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Fillers, Repairs and Repetitions in the Conversations of Saudi English Speakers: Conversational Device or Disfluency Markers

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Abstract

Based on the literature review, the three patterns (fillers, repairs and repetitions) in the conversations of the native English speakers are generally regarded as results of the normal speaking between people. On the other hand, the same patterns in the conversations of the L2 speakers are always seen as a marker of disfluency and linguistic disabilities of the nonnative speakers. Therefore, this study simply focuses on finding how the three disfluency patterns are used by the Saudi English speakers from different levels of fluency. The sampling of the study includes two groups of participants from different fluency levels. Through the transcriptions and the discourse analysis of one hour recoding of the two groups, the results showed that the three patterns (fillers, repairs and repetitions) should not be generally associated with disfluency. Instead, repetitions and self-repairs have been equally used by the two groups and such patterns can be used as a conversational device. However, the filler “uh” with longer pausing can clearly predict disfluency among the Saudi English speakers.

Keywords: fluency, disfluency, spoken discourse, speech fluency.

1. Introduction

According to the literature review, speech fluency, for both native and nonnative speakers, is an abstract construct that is basically measured through temporal and intonational variables in the conversations such as pace, pauses, speech rate, disfluencies, corrections, formulaic sequences, and false starts, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. However, although disfluency, as universal linguistic phenomenon is experienced by both native and nonnative speakers of any human language, the disfluency of L1 speakers, in the literature, is still evaluated differently from that of L2 speakers. In other words, when comparing disfluency, as process, in the conversations of native and nonnative speakers, we find that disfluency in the conversations of the L1 speakers is seen as a sign of normal communicative interactions, whereas, with the L2 speakers, it is always regarded as a marker of linguistic disabilities. Therefore, through the study of how the three disfluency patterns (fillers, repairs and repetitions) appeared in the conversations of Saudi English speakers from different levels of fluency, the writer of this paper aims to investigate to what extent the how the disfluency of L2 speakers has been credibly studied in the literature.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Defining Fluency

Fluency, as a construct, has been extensively discussed in the literature. Thus, we find researchers as D'Amico (2010) stating in her definition of fluency that only "in language acquisition research, a wide variety of 32 definitions can be found" (p. 32). Therefore, for the purpose of clarity, only the mostly cited definition of fluency will be presented. Lennon (2000) has broadly defined fluency as a system that includes "rapid, smooth, accurate, lucid, and efficient translation of thought or communicative intention into language" (p. 26). Another definition of fluency was also introduced by Wood (2001) when he described fluency as the particular use of the language governed by a variety of linguistic aspects (p. 574). Later, in one of his article, Wood (2006) elaborated more on his definition of fluency and stated that fluency is measured and identified by variables such as "speech rate or speed of speech, pause phenomena, and length of runs between pauses" (p. 15).

2.2 Speech Fluency in The Perceptions of Native and Nonnative Speakers

On the other side, fluency, particularly, "speech fluency" has also been largely investigated in the areas of second language learning. For instance, in a detailed experimental study of fluency and accent in L2 speech, Pinget**,** Bosker**,** Quené and Jong (2014) defined perceived fluency of L2 speakers as "the judgment that listeners make about the fluency of a speaker " and it is largely based on variables such as "speech rate" rather than "repetition and repair" (p. 351). In another study of the development of fluency among ESL learners from different languages and through particular calculations of the data such as mean length of run (MLR) and formula/run ratio (FRR), Wadoo (2006) asserted that the functional uses of "formulaic sequences" during conversations are highly associated with speech fluency growth (p. 30). However, I think such a study is still limited and this is due to the fact that what exactly

constitutes these " formulaic sequences" and how they are differently used by L1 English speakers are not explicitly clarified.

Likewise, another resent study of developing speaking fluency by EFL Chinese university learners was also conducted. Through a three-month case study of oral fluency developments for eleven participants, Yang (2013) found that developing speech fluency can be "a trainable skill" in terms of enhancing the speed rate of speaking, reducing hesitations disfluency (p. 68). Similarly, in their study of fluency in the speech of second language learners, Kormos and Dénes (2004) mainly attempted to investigate what variables can predict the perception of fluency other than the traditional measures as "accuracy and lexical diversity." Briefly, for the purpose of indicating how the individual level of fluency is correlated with the overall judgments of native and nonnative experts, the speech samples of 18 Hungarian English speakers were collected. The findings of the study showed that fluency is " temporal and intonational phenomenon" that is more influenced by "pace, the mean length of runs and pauses, speech rate and phonation-time ration than that is comprised of the frequency of filled and unfilled pauses and other disfluencies" (p. 18-19).

In another detailed study of the same topic, Rossiter (2009) also concentrated on the perceptions of fluency by native and nonnative English speakers. The main goal of the research was to find out what variables, in the perceptions of both native and nonnative English speakers, are important in understanding the concept of fluency and how the basic measures of fluency actually reflect the particular fluency level of the individuals. The participants of the study were divided into four groups: (the speakers) 24 ESL students at Canada, (the recruited raters) native English speakers with PhD or MA degrees, undergraduate native English speakers and nonnative graduate students with an advanced level of fluency. Again, the results of the study proved that fluency, as a linguistic phenomenon, is equally observed in the perceptions of native and nonnative speakers. Yet, other variables such as "self-repetition, speech rate, and the use of non-lexical fillers, self-corrections, formulaic sequences, and false starts, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary" (p. 407) were considered to be of low influences on fluency when comparing to the other variables.

By going through the previously discussed studies, we find that speech fluency, for both native and nonnative speakers, is an abstract construct that is based on a variety of variables. Through measuring and evaluating these temporal and intonational variables in the talks of interlocutors, we will be able to judge how much fluent a speaker is in a conversation. Speaking of speech flow, it is more appropriate now to move to the concept of disfluency, which has been widely seen in the literature as a thread running through the cloth of the natural conversations. For the purpose of having a deeper understanding of disfluency and how its various patterns impact the processes of conversations, the last part of my literature review will be devoted to the discussions of disfluency.

2.3 Defining Disfluency

"Disfluency," as a process, has been widely explored in the speech production of native and nonnative of speakers. In the general areas of speech science and disorders, disfluency has

been confused with "stuttering". Interestingly, Janssen and Kraaimaat (1980) strongly argued that disfluency is different from stuttering and they clearly differentiated “disfluency” from "stuttering" by stating that disfluency is identified, as any sort of “disruptions" that are performed by "a normal speaker as normal disfluencies to distinguish them from stuttering" (p. 117).

Similarly, in a controversial article about *Disfluency in dialogue: An intentional signal from the speaker*. Finlayson and Corley (2012) have defined disfluency as a universal speech problem that normally impacts "around six per hundred spoken words … including fillers such as uh and um, prolongations of both open and closed class words, repairs, and whole or part-word repetitions" (p. 3). Interestingly, the findings of the study didn’t completely approve or disapprove the claim of considering disfluency as a communicative device of the speaker; instead, disfluencies were regarded as "products of difficulty in speech" (p. 17).

2.4 Disfluency and L2 Speakers

By and large, disfluency, as a process performed by nonnative speakers of a language, has been differently investigated and analyzed not as "normal disruptions" of speakers as I mentioned earlier, but as linguistic disabilities of the L2 speakers to adopt and sustain the native use of the language. Thus, Klapi (2012) defined disfluency as a phenomenon in which the use of particular variables impact and restrict the speech flow of the language (p. 4). In her detailed descriptions of these variables, Klapi also asserted that disfluency has been specifically associated with many salient features such as "repair, prolongations, explicit editing terms, repetitions, truncations, silent pauses, fillers, code-switching, mispronunciation and discourse markers" (p. 10-15). Likewise, in a further discussion of the important aspects of disfluency, particularly, with nonnative speakers of a language, Liyanage and Gardner (2013) also explicitly indicated that "language features such as pausing, silences and self-repairs" are always observed and evaluated as markers of disfluency of the speakers (p. 1).

Based on the literature review, we can see that fluency and disfluency, as phenomena, are experienced by both native and native speakers of a language. Also, the previous studies have shown that variables such as pace, pauses, speech rate, disfluencies, corrections, formulaic sequences, and false starts, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary were used to measure and investigate the fluency levels of the speakers. On the other hand, disfluency, as a process by native speakers, has been broadly explored in the literature review. In contract, the literature review on disfluency with L2 speakers is still obviously limited. Patterns such as pausing, repetition, and repair are generally seen as the most salient features of disfluency among native and nonnative speakers.

Through the critical analysis of the literature on fluency and disfluency, we can evidently observe how disfluency is biasedly studied, especially, with L2 speakers. It is clear that fluency with L1 and L2 speakers is fairly perceived as either "temporal or intonational" phenomena. Even though the studies that were investigating disfluency in the conversations of native and nonnative speakers concluded with almost the same variables such as pausing, repletion and repair, the disfluency of L1 speakers is still evaluated differently from that of

L2 speakers. In other words, when comparing the same disfluency patterns of the L1 speakers to that of L2 speakers in the literature, one will find that such patterns in the L1 conversations are observed as sign of the normal communicative interactions, whereas in the L2 conversations, these are regarded as "indicative of disfluency" and linguistic disabilities (Liyanage & Gardner, 2013, p. 1).

3. The Significance of The Study

By and large, fluency in the conversations of the Arab English speakers have been extensively explored in the literature. However, instead of studying how the disfluency patterns appeared in the conversations of the Arab English speakers, the Arab researchers were mainly interested in investigating the communication problems faced by the Arab English learners. To account for this gap in the literature, my study will focus on how the main features of disfluency: "filled pauses, repairs and repetitions" are conversationally used by the Saudi English speakers from different levels of fluency. Also, through the findings of this study, I will be able investigate to what extent the disfluency of L2 speakers has been credibly studied in the literature.

4. Method

4.1 Research Questions

1.To what extent the disfluency patterns (fillers, repetitions and repairs) in the conversations of the Saudi English speakers are used as a conversational device or a marker of the linguistic disabilities of the speakers from different proficiency levels?

2.Are there any relationships between the fluency levels of the participants and the avoidance or the occurrence of the disfluency patterns in their conversations?

4.2 Participants

Briefly, the sample of this study was based on two groups of participants from different levels of fluency. The first group was consisted of twelve undergraduate students from a listening and speaking 1 class and they are treated in the study as the group of the low fluency level speakers. The second group includes 4 master holders in Saudi Arabia. The participants of the second group are classified as the high fluency level speakers. It should be indicated here that the participants in the first group have never been exposed to the natural L2 setting, whereas, the participants in the second group had been living in the in the US for a period of a two to a five-year long.

4.3 Procedures

The study was based on discourse analysis of two audio recordings of Saudi graduate and undergraduate English speakers in Saudi Arabia with the help of a Saudi colleague in Saudi Arabia. So, a total natural data of one hour recording of Saudi English speakers was collected. A thirty-minute audio recording was taken from an English Listening and a Speaking 1 at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Jazan University in Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, another

thirty- minute recording of the four MA holders was also taken at a language lab in Gizan city.

The participants were orally consented about the purpose of the data and the confidentiality of their information. In order to obtain a valid natural data, the topics of the conversations were only chosen by the participants and the setting of the recordings was as natural as possible. Moreover, for establishing a more comprehensive unbiased analysis of the data, I approached the data first with unmotivating looking. Through this initial stage and with the help of the transcriptions and the use of the different conventions, I was generally observing the conversational discourse patterns used by the different speakers. Later in the second stage, I focused on the particular disfluency patterns "filled pauses, repair and repetition" and their occurrences in the conversations. In the last stage of my analysis, my main focus was devoted to the comparison of the occurrences of the disfluency patterns and how they appeared in the speaking of participants of the different fluency level.

5. Results

By going through the data of the two groups, I noticed that three fillers (uh, uhm and um) were generally present in the conversations of the different participants. However, when comparing the group of the undergraduate English students to/with the other group of the undergraduate English students, we can find that only two fillers (uh and uhm) seemed to be used. Generally speaking, “uh” appeared more frequently than “uhm” in the conversations of the low fluency speakers. For example, in the flowing fragment from the conversations of the undergraduate students, it can be noted that “uh” occurred for three times:

“Yeah I think I think they are not regular. Yes, they earn lots of money and they live their life and doesn't care about (.) **uh** (0.2) about their levels or to **uh** (0.2) yeah to prove to improve **uh** (0.5) their playing.”

When comparing this to another fragment taken from a conversation of the graduate students, even though “uh” appeared in the dialogue, it was not used as much as in the previous example. Also, it can be noted that the filler “um” occurred more often than “uh”:

“↑Yeah, I know it. It is, um (.) So it is um (.) I am standing between um (.) the Library and, uh (0.2) [the Humanities.”

Furthermore, when looking back at the transcriptions of all participants, another disfluency features such as repetitions also appeared in the conversations of the two groups. In the coming example from the dialogues of the graduate students, we noticed that the word “all” and phrase “that whole” have been repeated by the same speaker at the same turn:

“↓I mean, all, all that money wasted. ↑He should, you know, do something useful with it, with that whole, that whole money. “

Further, the two groups have also used the two types of repairs. Thus, there were instances during which repairs were initiated and performed either by the same speaker, as a self-repair, or by another speaker in different turns. In the coming example, a repair was offered by speaker 4 and later in different turns speaker 2 didn’t accepted it:

Speaker 2:	You have uh some experience about that?
Speaker 4:	You mean some ideas?
Speaker 2:	No, uh (.)

However, self-repairs were used by the two groups more often than other type of repair which appeared in the last lines of the previous fragment. There were few cases in which both types of repairs appeared in the one fragment and within a few turns. For instance, in the coming fragment of a dialogue between two graduate students, we find that a repair was offered by speaker 1, in his turn, to speaker 2 and later speaker 2, in his second turn, responded to speaker 1 with a self-repair:

Speaker 2:	↑ That's right. You know, a friend of mine actually. I know he, he used to have iPhone 1 and after a while I met him, he told me that he has got almost the entire series of iPhone. He's [really addicted to
Speaker 1:	The entire series? I mean like (0.2)]
Speaker 2:	Yeah. From iPhone 1 to iPhone 6 now, I think.

6. Discussions & Findings

When comparing the occurrences of the filler “uh” in the conversations of the two groups, we can obviously see that “uh” has been widely used by only by the first group of the undergraduate students. While, it was very limited in the transcriptions of the graduate students. According to the simple calculations of the occurrences of “uh” in the conversations of the two groups, it can be noticed that “uh” appeared 74 times in the conversations of the low fluency level speakers and only 24 times in the dialogues of the high fluency level speakers. On the other hand, when looking again at the conversations of the more fluent speakers, we noticed that the filler “uhm” only appeared five times, whereas, fillers such as “um” only occurred for seven times in the conversations. On the other hand, when observing the conversations of the lower fluency speakers again, one can see that “um” appeared only twice, while the other filler “uhm” did never occur.

Even though repetitions appeared in the transcriptions of both the graduate and undergraduate students, the structures and rates of the repetitions somehow vary in the conversations of the two different groups of participants. When comparing the contents of the different conversations, we noticed that lexical, phrasal, clausal and sentential forms of repetitions appeared in the dialogues of the low fluency level speakers. However, clausal and phrasal types of repetitions such as “you know” seemed to be the most frequently types of repetitions used by the speakers of the high fluency level. Also, it should be stated that even though there were instances of lexical and sentential forms of repetitions in the conversations of the graduate students, such types of repetitions were very limited in their occurrences. Moreover, in the terms of the rates of repetitions, forty cases of repetitions were observed in the transcripts of the low fluency level students, whereas, thirty-seven instances of repetitions were identified in the conversations of the more fluent speakers.

As I mentioned earlier, repair, as a disfluency pattern, has largely occurred in the conversations of the two groups. For the speakers with low fluency level, different types

seemed to be interactively used. Statistically, self-repairs occurred more often than the other types of repair, which were to be initiated and made by other speakers in different turns. Again, in the conversations of the undergraduate students, the occurrences of repairs can be classified into twenty-five self-repairs and only nine cases of the other types of repairs. On the other hand, there were twenty self-repairs and ten other repairs in the dialogues of the more fluent speakers. Briefly, what can be understood from these results is that there is a clear tendency of the participants in the two groups to avoid the use of other types of repairs. In other words, we find that the other types of repairs, in which other speakers gave and offered repairs to the original speaker in a conversation, were more used by the graduate students than the undergraduate students. Furthermore, these preferences towards particular types of repairs and the avoidances of the others have also strongly influenced the structures of turn taking and especially overlapping. Therefore, a detailed analysis of this interesting phenomenon will be given later in the discussions of findings.

Even though fillers such as “uh” generally appeared in the conversations of both high and low fluency level speakers, the limited occurrences of “uh” in the speech of the more fluent speakers clearly indicate that such a filler can clearly predict disfluency and the linguistic disabilities of the speakers. Based on the different examples from the conversations of the undergraduate students, it appeared to us that the filler “uh” was subconsciously used by the different speakers to compensate different incapabilities of speakers, such as starting the conversation, responding to a question, giving answers and using the correct words. When we compare the seventy-four cases of using “uh” in the conversations of the less fluent speakers to those of the twenty-four occurrences of the more fluent speakers, we noticed that the appearances of “uh” seemed to serve different conversational functions. In the following chart, I will briefly attempt to identify the three important functions in which the filler “uh” occurred throughout the conversations of the two groups:

Conversational Functions	To initiate a turn	To initiate a self-repair	Disturbances	
Lower Fluent Speakers	13	4	57	Rates of the Occurrences of “Uh”
High Fluent Speakers	8	1	15	

Remarkably, other fillers such as “uhm” and “um” also appeared in the transcriptions of the two groups. As I mentioned earlier, in the dialogues of the undergraduate students, the filler “uhm” has never been used, whereas, “um” appeared only twice. On the other hand, in the conversations of the graduate students, the filler “uhm” occurred for five times and “um” appeared for seven times. Again, by going through the conversations of the two groups we will also find that “uhm” and “um” have been used to serve the following roles:

Conversational Functions	To initiate a turn	To initiate a self-repair	To Disrupt the flow of the conversation	Rates of the occurrences Of “uhm” and “um”

Lower Speakers	Fluent	0	0	0	"uhm"
		0	0	2	"um"
High Speakers	Fluent	1	0	4	"uhm"
		2	2	3	"um"

In the above two charts, I preferred to use the soft term "disrupt" instead of "linguistic disabilities." For the purpose of clarity, it should be clearly identified here that what I meant by the function above of "to disrupt the flow of the conversation" can be basically defined as the moments of longer pauses during which the speakers stopped talking particularly in the middle of a sentence and as a result of the speakers' difficulty to maintain the topic. In other words, speakers, especially with lower level of fluency and through the device of longer pauses, were able to compensate their speaking difficulty through adding extra information that helped to maintain topic. Interestingly, such a finding has been clearly identified in the previous studies of fluency. Thus, in a study of pauses and disfluency, "silent and filled pauses" with "prolongation" are highly considered a marker of disfluency (Tissi, 2000, p. 107). This interesting result, in the following example from the transcription of the undergraduate students, can be explicitly observed through such a fragment in which the filler "uh" with longer pauses was seen as a true sign of disfluency and an indicator of disruption:

Speaker 2:	**Uh** (0.2) maybe money. People in Saudi Arabia love football. **Uh** (.), football, uh (0.5), become, **uh,** famous in Saudi Arabia, **u**::**h** (0.7), and in many country around the world. **Uh** (0.5), that is funny and **u**::**h**, interested, **uh,** yes.
Speaker 3:	**Uh** (.) I think because, **uh** (0.3), it's easy game to play **u**::**h**(0.6)**,** it's not like**, uh,** like basketball or hand a ( ) Volleyball**.** Just need a ball and goal and you can play**. Uh** (0.4) I think that's it.

As I mentioned earlier in the results sections, having forty cases of repetitions in the conversations of the undergraduate students and similarly thirty-seven instances of repetitions in the dialogues of the graduates directly indicated that the repetitions patterns were equally used by the two groups of participants. Even though mostly all types of repetitions occurred in the conversations of the two groups, phrasal and clausal types of repetitions apparently seemed to be more used by the high fluency level speakers rather than the other forms of repetitions.

Therefore, now it can be strongly argued that the continual process of repetitions particularly by the Arab English speakers in conversations should not be regarded as a marker of disfluency. Instead, it mainly happened as an obvious result of L1 negative transfer. Repetition in the Arabic language is "at the very heart of the language and discourse" (Feghali, 1997, p. 357) and it is a "positive" strategy in which several meanings are delivered" (Zaharna, 1995, p. 248). Accordingly, it should be stated that such a pattern can be obviously regarded as a conversational device instead of its being only associated with disfluency.

We understand earlier that the two groups have generally used repairs. However, the two types of repairs were not similarly used by the participants. Offering repairs to the other

speakers in the conversations mainly appeared in the transcriptions of the higher fluency level speakers. Simply, the following chart will briefly describe how the two types of repairs were used by the two groups:

Types of Repairs	Low Fluency Level Speakers	High Fluency Level Speakers
Self-repair	25	20
Others' repair	7	10

By looking at the transcriptions of the two groups, we observed that the Saudi English speakers in the conversations were more interested in using self-repairs than offering repairs to the other speakers and such a process have significantly impacted the instances of overlapping. In comparing the first group of the twelve undergraduate students of Jazan University who have never been exposed to the L2 culture to the second group of the six graduate students who have been exposed to the L2 culture in the US, we would be able to state that it is the sociopragmatic fluency that has influenced the different uses of repairs by the two groups. In other words, the more exposure to the natural L2 context, the more likely speakers will equally use the two types of repairs and naturally overlap with each other in a conversation.

However, it should be also indicated that although all participants in the second groups had been living in the US for a period of a one to a five year long, still the factor of the sociopragmatic fluency alone will not be enough to interpret the results of having twenty cases of self-repairs in the conversations of the graduate students, which is almost an equal number to the same number of self-repairs produced by the other group. This takes us to another argument about the impact of the first language on the natural uses of second language. In the Arab culture, giving repairs to other speakers in a conversation is uncommon and it is also regarded as an impolite behavior. Therefore, I think that the arguments of having the two factors of the L1 transfer and the sociopragmatic fluency will help us more to understand these particular preferences of the Saudi English speakers towards the use of self-repairs. Similarly, by looking at the structures of the conversations and how the organization of turn taking and overlapping were clearly different in the two groups, we find that the argument of L1 transfer will again make our discussions of the results and the interpretations of the finding more comprehensive. Still, such an interpretation of the result cannot be generalized because of the limited number of participants in this study.

Generally speaking, when looking at the structures of conversations in the transcriptions of the two groups, it can be noticed that the conversations of the two groups tended to miss the basic interactional features of regular conversations such as turn taking and overlapping. In other words, when critically observing the conversations of the Saudi English speakers in the two groups, we will clearly notice that the subjects tended to speak and pause and continue speaking. In contrast to the regular system of conversation in which longer pauses were normally followed by overlaps or repairs, we find that there were many examples in the conversations of the two groups where the same speakers continued to talk after a long pause. Clearly such a conversational feature might be again understood and interpreted as an obvious result of the influence of the speakers' first language, particularly, if we know that in

the Arabic language, monologue speech is something regular in the normal structure of the daily conversations.

7. Conclusion

Based on the pure and the applied analysis of the data of the two groups, we can clearly state here that the three disfluency patterns (fillers, repairs and repetitions) should not be generally regarded as markers of disfluency for the Saudi English speakers. Generally speaking, the filler "uh" with longer pausing can clearly predict disfluency among the Saudi English speakers. Similarly, the overuses of repetitions and self-repairs obviously reflect the powerful impacts of the Saudi speakers' first language on the natural uses of the second language. Likewise, the limited sociopragmatic fluency of the Saudi English speakers, especially with the group of the low fluency level speakers, has resulted into creating a unnatural conversational system of the second language by simply avoiding giving repairs to others, reducing the numbers of overlaps and changing the ordinary structures of interactions between different speakers.

8. The Limitations of The Study

Clearly, due to the sampling of this current project, the generalizations of the findings of this study might not be possible. Even though the results succeeded to support the early hypotheses and to answer the questions of the study, having a limited number of participants of a one gender was not fairly enough for the researcher to identify the clear impacts of the participants' native language on the uses of the three disfluency patterns. Also, another major limitation of the study is related to the measure of fluency of the participants. Although using graduate and undergraduate subjects from different levels of fluency in English could apparently help the researcher to answer the research question, having a larger number of participants taken a standard fluency test before sampling will definitely increase the external and internal validity of the research.

9. Future Research

Based on the literature of Arab English speakers and conversations, we can find that many studies focused on investigating the communications problems encountered by the Arab English speakers, whereas, other studies were interested in finding how English was used by the Arab speakers in conversation. As we have seen in this current study that the exposure of the language learners to the L2 culture clearly impacted the way they used the language. However, when going through the literature, a question that is how the exposure to the L2 context influences the natural uses of the language by the second learners is still not clearly answered.

Again, through results of this study, we were able to observe how the advanced English speakers, who have been exposed to English in the natural L2 setting, have differently used the pattern of repairs than the undergraduate students who have never been exposed to an L2 context as being in the U.S. as the other group. In other word words, being naturally exposed to the L2 setting means having more opportunities to develop the sociopragmatic fluency of the L2 learners. Therefore, I am strongly interested to investigate to what extent the

sociopragmatic fluency of the Saudi English students in the US would impact their actual English conversations in terms of the four structures of interactions: turn-taking, sequences, repairs, and turn designs.

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