Discursive Silence: A Tool to Read between the Lines in Persian Stories

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Abstract

According to Hemingway, if a writer knows enough about what he is writing about, he may be silent about seven-eighth of the text (1996: 192). This silence as a notable absence leaves a meaningful trace, which is a marker of written silence. Such silence has an interactive role, employed as a discursive technique in literature to produce a fictional world. Based on this theory, the reader seeks to fill the empty places in the fictional text to understand the story completely. An appropriate device for filling the blanks would be possible through understanding the different six types of silence and its functions. To be exact, the narrative silence is represented in structural, semantic and pragmatic types discussed respectively in three syntagmatic, paradigmatic, and interactive axes. This paper examines these variations of narrative silence in five Persian short stories[1] to analyze the structure of narrative and the creation of the elements of a story by means of silence. The purpose of studying silence is to establish how the narrative structure is based on untold or omitted parts in subtly differing ways, so each kind of silence has its special function in these five stories. Generally, the theory of silence not only proposes a universal pattern for studying fiction, but also suggests a comprehensive analytic tool to study the structuring of narrative that will then allow scholars to differentiate the different silences that constitute styles of fiction writing.

Keywords: Silence, Fictional world, Interactive, Narrative

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[1] The actual data of this research are five complete stories, but in this paper there is the chance to present only fragments of each.

1. Introduction

Silence has been neglected in the study of language for a long period of time, until has considered as a part of language recently. Nowadays, it forms an essential part of communication in verbal and written texts, so it takes different function in terms of its context (see. Asher, 1994: 3945). Silence has been studied from so different views as yet. It considered as linguistic zero (e.g. Jacobson, 1939; Haas, 1957), as being nothing, i.e. no word with no communication, as omission of morphemes and words in structures, viz. ellipsis and as stylistic item as well. It exists not only in relation to speech, but may also be examined in the written representation of something that cannot be told, something absent in the text. In literary studies, silence is considered by different literary and rhetorical approaches, such as Politi (1998), Massey (2003), Schwalm (1998), Tseng (2002), and Glenn (2004). All these approaches to silence refer simply to a part of silence as well as various philosophical and literary theories that are more theoretical than practical. Much sociolinguistic research has been done on silence by such scholars as Bruneau (1973, 1988, 2007), Huckin (2002), Kurzon (1997, 2007), Tannen (1985), Saville-Troike (1985), and Jaworski (1993, 1997, 2000). However, these scholars focus more on silence in speech and as a part of language. This paper, however, aims to focus on the function of discursive or narrative silence in structuring a written story, that is, it addresses the manner in which a story could be structured by not telling a part of the story.

The question is how the essence of written silence, its linguistic types and its discursive functions are represented in a narrative. As for the first issue, written silence as a discursive category is considered to be an absent element in the fictional world. So silence can refer to any trace of the absence of some story line(s) or word(s) which affect the interpretation of the story in one way or another. So these modes of narrative silence are represented in structural, semantic and pragmatic types discussed respectively on three syntagmatic, paradigmatic, and interactive axes.

In this paper, I analyze five Persian short stories from different writers to show the function of narrative silence in the formation of fictional world. This research will demonstrate and then interrogate the value and role of silence in complexly structuring a text.

2. Silence and Its Different Types

According to Hemingway's "Iceberg Theory" or theory of omission (1996), "if a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about, he may omit things that he knows and the reader [knows as well…]. The dignity of movement of an ice-berg is due to only one-eighth of its being above water" (1996: 192). Then, silence could be defined as the absence of speech through which communication occurs (Agyekum, 2002: 31). So, it is the extreme manifestation of indirectness, which is a matter of saying nothing and meaning something, as indirectness means saying one thing and meaning another (Tannen, 1985:97).

In my opinion, "silence, at this point, is recognized as a meaningful and structured absence comprehensible through a perceived trace which is left in the signifying empty place within a story text. This trace as a marker of silence may be introduced in various forms, represented

in structural, semantic and pragmatic types discussed respectively in three syntagmatic, paradigmatic, and interactive axes." The study of meaningful and structured silence (as opposed to meaningless or unintentional silence) in literature shows that this marked silence is present in any text by means of a range of discursive indicators, such as omission of a part of text or replacing a word with another sign. According to Baker (1955), interpersonal silence has two basic forms in a continuum, one is "when speech breaks down" and the other is "when the words become irrelevant" (Baker, 1955: 157). Therefore, silence is not only the complete refusal to speak, but also acts of silence within discourse that are considered meaningful (Ibid: 165). Jaworski has defined silence based on the prototypical approach, which has different forms "associated not only with the lack of speech, but also with its use", that is silence considered to be as "a communicative category and not merely as an acoustic one" (Jaworski, 1992: 99). To be exact, "One can utter words without saying anything" (Searle ,1969: 24). A text expresses itself, its meaning, partly through words and partly through silence. It is clear that 'absolute silence is impossible' (Bruneau, 1973:17), so silence occurs between the lines of written texts. Untold text or silence, in my opinion, has an interactive role and also may be employed as a narrative technique in literature to generate a plot: an absent engine. Silence is analyzed in different disciplines in varying terms: in philosophy as absence, in syntax as empty category, in morphology as zero morpheme, and in discourse analysis as silence.

According to Eagleton (1983),

> The reader makes implicit connections, fills in gaps, draws inferences […] and to do this means drawing on a tacit knowledge of the world in general and of literary conventions in particular. The text itself is really no more than a series of 'cues' to the reader, invitations to construct a piece of language into meaning. (1983: 66)

In fact, when silence, as Johnstone contends, comes to the foreground [of a text],then discourse moves to the background. She stipulates two sources of silence in discourse, "implicature" and "presupposition" (Johnstone 2008: 70-71), both of whose existence emerge from the experience of a number of preceding texts in the audience's pre-knowledge. According to Derrida, writing is nothing unless a kind of absence in order to express something (1976: 62). Accordingly, written silence as a discursive category leads to the absence of a discursive element which nonetheless leaves a trace. Each trace that refers to a silent element is considered as sign of silence. The typology of silence has been and continues to be discussed in different contexts, such as social, textual, pragmatic, or fictional contexts. Bruneau (1973) categorizes silence into three types: psycholinguistic, interactive, and sociocultural. Kurzon proposes seeing silence as a semiotic concept in relation to speech (Kurzon, 1998: 8–18) and differentiates the relation between speech and silence as non-verbal, intentional silence (being complementary to speech) and co-verbal behavior which considers all communicative behavior that accompanies speech (or silence). He finally (1997, 2007), distinguishes between four types of silence, such as conversational, thematic, textual and situational (Kurzon 2007-a: 1673–1688). Huckin (2002) examines five types of textual silence, such as speech-act silences, presuppositional silences, discreet silences, conventional silences, and manipulative silences. His main focus is on manipulative silences,

the basic feature of which is that the writer does not intend the silence to be noticed by the reader (Huckin 2002 347–372). Michal Ephratt (2008) has also taxonomized "eloquent silence" into six distinctive types and points out that such silence is able to fulfill the same functions within Jakobson's communicative model, that is referential, emotive, conative, phatic, metalinguistic and poetic (Ephratt 2008: 1909-38).

Silence has been established as a means of communication expressing a variety of function (Bruneau 1973; Johansson 1974; Gilmore 1985; Maltz 1985; Tennan 1985; Gal 1989 and Jaworski 1993). In the fictional context, in my opinion, it could be represented in three structural, semantic and pragmatic levels, respectively, on three paradigmatic, syntagmatic and interactive axes. All of these levels constitute the discursive sources of structuring fictional discourse. Each type of silence operates on a specific linguistic axis as follows:

2.1 Silence on the Paradigmatic Axis

Ferdinand de Saussure stressed that meaning that arises from the differences between signifiers; these differences are of two kinds: those of syntagmatic (concerning positioning) and paradigmatic (concerning substitution) relations (Saussure 1974: 122). According to him, there are two relations or 'axes', where the vertical axis (the paradigmatic relations) refers to absent signifiers from the text (ibid: 123). This axis is a place on which the silence of ellipsis and metaphor (explained subsequently) operates to create part of the narrative through absent/silent elements. The place of an silent element could be filled simply with an element in the same domain. Since a signifier may be substituted for another signifier on the paradigmatic axis, in some cases it is replaced with a silent element that refers to the same signified, and therefore there is now a signifying silence on paradigmatic axis.

2.2 Silence on Syntagmatic Axis

Syntagmatic relations are possibilities of combination that refer to other co-present signifiers within the text. A syntagm is an arranged combination of interacting signifiers which forms a meaningful whole within a text. The relations are created through linking the signifiers to each other in the paradigm sets, and work against any absence-relationship on the paradigmatic axis. Thus, both the present and absent elements interactively lead to being meaningful, are, in fact, co-constitutive. Barthes (1967) believes that the syntagmatic dimension is the juxtaposition of different elements at the same time in a complete ensemble. So the arrangements of present as well as absent words or signifiers have an effect on the meaning of the text. Absent or silent signifiers could play a determining role in reading a fictional text, such as the silence of cataphora and metonymy that act on the syntagmatic axis. In fact, the special sequences of words in every context have different values (Yule 1989: 125).

2.3 Silence on the Interactive Axis

The interactive axis is applied to contiguous and substitution relationships among words at the same time; that is, it occurs on the paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes all at once. So it could be considered as a kind of meta-linguistic axis acting as the consequence of all factors that come into view in the form of the background of a text, such as the presupposed knowledge of a reader, a situational context (temporal and special), and the interaction

between the reader and the author (Sasani 2001: 54). Some of these factors are related to "inter-linguistic elements", considering "they do not exist directly in the structure of the text" (ibid). Other factors are related to "meta-linguistic elements like subjectivity, pre-knowledge, world view, pre-understanding of a reader (the way he thinks), time, place, elements exist in a place, attendants, author …" (ibid: 55). Presupposition and implication are two pragmatic devices that cannot act simply on the paradigmatic or syntagmatic level due to their being the consequence of both axes, so they work on a new type of axis, called the interactive axis.

3. The Six Types of Discursive Silence

3.1 Structural Silence

The different types of cohesive ties in a text are reference, ellipsis, substitution, conjunction and lexical cohesion (Halliday and Hassan 1980: 4). The first two items (cataphora as a kind of reference and ellipsis) could lead to creating structural and semantic silence. If a signified appears in a text through an absent signifier, that is, the signifier has represented its meaning through its absence, then a structural silence occurs in the text in the form of ellipsis or cataphora. In other words, structural silence is divided into ellipsis (an item is replaced by nothing) and cataphora (a delayed signified temporarily replaced by nothing), which create structural complications in the story. That is, uncertainty arises that leads to guessing the next consequences in the plot. These two types of silence are marked in our text analysis as follows:

- Silence of ellipsis: $\varnothing$
- Silence of cataphora: **<u>bold underline</u>**

3.1.1 Silence of Ellipsis

Barre Toelken (2003) speculates about ballad ellipses and termed it silence, due to the term schweigen which is not just means being quiet, but intentionally means refraining from speaking-and it is in this sense that Toelken employ the term "silence" for ellipsis (see. Toelken, 2003: 85). According to Kurzon (2011), the omission of pragmatic items such as "utterances and entire discourses –where some items may either be defined within a context or be regarded as ad hoc" (Kurzon, 2011: 2275), may be used to relate silence and ellipsis. According to him, the interpretation of this type may be arrived at only through pragmatic means, for multiple interpretations. He has suggested zero mark ($\emptyset$) to indicate the syntactic ellipsis, which means zero equals silence. Based on Kurzon's "On silence" (2011), "Even if every communicative silence may be considered a zero, not every zero is silence, e.g. ellipsis" (ibid). Ellipsis occurs "where a word is left out in order to achieve more compact expression" (Cuddeon 1979: 217). It also can be "interpreted as that form of substitution in which the item is replaced by nothing" (Halliday& Hassan 1980: 88). There is no reason to say "what is unsaid is not understood"; on the contrary, 'unsaid' implies 'but understood' nevertheless (ibid: 142). The meaning of a text usually is more than its existing elements constructing a text.

Ellipsis occurs when a necessary element related to the main topic of the story is left untold in the surface structure of an utterance. The state of being unfinished leads to both

markedness and signification of the text. So the reader will discover that the text could convey much more than simply that which is told. Although substitution and ellipsis, according to Halliday and Hassan, may embody the same fundamental relation between parts of a text, ellipsis is simply substitution by zero (ibid: 142).

This type of silence is represented largely in "The Pear Tree", a work by Goli Taraghi (2001). In this bittersweet Iranian drama, the middle-aged author called Mahmoud reflects on his youth, and the story flashes back to the late 1970s before the Iranian revolution with an awkward 11-year-old Mahmoud at a country estate north of Tehran where the youth falls under the spell of his 14-year-old female cousin known only as M. As Mahmoud's infatuation increases, his adolescent dreams soar to creative, religious, and erotic heights. Decades later, a barren pear tree leads his memories back to M, the abbreviation for his sweetheart's name.

There are utterances in the story with some omitted parts (shown by $\varnothing$), considered silent elements due to the role of untold parts in the narrative.

(1) «عصبانی شده‌ام و عصبانیت کارم را عقب می‌اندازد. کدام کار؟نوشتن [∅] مثل نفس کشیدن، نگاه‌کردن[∅]، خواستن[∅]. مثل بودن[∅]. به همین سادگی. اتفاقی ضروری[∅]، طبیعی[∅]، ممکن[∅]».

'I've gone mad and that holds back my job. <u>What job</u>? Writing [$\varnothing$]. Just <u>like taking a breath</u>; looking at [$\varnothing$]; yearning for [$\varnothing$]; [$\varnothing$] like being. Simple as that.[$\varnothing$] An event; [$\varnothing$] necessary, [$\varnothing$] natural, [$\varnothing$] possible'. (Taraghi 2001: 127)

In this story, a number of omitted utterances, especially the verbs, from the surface structure refer to some signifying points that play the main role in the structuring the narrative. Whenever the narrator speaks about his job (writing, political activities, academic teaching) the structural silence of ellipsis is activated in the text to refer to the missed sweetheart. In this way, the absence of a verb or any part of the sentence in such a discourse represents the absence of the sweetheart, since the narrator missed his sweetheart due to the primacy of his job. The most important textual issue here is not only the performance of the ellipsis as a process of omitting the predicted words, but also the way that the omission leads to creating the underlying narrative of the story. Furthermore, ellipsis abounds in "The Pear Tree," occurring whenever the narrator speaks about the tree as a symbol of his missed sweetheart, as he and his sweetheart were playing under the pear tree in their childhood. Since the narrator missed his love due to his job in the past and his book writing did not leave him time or opportunity to join his beloved in another country, he has tried to forget the barren pear tree (metonymically, the sweetheart). Significantly, the garden keeper now is worried about its infertility, a concern that reflects the narrator's diminishing powers of either creativity or even recall.

Another specimen of structural silence comes from Zoya Pirzad's short story, "The Story of a Rabbit and the Tomato". A housewife, in this fiction, wants to write a story, but she does not have enough time. She decides to cook tomato and rice *(apparently a simple dish to fix)* for

tomorrow in order to spare some time for writing a story. She starts writing in her mind about a rabbit falling down a hole. She wishes to save the rabbit in her story tomorrow. Then, she remembers that there is not enough tomato in the refrigerator, so she'll have to go shopping tomorrow. It means that she does not have enough time again to save the rabbit. The last line of the story is as following:

(2) «کاغذ را باید بچسبانم به آینة دستشویی تا فردا یادم باشد که —[∅]»

'I shall stick the slip on the bathroom mirror so that tomorrow I would remember that ___ [∅]'. (Pirzad 2002: 5)

The narrator places an underscore (a silence marker) purposely to refer to the omitted signifiers, referring to the act that has to be done in future. She did not say what she should keep in her mind to do, but the reader may try to guess. The narrator emphasizes on the uncertain ending by using the punctuation as a silence marker. This absence makes an unusual and unexpected end to the story that could be interpreted in different ways.

Some narratives use the structural silence of ellipsis as the result of the interaction of syntax and discursive factors for telling the story, thereby building story complication by the presence and absence of linguistic elements as well as allowing the reader to have an active role in completing the text.

The example of the structural silence of ellipsis may be illustrated in "My Little Prayer Room", written by Houshang Golshiri as well. In this story, there is a cicatrix-like appendage next to the narrator's little toe. He and his family try to hide it from the sight of others so they are not mocked. His inability to bridge the gap between himself and the others along with his keeping aloof from the others are caused by the existence of this keloid, considered as a congenital deficiency. This undesirable gap leads to dissolution of the relationship with his girlfriend. She counts the cicatrix an unusual element in the narrator's body. The only person who puts up with it is a whore who spends a night with him. The narrator finally finds the cicatrix as a part of his character. Look at the following part as an example:

(3) «می‌دانستم [∅]هست. اما [∅] مهم نبود، چون [∅] مزاحم نبود.»

'I knew [∅] existed. But [∅] didn't matter. Because [∅] wasn't a nuisance'. (Golshiri 2001: 251)

In the beginning of the story, the narrator speaks about something to which the story has not referred earlier. The reader could not guess what existed. In fact, the topic is omitted and the lack of the pronoun's referent (he/it/she: a person, the keloid or the sweetheart) leads to a significant story complication. Later on, the narrator meta-textually speaks about the existence of a cicatrix (metonymic silence). In this case, whenever he speaks about it, some sort of structural silence creates a complication in the plot. Here, cicatrix performs as a self-generating textual speech act, bringing itself about upon enunciation.

Ellipsis is reflected in a paradigmatic substitution against cataphora, which is a structural silence too, but on the syntagmatic axis. These two types aim at creating complication, i.e., the obstacles that increase the tension of the story conflict, which occurs during the absence of presupposed events. For instance, in the example A (silence of ellipsis), it is seen how

some parts of a sentence are silent (omitted), although in the example B (silence of cataphora), the signified is delayed through a temporary replacement by zero (nothing).

A. *Looking at [∅]; yearning for [∅]; [∅]like being*(Taraghi, 2001: 127).
B. *I sit up on my bed and watch <u>it</u>²*. *[…]. As if I figure <u>it</u> [<u>she</u>] does not exist!* (Golshiri 2001: 255).

It is worth mentioning that ellipsis and cataphora, like other kinds of silence, are considered silence in a situation in which the plot could be completed via some absent or silent parts.

3.1.2 Silence of Cataphora

In terms of textual cohesion, substitution resembles reference, which may point in any direction, but substitution is a relation between linguistic items, while reference is a relation between meanings (Halliday 1980: 89). Cataphora is a kind of textual reference (endophora) that could be considered a kind of delayed signified, temporarily replaced by zero (nothing). This nothingness is certainly presented as a visible signified in the subsequent text, "My Little Prayer Room", where it occurs as structural silence with a significant role as a part of the narrative, and makes a text compelling by means of complication. If the presupposition goes in the opposite direction, with the presupposed element (ibid: 18), it is called cataphora, which refers to the following textual elements. In the following part of the story, the function of the silence of cataphora is recognizable:

(4) «می‌نشینم توی تختم و به او نگاه می‌کنم، آن‌قدر که چشمم تار می‌شود، یا به اشک می‌نشیند طوری که فکر می‌کنم نیست<u>ش</u>، آن <u>تکه گوشت کوچک</u> من از آن قدر کوچک شده است که <u>پاک محو شده، مثل انگشت کوچک پای همه آدم‌ها</u>. »

'I sit up on my bed and watch <u>it</u>. So long that my vision goes blurred, or my eyes begin to shed. As if I figure <u>it</u> [<u>she</u>] does not exist! <u>That little cicatrix</u> of mine has shrunk so small that it's <u>totally gone; like everyone's little toe</u>'. (Golshiri 2001: 255)

'It/she' (a genderless pronoun in Persian) refers to the omitted object/subject of the sentence as a kind of delayed signified, temporarily replaced by another signified and then by the correct one, "*That little cicatrix of mine*". As the narrator's big crisis is the existence of the cicatrix, whenever he is speaking about it, various types of structural silence are activated to represent the crisis either as omitted parts or as an ambiguous signified. The reader would be curious to read the next sentence to know what the pronoun refers to and about what the narrator is speaking, since the pronouns in Persian are genderless. Applying the structural silence of cataphora not only leads to a kind of complication, but also makes the presence of the referent a kind of denouement.

The silence of cataphora has two functions: the first one is avoidance of repetition, which helps the economy of the text stylistically, and the second function is a kind of signifying silence, which has a discursive role. Therefore a part of a text to which no reference has been

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² In Persian, the gender of the pronoun is not clear. So it is not determined if the narrator speaks about the cicatrix or about the girlfriend.

made earlier will be omitted and the reader may access that part through the co-text. In other words, the structural silence of ellipsis and cataphora could be considered a device for economically generating complication in the story.

3.2 Semantic Silence

Semantic silence is a familiar issue in story telling traditions and it functions to build setting and atmosphere through description. It consists of metaphor and metonymy. They create the atmosphere and setting of the story, respectively. To be more exact, atmosphere is "the mood and feeling, the intangible quality which appeals to extra-sensory as well as sensory-perception, evoked by a story" (Cuddon 1979: 61) and setting is "the where and when of a story or play" (ibid: 620). In the following sentence from "The Pear Tree", for instance, the atmosphere of the story is created metaphorically through comparing the importance of "writing" with "breathing" for the narrator, who missed his sweetheart due to his job.

(5) «... نوشتن [∅] مثل نفس کشیدن، ...» ...

'…"Writing. Just like taking a breath,…"…' (Taraghi 2001: 127).

The semantic silence is marked as following:

- Silence of metaphor: dotted underline
- Silence of metonymy: double dotted underline

The semantic silence consists of metaphor and metonymy (the delayed signified replaced by something else) functioning to establish atmosphere and setting of the story, respectively.

3.2.1 Silence of Metaphor

According to Jakobson (1956), language may function in conformity with two poles, that of selection (metaphor), and that of combination (metonymy). Metaphor produces a twofold signification, owing to the omitted signifier substituted for another signifier with the same signified.

In semantic silence, the signifier may be omitted to refer to the signified through another signifier placed in its position on the paradigmatic axis. The difference between semantic and structural silence, in fact, is based on their substitution with nothingness or another signifier, which means a trace for the earlier silent signifier. According to Lakoff (1987), metaphor is a mapping from an entity in one domain to an entity in another domain in terms of their similarities (Lakoff 1987: 388). As Feyaerts points out, metaphor is "the (partial) mapping of two concepts belonging to different knowledge domains onto each other" (Feyaerts 2003: 60), that is, the substitution of the target domain with the source (silent) domain, which occurs on the paradigmatic axis. However, not every metaphor could be supposed as silence. A number of metaphors which have a key role in the narrative, however, as they are a part of the plot, are considered semantic silence. Otherwise, when a semantic silence of metaphor occurs in a story, the deferred signified has to be a key element of the narrative that plays a role by its absence.

In a story by Ebrahim Golestan, called "Gone, For Theft", for example, this kind of

metaphoric silence is significant. In this story, the main character is a housemaid, called Zaynab. She thinks that one of the workers, who came to repair the gable roof, is hiding himself from view to steal something or hurt someone at mid-night. This idea came to her mind due to a bitter sexual experience, being raped in the past by the master's son. So she is afraid of the worker's presence in the gable now, yet at the same time, she believes the guy is in a relationship with the neighbor's mistress. Zaynab hates them and their relationship, since she feels her youth is gone, as a heart-breaking theft, without any hope for love.

In one particular part of the story, for creating the atmosphere, the silence of metaphor is applied as follows:

(6) «دیگ‌ها و کماجدان‌ها و کاسه‌های مسی ته مطبخ، از روی طاقچه‌ها، سرد و عمیق به او نگاه
می‌کردند»

'The copper pots, casseroles, and bowls in the other end of the kitchenette, from there in the niches, cast cold and deep looks upon her; just in a way that metals shall look at her'. (Golestan 1948: 10)

In this extract, the semantic domain of the human is mapped onto the pot, the casserole, the copper bowl and generally on metals to depict Zeinab's merely functional life as a housemaid and her severe loneliness. It is worth mentioning that the semantic silence of metaphor, as a story writing technique, often creates the two elements of atmosphere and setting. Applying a semantic silence to create atmosphere, instead of only a common description, activates the reader's mental picture of the character's place of living. This signifying process refers to paradigmatic and intertextual relations, and links a sign to other signs which may have been deliberately left absent (Sojoodi 2009: 269). So the signifier of the source once substitutes for zero as silence and then substitutes again for the signifier of the target domain, not the signified, to create the semantic silence of metaphor.

3.2.2 Silence of Metonymy

Jakobson's use of metonymy has been applied to contiguous relationships among words in their forward motion on the axis of successions, so metonymy is the use of later words to clarify earlier ones and earlier words to clarify later ones. These lexical units are associated owing to their sequential position, and their meanings interact on a selection axis within its linear context (Jakobson 1956: 78, 82). As Kövecses, among many cognitive linguists, observes, "[m]etonymy is a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same domain" (1998: 32). Metonymy, then, is a mapping within the same conceptual domain (Ruddan 2003: 94) whereby the source (signifier) and the target (signified) are in the same domain.

To be more precise, the signifier, occasionally, may be omitted due to some reason, but the signified will be left and its presence could be understood by its traces. In fact, in this process once the signifier is omitted to defer the meaning, then another signifier comes next to the earlier signifier to fill the blank. This is a presence-associated relationship comparable to the syntagmatic relations or associations between the layers of a text. At first, there is an omission, and then there is a signifying act for the omitted or deleted element, as a metonymy

or indexical sign, by means of a left trace (Sojoodi 2009: 275).

The example of this type of silence could be noticed in "My Little Prayer Room", written by Houshang Golshiri:

(7) «بعد انگار هیچ کس توی این دنیا تنها نیست، آن قدر تنها که اتاق کوچک بشود و پنجره بسته باشد با پرده‌های آویخته، که تازه اگر هم پرده‌ها را کنار بزنی و پنجره را باز کنی آسمان ابری ابری باشد و تمام چراغ‌های همه خانه‌های دنیا خاموش باشند.»

'Then, <u>as if</u> there's no lonely person in this world – so lonely that <u>the room turns small</u> and <u>the window be closed</u> with <u>curtains drawn</u>. And even if you pull the curtains back and open the window, <u>the skies are deeply clouded</u>, and all the lights of all the houses in the world are <u>off</u>'. (Golshiri 2001: 255)

The room's becoming smaller, the window's being closed, the sky's being cloudy, the lamp's being turned off are all mapping on the semantic domain of 'being alone'. The reason is when a human being is alone, he usually closes the doors and windows, and if he feels loneliness, he may turn off the light. Therefore, the adjacency of being alone with these mentioned acts leads to the signification of contiguous contents with loneliness on the (absent) silent signifier.

The semantic silence of metonymy, as seen here, appears when the signified can be deferred on the syntagmatic axis. That is, in the semantic type, the silence of metonymy occurs once on the signifier's network, as with "the small room", "the closed window", and "the drawn curtain", and then occurs on the network of the signified, "being alone", which is established due to its juxtaposition with the earlier signifiers.

In another example from "The Pear Tree", a reader may see that drawing a decisive line between different types of silence is a bit difficult, even nebulous, as sometime they are interwoven together. In the following example, the narrator speaks about the pear tree, which is a deep metaphor related to his past. The past events are related to the narrator's job, his book writing and his political activity, and then the authorship is related to missing the sweetheart in the previous time as a main reason for forgetting the sweetheart. As soon as the narrator speaks about each aspect of his past metonymically, there will be a piece of omitted information (structural silence) to build the story complication.

(8) «وقتی شروع به نوشتن بکنم دیگر برنخواهم خاست. یک ضرب پنجاه صفحه خواهم نوشت. جمله‌های بلند∅، متصل، موزون∅، مثل آبشاری جاری∅، روان∅، محکم∅، کوبنده∅، باشکوه∅.»

'As I set out to write, I wouldn't stop. I'd write fifty pages straight. [∅]Lengthy, coherent, harmonious sentences like a cascade; [∅]flowing, [∅]vigorous, [∅]striking, [∅]glorious'. *(*Taraghi 2001: 126*)*

Utilizing cut-up sentences, omitting verbs and creating compliment about the patience of the act of authorship lead here to the structural narrative complication, which represents a deficiency in grammatical structure that may represent a conceptual absence of a phenomenon. It should be mentioned that this kind of story complication influences emotional connection with the reader and appeals to his interest to read the rest of the story.

So whenever the narrator speaks about writing, the pear tree, and his sweetheart, he applies this style of sentence. These cut-ups represent the sweetheart's absence that narrator tries to hide with emphasis on the pear tree's reality as well as on his sweetheart's character (metonymic silence).

... (9) «کاری که برایم آسان بوده و حالا، یک‌مرتبه، بدون دلیلـی آشکار، دلیل قابل‌قبول و توجیه، تبدیل به جان کندنی دردناک شده، به دست و یا زدنی بی حاصل∅، ، جلب جلویی ناشیانه در حوضـی گود∅،مثل دویدن در خواب∅، میخکوب روی نقطـه ای ثابت∅. نمـی‌توانم بنویسم. اعترافی تلخ∅. » ...

'…"So simple a job for me had now, quite out of the blue, <u>turned into a poignant struggle</u> for no clear, acceptable, and justified reason;[∅]<u>a futile thrashing</u> – [∅] <u>clumsy sloshes and splashes in a deep pool</u>; [∅] <u>like running when asleep</u> – [∅] <u>nail-struck on a fixed spot</u>! I do fail to write! [∅] A bitter confession."…'
(Taraghi 2001: 126)

In the last part of the utterance, the narrator points out that he can write nothing. The act of writing and the pear tree are both symbols for the narrator's remembering his sweetheart. Different kinds of silences, therefore, occur in the text immediately after one of these three elements emerges to construct a narration. In this part, the verbs are omitted to build story complication. In addition, one of complication's functions is to make an emotional connection with the reader and to appeal to his interest to read the rest of the story. The absence of information in the text is comparable to *failure of writing* and *a poignant struggle* which create the atmosphere of the narration through this semantic silence. *Failure of writing*, *futile thrashing,* and *running when asleep* are supposed to be similar ways of depicting the narrator's pitiful paralysis to the reader.

3.3 Pragmatic Silence

On the pragmatic level, there is more focus with differing types of silence on the addressee due to the dependency of missing information on the addressee's pre-knowledge, but the missing part could be accessible inside the text itself on the structural and semantic level. "Cohesion occurs where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another" (Halliday 1980: 4). This entirety occasionally relates to missing links not mentioned in the text. Some of them are a prior body of discourse (pre-knowledge), including thoughts which implicitly or explicitly take up, prolong, cite, refute, transform. (Culler 1981: 112).

This type of silence consists of presupposition and implication, which create the complication and the suspense in the story. According to Cuddon, suspense is "a state of uncertainty, anticipation and curiosity as to the outcome of a story…" (Cuddon 1979: 669).

Silence of implicature leads to an emotional connection with the reader, persuading him to read the rest, whereas silence of presupposition creates a possible economy of words, allowing the reader to broaden hidden stories, and boosts the reader's cognitive knowledge about the characters in the story. Pragmatic silence tries to churn *the reader's* emotions, catching his *interest* to read. By using silences of implicature and presupposition, a writer may remove some information from the text in support of the pleasure of the reader who can

recover or project through inference the missing links in the chain of events through the narration. This type of silence is marked as follows:

- Silence of presupposition: waved underline
- Silence of implicature: double underline

3.3.1 Silence of Presupposition

Presupposition is generally understood as some omitted information in the readers' pre-knowledge or some recoverable information through the co-text. In fact, it is possible to access the untold information through some other mentioned information in the narrative. Any given reader's interpretation of a sentence, could say more than what is mentioned in the text. The omitted element leaves a particular empty space to be filled in another place. Whatever the semantic content of a text, its condition as a signifying practice presupposes the existence of other discourses. This is to say that every text is formed at the outset under the jurisdiction of other discourses which impose a universe on it (Kristeva 1974; Culler 1981: 116).

In the following example from "My Little Prayer Room", it is presupposed when the other people are sad, or blue, they have to smoke or go to a cozy bar:

(10) «و بعد دیگر مثل آدم‌های دیگر مجبور نیستم سیگار بکشم، و احیاناً دنبال یک میخانه کوچک دنج بگردم که فقط یک میز داشته باشد و یک صندلی.»

'And then, like the others, I don't have to smoke, or look for a cozy little bar that only has one table with one chair'. (Goshiri 2002: 255)

In an example from "The Dream of Blood" written by Bahram Sadeghi, the character referred to is not a straightforward person, due to his pretending to get warm.

… (11) «اما اغلب دور و بر تنور می‌پلکد و می‌پلکد و ادای کسی را در می‌آورد که می‌خواهد گرم بشود»...

'…"He keeps hanging around the furnace, and feigns someone wishing to get warm!"…' (Sadeghi 2001: 377).

According to the silence of presupposition, being dishonest is one of the characteristics of feigning in the pre-knowledge of the reader. So the narrator introduces the character through silence of implicature as a narrative technique. It is worth mentioning that customarily some different types of silence create the untold part of the story altogether. In the silence of implicature, some utterances are omitted that have a semantic connection with other utterances. Not only do the semantic gaps between the two utterances lead to an obvious absent utterance, but also that utterance builds the narration by withholding a part of text.

It is not possible, however, to determine exactly if presupposition simply occurs on the paradigmatic or syntagmatic axis due to the interaction of both axes for creating presupposed elements.

3.3.2 Silence of Implication

The use of this type of silence can be fully accounted for by the theory of relevance, which is

mentioned by Sperber and Wilson as well (see. Sperber & Wilson, 1986: 169). Silence of implication, in my openion, is the understanding of absent narrative whose presence could be perceived by some traces. It occurs when an articulated issue in a sentence is not related to the previous sentence on the surface. In fact, the cooperative principle proposed by Grice will be violated to create implicature. According to Grice (1961), implicature is what the speaker implicitly talks about, while that underlying meaning is different from his explicit words (Grice 1961: 3). Implicature seems to act on the interactive axis, as it does not arise simply on the syntagmatic or paradigmatic axis. Therefore, there is an empty place between what is told literally and what is understood, so the implicit meaning is the result of a bridging assumption to fill that blank. The regarded message will thereby be perceived by inference to create textual coherence.

According to Yule (1989), when a meaning of an expression is more than the uttered part, it has implicit meaning. When a speaker intends to transfer a message, it becomes necessarily more than its uttered words. However, the implicit meaning does not have any formal marker and it is recognized as the perception of the absent part of a narrative. Implicit meaning is considered as a kind of inference in which some information connects the expressions by missing links. These links could be recognized through the pre-knowledge of the speaker and the hearer; they state "a type of relationship which might take the form of a universally quantified proposition such as Every X has a Y". Inference is an inexact process of filling in the missing links between two utterances by means of speaker and hearer (Yule 1989: 258). "Participants construct a notion of what the discourse is about", to fill the empty place within a text in order to interpret the meaning of what they hear (Saeed 1997: 191).

The process of recovering the missing information of a text leads to understanding the relation between two expressions in spoken or written text, called, in my terms, the silence of implication. These parts missing or omitted are recoverable by means of a trace that makes possible the interpretation of silence in the reader's mind. This kind of silence will be possible through violating Grice's maxims of quality, quantity, relation, and manner. In the maxim of quality, the speaker is supposed to give information that is not false or that is supported by evidence. The maxim of quantity says that the utterance has to be informative and gives as much information as is needed, and no more. According to the maxim of relation, the utterance has to be relevant, and mention content pertinent to the discussion. Finally, based on the maxim of manner, an utterance has to be as clear, as brief, and as orderly as it is possible, avoiding obscurity and ambiguity (Levinson 1992: 102).

Silence of implicature leads to an emotional connection with the reader, persuading him to read the rest, although silence of presupposition creates a possible economy of words, allowing the reader to broaden any hidden stories, and boosts the reader's cognitive knowledge about the characters in the story. Finally, a high rate of pragmatic silence in the text leads to a story focused stylistically on its own narrative method, setting the *reader* on edge, *as he or she must work interpretively to read meaningfully.* These silences of implicature and presupposition enhance the reader's pleasure, as he or she can recover the missing links in the chain of events through the narration.

To see how flouting the maxims lead to the silence of implicature, look at the following example:

(12) «... و در آن لحظه گذرا بود که ژ را باز دیدم، و هنوز مطمئن نیستم که حقیقتاً او را دیده باشم» ...

'…"And it was at that moment when I saw "J" again; and I'm not sure whether I had really seen him".... (Sadeghi 2001: 379)

Flouting the maxim of quality, here, could be interpretable in terms of signifying self-cancelling statements of "seeing J" and "not seeing him", a state of contradiction and erasure that suggests a missing link within a dream, which is not mentioned directly in the story, but could be understood from the story contextually, so it is the reason that narrator points out seeing but not seeing, which is possible simply in a dream, not reality.

To give another example, look at the following utterance:

(13) «...می‌گفت: بگو که دوستم داری. می‌گفتم حتماً باید گفت، مگر نمی‌بینی[∅]؟نمی‌دانم چرا تا آدم نگوید [∅] باورشان نمی‌شود [∅]، درست مثل همین پسرک لاغر که پایش شکسته بود.» ...

'…"Tell me I love you", she said. "I should say necessarily! Why don't you see[∅]?", I said. I don't know why they won't believe [∅]unless you tell them[∅]! Just like this slender slip of a lad who'd broken his leg."…'
(Golshiri 2001: 257)

Flouting the maxim of relation makes possible the silence of implicature to be produced in this story, "My Little Prayer Room". There is a missing part between two sentences: "*Tell me I love you*" and "*just like this slander slip of a lad…*". The silent part shows that a relationship comes to an end by unveiling the narrator's reality, having a little cicatrix, something that the narrator tries to hide. It is true that no one is complete, but the incompleteness will not come into sight until a person reveals it. The sentences in this part of the narrative look irrelevant according to the maxim of relation, although they are related by recovering the missing parts through inference or filling the silence. The point is the girl who is in love with the narrator noticed his little cicatrix, then she decides to break up with him. The sense of love, here, is under question. Can people love others because of what they are?

To see another case of this type of silence, look at the following extract from "Gone, For Theft", written by Ebrahim Golestan:

(14) او با تضرع گفت: «آخه خانم جون نردبون که دود نشده بره آسمون.»

'…"But, madam! The ladder's not gone into air as smoke!" she implored.'
(Golestan 1948: 14).

This part of the story seems to focus on the absence of the ladder, a key component in the narrative due to his role in the thieves' climbing to the gable, but in fact the ladder reference signifies the lack of being satisfied with one's life, which feels like an untold story. Since the image of the ladder is connected to the people who climb it to repair the gable, one can infer that the ladder's absence signifies the unacceptable presence of people who hide it in order to

come back at midnight for theft. The absence of the ladder, which refers to the presence of thieves, becomes associated with the mistress's memory about one night when the lord of the house had raped her, the memories now carried from her youth to her daydreaming about strange men who are in love with the neighbor's mistress. The link between the ladder and sexual intercourse is constructed by the silence of implicature, so this silence could facilitate and develop the knowledge of the reader about the characters of the story.

Removing every kind of silence could be considered a kind of resolution (denouement) that clears up the ambiguity. Resolution of silence does not occur necessarily at the end of the story; it could occur in different part of the narrative and it depends a lot on writing style. It is worthwhile knowing that there could be at least a basic silence in the story as the basic climax through which the clearing up of the ambiguity leads to the story's denouement.

4. Conclusion

First of all, in this paper I have analyzed the reality of written silence as a signifying absence, as well as its functions, which leave a number of traces in the signifying empty places within a text. However, the traces of silent texts lead to recovering the untold stories in the text, as well as creating the narrative coherence of the text due to the presence/absence of the told/untold utterances. A text expresses part of its message by using words and partly by making use of silence. To recover the absent information which completes the text, one needs an analytical framework, which I offer as the often neglected, under-represented theory of silence. This study views written representations of silence as that which cannot be mentioned or is not said intentionally – what is in effect absent in a text for some reason. The project of articulating the significance of textual silences leads to a number of different styles of story writing through the differing deployments of silence. In fact, the traces of silence as a marker are introduced in various types of literature to create the possibility of different interpretation of fiction, such as structural, semantic and pragmatic silence. Consequently, these types, as discussed previously, enable a compelling, delving study of the structure of narrative and of silence's creation of the elements of a story. Structural silence is divided into ellipsis and cataphora. Semantic silence consists of metaphor and metonymy. Pragmatic silence consists of presupposition and implication. Each of these has its specific function in fiction.

Based on this theory of meaningful, constitutive, and often troubling silences, the reader is seeking to fill the empty places in the fictional text to understand the story completely. There will be, therefore, an active connection between the reader and the text. An appropriate device for filling the blank would be possible through the different types of silence and its functions. The purpose of studying silence is to examine how the narrative structure is based on untold or omitted parts in different ways, as each kind of absence has its special function in the story. Generally, a sustained theory of silence not only proposes a universal pattern for studying fiction, but also suggests a comprehensive analytic tool to study the structuring of narrative that in turn allows scholars to differentiate the different styles of fiction writing.

Acknowledgement

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