure ideas, soften statements, and establish a casual, relatable tone. Although less frequent, lexical fillers often carried greater pragmatic weight by reflecting the speaker's intent or helping the listener follow shifts in thought.

Table 1. Types of Fillers

Type of Filler	Filler Expression	Frequency
Non-lexical filler	Um	17
Non-lexical filler	Uh	75
Lexical filler	Yeah	4
Lexical filler	Like	13
Lexical filler	You know	9
Lexical filler	I mean	15
Lexical filler	Well	8
Lexical filler	So	1
Lexical filler	Kind of	1
Total	-	143

Non-lexical fillers such as "uh" and "um" appeared most frequently, serving as vocalized pauses that allowed Taapsee to maintain fluency and manage cognitive load during her speech. For example, in the utterance *"Uh, well, if you asked me why did I do engineering...,"* the filler "uh" signals a brief hesitation, enabling the speaker to mentally prepare before continuing. This use of non-lexical fillers aligns with findings by Wigati and Indriani (2022) and Nurrahmi et al. (2021), who observed that such fillers help speakers manage thinking time during spontaneous or pressured speech. However, unlike many studies focusing on students or language learners, Taapsee's use of non-lexical fillers highlights their role even among fluent and confident speakers.

Lexical fillers, including "like," "I mean," and "you know," were less frequent but served important pragmatic functions. For instance, in the utterance "I mean, even I was confident I could have done anything else," "I mean" acts as a lexical filler that clarifies and emphasizes the speaker's point. This strategic use differs from fillers functioning solely as hesitation markets and supports findings by Fitriati et al. (2021) and Anggrarini et al. (2024), who note that lexical fillers often help express personal stance or soften tone in formal contexts. Taapsee's confident use of such fillers demonstrates their expressive potential in skilled communication.

This study also provides new insights by focusing on a bilingual, non-Western public figure, demonstrating how cultural and linguistic backgrounds influence filler use, especially in informal English within a multilingual environment. In sum, fillers in Taapsee Pannu's speech fall into two types: non-lexical and lexical, both serving universal and context-specific functions shaped by identity, audience, and communicative goals.

Functions of Fillers
The analysis showed that filler expressions in Taapsee Pannu's spontaneous speech fulfilled seven key pragmatic functions based on Stenström's (1994) framework: hesitating, editing, reformulating, initiating, linking, marking hesitation, and emphasizing. However, not all of these functions were equally found in her speech.

The fillers mostly served five important functions: hesitating, reformulating, initiating, linking, and emphasizing, while editing and marking hesitation were found only rarely or were less clear. These fillers were not random disfluencies but rather purposeful communicative tools that helped maintain fluency, clarity, and keep the audience engaged.

Table 2. Functions of Filler Expressions

Function	Example	Frequency
Hesitating	Uh, Um	95
Reformulating	Like, I mean, Kind of, You know	25
Initiating	Well	7
Linking	So	1
Emphasizing	You know, Yeah	15
Total	-	143

Hesitating fillers were the most frequent, with expressions like "uh" and "um" appearing in 95 utterances. These allowed brief pauses during moments of reflection or uncertainty, helping Taapsee manage cognitive load and maintain fluency without disrupting the speech flow.
Example:
 "Uh, what to do this one year…"
This hesitation marker aligns with previous research on spontaneous speech (Nurrahmi et al., 2021). However, unlike anxious or uncertain speakers, Taapsee's use suggests measured confidence.

Editing fillers were rare in Taapsee's speech, likely reflecting her fluency and experience. Unlike learners who often self-correct using fillers like "uh—I mean…" or "um—no…", Taapsee rarely needed to revise her speech mid-utterance.

Reformulating fillers, found in 25 utterances, helped clarify or adjust prior statements. For example, "I mean" often introduced restatements or elaborations to improve clarity and focus.
Example:
"So yes, I mean, as I told you, we all become engineers first…"
This aligns with Anggrarini et al. (2024), who noted that lexical fillers can strategically restructure information.

Initiating fillers, such as "well," marked the beginning of new ideas or topics, softening transitions and preparing the audience.
Example:
"Well, talking about my entering into movies…"
This usage supports findings by Pardede et al. (2020) on the role of fillers in public speaking transitions.

Linking fillers like "so," "yeah," and "you know" connected thoughts across the speech, enhancing coherence and natural flow.

Example:
"So yeah, I mean, uh—uh U sir, you said you were out of place here…"
This supports Grieve et al. (2021) and Ong and Fermano (2023) who emphasize the importance of linking fillers in maintaining listener engagement.

Marking hesitation overlapped with hesitating but involved more overt expressions of doubt or emotional vulnerability. In Taapsee's case, this was minimal and less distinct compared to student speakers who display more explicit hesitation (Awang et al., 2022).

Emphasizing fillers added emotional weight or nuance to the speech, making points feel more vivid and authentic.
Example:
"Things turned out, like, really good for me…"
The filler "like" intensifies the emotional tone, consistent with findings by Wang (2021) and Gustafson et al. (2021).

Overall, these filler functions, based on Stenström's (1994) framework, demonstrate that fillers in Taapsee Pannu's spontaneous speech serve deliberate communicative purposes. Rather than mere signs of disfluency or uncertainty, they enhance the speaker's authenticity, fluency, and connection with the audience.

Filler as Speaking Strategies
Beyond their functions, fillers also serve as strategic tools in spontaneous speech. They help the speaker gain time to think, maintain control of the conversation, emphasize points, and navigate transitions effectively. Rather than being random hesitations, these fillers reflect intentional choices that support fluent, natural delivery and strengthen the connection with the audience.

Tabel 3. Filler as Speaking Strategies in Taapsee Pannu's Speech

Speaking Strategy	Function	Examples
Holding the Floor	Maintaining the turn during pauses or planning speech	- "Uh, well, if you asked me why did I do engineering..." - "Um, okay, so I said..." - "Well, talking about my entering into movies..."
Delaying Response	Pausing to gather thoughts or process emotional response	- "Um, well, when I entered engineering..." - "Uh, they thought, yeah..." - "…Uh, what to do this one year..."

Emphasizing a Point	Highlighting or reinforcing an important message	- "I mean, even I was confident I could have done anything else." - "You know, it—it starts something that I started really working on in my favor…" - "Things turned out, like, really good for me…"
Navigating Emotion/Uncertainty	Reflecting emotional processing or mental effort in personal storytelling	- "Uh, woo—hoo—yes, software, software, yes." - "…Uh, well, I don't know the language." - "Uh, yes, and uh, I kind of managed to score…"
Facilitating Transitions	Bridging between topics or resuming train of thought	- "Uh, well, I don't know the language." - "Well, talking about my entering into movies…" - "So, uh, then came this wedding planning venture."

Holding the Floor:
Fillers such as "um," "uh," and "well" help the speaker maintain conversational control during pauses, preventing interruptions and managing pacing.
Example:
"Um, well, um, very bad with speeches, so let me start…"
This use aligns with findings by Ong and Fermano (2023) on managing turn-taking in public speaking.
Delaying Response:
Fillers buy time to process complex ideas, helping to avoid awkward silence, especially in high-pressure contexts.
Example:
"Uh, what to do this one year…"
This strategy is consistent with Awang et al. (2022) who highlight fillers as planning tools in spontaneous speech.
Emphasizing a Point:
Lexical fillers highlight key messages and add personal style or emotional nuance.
Example:
"Things turned out, like, really good for me…"
This use of fillers promotes relatability and expressiveness (Gustafson et al., 2021).
Navigating Uncertainty or Emotion:
Fillers often appear in moments of vulnerability or reflection, conveying sincerity and self-awareness rather than nervousness.

Example:
"Uh, well, I don't know the language."
Here, fillers soften the expression of personal challenges, showing emotional honesty.
Facilitating Transitions and Coherence:
Fillers smooth topic changes and maintain narrative flow, helping the speaker structure the story clearly.
Example:
"Well, talking about my entering into movies…"
Taapsee's proactive use of fillers for transitions supports findings by Pardede et al. (2020).

Pragmatic Context of Filler Use
In Taapsee Pannu's spontaneous speech, fillers were not merely signs of hesitation, but intentional pragmatic devices shaped by the communicative setting, the audience, and her overall goals as a speaker. Their use allowed her to adapt to the audience, manage her thoughts and emotions, and keep her narrative coherent. This pattern shows a balance between fluency, relatability, and conversational control, likely influenced by her bilingual background and cultural context.

The analysis reveals that fillers were not only employed to manage the flow of speech but also functioned as pragmatic tools supporting coherence, emotional expression, and audience engagement. This finding aligns with Wigati and Indriani (2022) and Ong and Fermano (2023), who argue that fillers bridge silence and assist in mental processing. In Taapsee's case, however, their use also reflects strong speaking confidence and audience awareness.

Table 4. Pragmatic Context of Filler Use in Taapsee Pannu's Speech

Pragmatic Function	Description	Example & Analysis
Social Context Awareness	Use of informal fillers to reduce distance and align with audience tone	"You know, people guide you…" → Enhances relatability and softens reflections about social pressure
Audience Engagement	Fillers used to draw in the listener or prepare them for key points	"I mean, even I was confident I could have done anything else." → Signals emphasis and inclusion

Cognitive & Emotional Processing	Fillers mark mental effort, nerves, or emotional spontaneity	"Uh, woo-hoo—yes, software, software, yes." → Indicates excitement and unrehearsed delivery
Managing Topic Shifts and Self-Corrections	Fillers help transition between ideas or return to the main topic	"Well, talking about my entering into movies…" → Guides the listener into a new segment of speech
Politeness and Mitigation	Fillers hedge or soften statements to maintain social harmony	"I mean, I'm sure you beg to differ…" → Reduces assertiveness and shows deference

For instance, in the utterance:
"Uh, well, I don't know the language."
The fillers uh and well signal both hesitation and emotional reflection. Here, Taapsee conveys a personal challenge while maintaining fluency, softening the vulnerability of not knowing a local language. This contrasts with Nurrahmi et al. (2021), who mainly associated fillers with nervousness or lexical difficulty among student speakers. Taapsee's usage illustrates that even confident speakers use fillers to convey relatability and emotional honesty.

Similarly, in:
"Well, talking about my entering into movies…"
The filler well marks a smooth topic transition, enabling her to shift subjects without sounding abrupt. This supports Pardede et al. (2020), who noted Indonesian public figures often used fillers to maintain fluency during interviews. However, unlike many YouTube influencers who use fillers reactively for recovery or repair, Taapsee employs them proactively to structure her narrative.

While earlier research such as Awang et al. (2022) and Syamsudin (2024) emphasized the cognitive load behind filler use, the present study extends these insights by showing that fillers can also function as performance tools, particularly in celebrity speech contexts where speakers aim to appear articulate yet approachable. Furthermore, unlike most prior studies that examined learners, students, or Western figures (e.g., Elon Musk in Tabitha & Bram, 2024; Emma Watson in Indriyana et al., 2021), this study focuses on a non-Western, bilingual Indian actress. Her bilingualism may also influence filler use as she navigates between informal English and culturally nuanced delivery.

In sum, Taapsee Pannu's use of fillers demonstrates their dual role as linguistic and pragmatic tools. The findings address both research questions by showing not only the types and functions of fillers, but also how they serve communicative strategies shaped by context and audience.

Inter-Rater Reliability

The coding of filler expressions in this study was checked for consistency between two independent raters to ensure reliability. Inter-rater reliability (IRR) was calculated to determine the level of agreement in identifying both the types and functions of fillers in Taapsee Pannu's spontaneous speech. High reliability ensures that the findings are not biased by individual coder judgments and strengthens the validity of the analysis. The inter-rater reliability was measured using Percentage Agreement (PA), calculated with the following formula:

$$\text{PA (\%)} = \frac{Number\ of\ agreements}{Total\ coded\ items} \times 100$$

where Number of agreements is the total instances coded identically by both raters, and Total coded items is the total number of filler expressions identified.

Table 5. Inter-Rater Reliability for Types and Functions of Fillers

Category	Yes (Agreement)	No (Disagreement)	Total Items	Percentage Agreement (%)
Types of Filler	127	16	143	88.8
Functions of Filler	113	30	143	79.0

Calculation example for Types of Filler:
$$\text{PA} = \frac{127}{143} \times 100 = 88.8\%$$
Calculation example for Functions of Filler:
$$\text{PA} = \frac{113}{143} \times 100 = 79.0\%$$
These results indicate good consistency between the two raters. Although the agreement for functions of fillers (79.0%) is slightly lower than for types of fillers (88.8%), both values demonstrate acceptable reliability, confirming that the coding of filler expressions was dependable for further analysis and discussion.

Conclusion
This study examined the use of filler expressions in Taapsee Pannu's spontaneous speech, focusing on their types, communicative functions, strategic roles, and pragmatic aspects. Using Rose's (1998) and Stenström's (1994) frameworks, the analysis found that fillers were not simply signs of hesitation but played an active role in supporting fluency, structuring delivery, and engaging the audience. They

reflected the speaker's thought process, emotional state, and awareness of the audience, particularly in spontaneous or high-pressure situations.

In terms of type and frequency, non-lexical fillers such as "uh" and "um" appeared more often than lexical ones. Non-lexical fillers typically occurred during pauses for planning or storytelling, giving the speaker time to organize thoughts without losing the listener's attention. Lexical fillers like "like," "I mean," and "you know" appeared less frequently but carried nuanced functions such as clarifying meaning, emphasizing points, and making the tone more conversational.

Functionally, the fillers served five out of Stenström's (1994) seven communicative functions: hesitating, reformulating, initiating, linking, and emphasizing. Non-lexical fillers were more closely linked to hesitation management, while lexical fillers had broader pragmatic purposes, such as structuring ideas, softening personal opinions, and strengthening interpersonal connection. These uses highlight how fillers can be part of deliberate speaking strategies rather than accidental disfluencies.

Pragmatically, Taapsee's filler use reflected sensitivity to audience and context. Speaking to a younger, student audience at BITS Pilani Goa, she employed informal fillers to create relatability and ease. This aligns with her bilingual background and cultural awareness, allowing her to balance her public image with a personable, approachable tone. Such pragmatic adaptation shows that fillers can also serve social and cultural functions beyond mere speech planning.

In addition, the reliability of the coding was verified through inter-rater reliability analysis using Percentage Agreement (PA). The results showed high agreement between the two raters, with 88.8% for types of fillers and 79.0% for functions of fillers, indicating that the coding process was consistent and dependable. This confirms that the findings presented in this study are based on reliable and systematic observation, strengthening the validity of the conclusions drawn.

In conclusion, fillers in Taapsee Pannu's speech functioned as meaningful tools across structural, emotional, and social dimensions of communication. These findings suggest that, rather than being discouraged outright, fillers can be used strategically to enhance delivery and audience engagement. Language educators, public speakers, and communication trainers may benefit from rethinking their approach to fillers, focusing on purposeful use instead of complete avoidance. Future studies could explore filler use across different cultural contexts and speaking genres to broaden understanding of their role in effective communication.

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