

## Silence and the scope of concepts in the novel “Fig Tree of Temples”

Silencio y el alcance de los conceptos en la novela “Fig Tree of Temples”

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### ABSTRACT

One of the most important human activities is communication which enables him to express emotions and his needs. This communication can be non-verbal, movement, and verbal. According to the findings of the behavioral sciences scientists, only 30 to 40% of our communication is verbal, and about 60 to 70% of it is non-verbal which happens by expression of head, hands, eyes, eyebrows, etc. Since the verbal language is under the control of the conscious part of the human brain, words can be expressed consciously which are not in agreement with our intentions and emotions. As a result, the real intention is hidden or expressed in another way. However, the body language is controlled by the unconscious part of the human brain and it can't be controlled very much. Therefore, it reflects real and inner emotions. The non-verbal behaviors have been mentioned and studied in most sciences including psychology, linguistics, communication, etc. These behaviors can be studied in literature because it indirectly shows the meaning. The silence was studied in this article among various non-verbal behaviors. The silence that apparently is not speaking can contain various concepts. Findings of this research show that silence has two types. The first type is indiscriminate and unintentional. The second type is purposeful and to show the intention. This type of purposeful silence can contain various concepts in different conditions such as sadness, anger, ignorance, satisfaction, contemplation, etc.

**Keywords:** meta-verbal behavior, body language, silence

### RESUMEN

Una de las actividades humanas más importantes es la comunicación que le permite expresar emociones y sus necesidades. Esta comunicación puede ser no verbal, de movimiento y verbal. De acuerdo con los hallazgos de los científicos de las ciencias del comportamiento, solo del 30 al 40% de nuestra comunicación es verbal, y aproximadamente del 60 al 70% es no verbal, lo que ocurre por la expresión de la cabeza, manos, ojos, cejas, etc. El lenguaje verbal está bajo el control de la parte consciente del cerebro humano, las palabras se pueden expresar conscientemente y no están de acuerdo con nuestras intenciones y emociones. Como resultado, la intención real se oculta o se expresa de otra manera. Sin embargo, el lenguaje corporal está controlado por la parte inconsciente del cerebro humano y no se puede controlar mucho. Por lo tanto, refleja emociones reales e internas. Los comportamientos no verbales se han mencionado y estudiado en la mayoría de las ciencias, incluida la psicología, la lingüística, la comunicación, etc. Estos comportamientos se pueden estudiar en la literatura porque indirectamente muestra el significado. El silencio se estudió en este artículo entre varios comportamientos no verbales. El silencio que aparentemente no está hablando puede contener varios conceptos. Los resultados de esta investigación muestran que el silencio tiene dos tipos. El primer tipo es indiscriminado y no intencional. El segundo tipo tiene un propósito y para mostrar la intención. Este tipo de silencio intencional puede contener varios conceptos en diferentes condiciones, tales como tristeza, ira, ignorancia, satisfacción, contemplación, etc.

**Palabras clave:** comportamiento metaverbal, lenguaje corporal, silencio.

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## RESUMO

Uma das atividades humanas mais importantes é a comunicação que lhe permite expressar emoções e suas necessidades. Essa comunicação pode ser não verbal, movimento e verbal. De acordo com as descobertas dos cientistas das ciências comportamentais, apenas 30 a 40% de nossa comunicação é verbal, e cerca de 60 a 70% é não-verbal, o que ocorre pela expressão da cabeça, mãos, olhos, sobrancelhas, etc. Como a linguagem verbal está sob o controle da parte consciente do cérebro humano, as palavras podem ser expressas conscientemente e não estão de acordo com nossas intenções e emoções. Como resultado, a intenção real é oculta ou expressa de outra maneira. No entanto, a linguagem corporal é controlada pela parte inconsciente do cérebro humano e não pode ser controlada muito. Portanto, reflete emoções reais e internas. Os comportamentos não verbais foram mencionados e estudados na maioria das ciências, incluindo psicologia, linguística, comunicação, etc. Esses comportamentos podem ser estudados na literatura porque indiretamente mostra o significado. O silêncio foi estudado neste artigo entre vários comportamentos não verbais. O silêncio que aparentemente não está falando pode conter vários conceitos. Os resultados desta pesquisa mostram que o silêncio tem dois tipos. O primeiro tipo é indiscriminado e não intencional. O segundo tipo é proposital e mostra a intenção. Esse tipo de silêncio proposital pode conter vários conceitos em diferentes condições, como tristeza, raiva, ignorância, satisfação, contemplação etc.

**Palavras-chave:** comportamento meta-verbal, linguagem corporal, silêncio

### 1. Introduction

Nonverbal communication is the most important part of interpersonal communication. One of pioneers of nonverbal studies "Birdwhistell" has noted that only 35% of the meaning in a particular situation is transmitted verbally to the other and the remaining 65% is nonverbal. Nonverbal communication is often much subtler and more effective than verbal communication, and can convey meaning better than words. For example, a smile may convey our emotions much more easily than words (Wood, 2005, p. 284). Nonverbal messages include things such as appearance and charms, gestures, movements, facial expressions, eye movements, phonetic behavior, touch, environment, time, and so on. In fact, music of communication is referred to as nonverbal behavior. For this reason, sometimes without saying anything, we experience feeling of relaxation, danger, sadness, and enthusiasm (Karimi, 2012: 21).

Among nonverbal behaviors, silence is one of the most important nonverbal behaviors that has a significant effect on message transmission. At first glance, silence means disconnection between individuals. While we cannot regard silence against speech or writing as "nothing" or disconnection (silence is to not say something that has a particular meaning itself) (Tannen, 1985: 94). Afrat (2008) believes that silence is a very effective communication tool that people use in their daily lives.

Leila Sadeghi states in her article "Referential discourse of silence by linguistics approach":

"If saying indirectly means saying something and perceiving something else, then silence is extremity of saying indirectly. (Tannen, 1985, p. 94) In fact, silence can be considered as making meaning by saying nothing."

Each person has a special purpose in saying the words. Sometimes he expresses this purpose explicitly in his sentences, and sometimes he means something else from what he says. Silence is also in this way. If one has no intention of silence, this silence is without any purpose and unintentional. But if he wants to convey a concept with his concepts, he has done a very deliberate act, and this is the second type of silence that can be explored and understood more.

This article attempts to examine the different types of silence in Ahmad Mahmood's book "The Fig Tree of the Temples" to help understand this valuable book.

### 2. Types of silence

As mentioned in the introduction, the second type of silence is purely purposeful. So silence conveys different meanings in different situations. Sometimes one expresses their sadness and sometimes their satisfaction by not speaking. Sometimes one is silent because they have nothing to say and sometimes they are overwhelmed with thought. In the article, Leila Sadeghi expresses silence from various points of view, some of which have a concept similar to what I have stated in my own article.

I have tried to give a definition for each type of silence and to give a few examples for each from Ahmad Mahmood's book "The Fig Tree of the Temples".

Leila Sadeghi in the article “Referential discourse of silence by linguistics approach” writes a silence from the point of view of Thomas Hawkin (2002), called Manipulative Silence, in this type of silence the speaker deliberately deletes part of their speech and keeps silent, which is referred to as deliberate silence in my article.

### **Deliberate silence**

Famararz had listened for a moment and then had drunk water from the pitcher and had heard the sound of Afsane’s fingertips knocking on the room’s door, saying nothing until hearing Afsane’s voice: “Famararz.” And again he had said nothing and heard again, “Are you awake Famararz?” And finally he had released the held breath and said, “Go, mother, please don’t disturb me!” (p. 154).

### **Silence as a sign of surprise**

Sometimes the listener is so surprised by what they are hearing that they are unable to answer and keep silent.

Zari looks around. She pulls to the doctor’s side and says quietly

- It’s about one of friends

The doctor glances at Zari hesitantly: “Friends?” Zari says:

- Yes doctor, friends

- If I’m not mistaken, I have to say I realized who this friend is.

- Zari’s mouth can’t move. Looks at doctor. Says nothing. Doctor retracts, leans back in his chair and says quietly

- Mrs. Golandam.

Zari gets puzzled: “How did you find out, Doctor?” Says Zari

- I heard something these two recent days, which was very easy to guess (p. 658).

### **Silence as a sign of sadness**

Sometimes in communications the speaker says something that makes the audience very upset, but instead of responding to the speaker, the audience keeps silent and transmits their feelings to the speaker with this behavior.

Kamran says:

- First you need to do something about your addiction

- Famararz interrupts him: “do you really think that” Kamran says

- I don’t want to believe but

- I must do drug retailing too, right?

- My word or belief has no effect – Rumor fags out the human

Famararz says nothing, looks at Kamran’s eyes for some seconds and then puts his hand up: “okay” and stands up (p. 68).

### **Silence as a sign of there is nothing to say**

In some communications, the speaker says something that the listener has no answer for it for some reason and prefers to be silent so the speaker understands the content of what they have said by themselves. Tajolmoluk gets the glass close to her lips, smirks and says

- The whole world is the fan of left! You’re so naïve Famararz.

Famararz picks up the glass full of tea and stands up: “I see you are wisecracking aunt!” Tajolmoluk says nothing. Famararz stays in the middle of the door frame and turns around his head and says

- I'm so broke aunt Taji.

Tajolmoluk says

- As long as a person does not stand on his own feet and does not say Ya Ali, he would be always broke even if he has mine of wealth, because he always takes from it and puts nothing instead!

- It's not my fault that I'm unemployed, aunt Taji!

- It is and it is not – You have to go for it, Faramarz darling.

Faramarz keeps silent (p. 238).

### **Silence as a sign of fear and worry**

Sometimes the speaker wants to say a word, but the fear of the listener's reaction forces him to remain silent, and this fear is clearly evident in the appearance of the speaker.

And Farzane had said again: "Aunt Taji, I want to tell you something." And had held Tajolmoluk's hand and both had gone to the room and shut the door and Farzane, as if she were afraid to speak, had remained silent and was choked with her tears and aunt had been looking at her for a while and finally started to talk: "Didn't you say you have something to tell me?" Farzane had nodded and said nothing. Again aunt had said: "Why are you not speaking then?" Farzane's color had changed and still remained silent looking down (p. 273).

### **Silence as a sign of being careful**

Leila Sadeghi in her article "Referential discourse of silence by linguistics approach" expresses this silence from viewpoint of Thomas Hawkin (2002) in this way:

"The author avoids from saying sensitive topics or sensitive information in order to avoid hurting the reader or violating someone else's private domain. This category includes matters such as confidentiality, being polite, and privacy of words (tableau)."

#### **Examples:**

The police officer's big nose wrinkles "My job? Who am I?" Doctor smirks and says nothing. The police officer says

- You didn't answer, doctor – Who am I? (p. 601).

### **Silence is a sign of respect**

Sometimes in our communications in order to avoid a problem between us or in order not to make the audience upset we are forced to be considerate about them and remain silent the situation instead of responding to them.

And puts the pullover in front of Hassanjan "I bought it in prison for you". Hassanjan looks at the pullover's cuffs while smiling. Hears: "these pants also fit you! However, they are a little long for you that I'm going to have them cut short!" looks at Hassnjan: "they're absolutely new!" Hassanjan says nothing. He knows Faramarz's moods. His cheeks are pale. Faramarz gets his cigarette from his lips: "what?" Hassanjan says

- nothing

Faramarz says

- you don't want it?

Hassanjan starts to scrape the saucer back, says nothing.

Faramarz says

- okay!

And he puts the pants and pullover in the bundle and wraps it up quickly and stands up (p. 59).

**Silence as a sign of not caring**

Sometimes we find ourselves in situations where someone is saying a lot about us, but we don't care at all and we don't see a reason to respond. As a result, we remain silent so that the speaker can understand his behavior.

He breathes loudly and goes sit beside the black-a-vised young man and puts the bag beside his foot. The young man says:

- I'm "Farzin"! You?

Faramarz takes a look at him. Says nothing. The young man says while laughing

- Is there actually anything in the bag or you just have it in order not to be left empty-handed? (p. 128).

**Silence as a sign of listening or waiting for someone to speak**

This kind of silence is more common. The listener is silent until the speaker finishes his speech or does his work so that he can then speak. Mehran gave the glass slowly to Afsane and said: "drink, it's not a bad thing, it will release you from sadness and grief!" Afsane yielded. When she was taking the glass to her lips, her hand was shaking- she drank, warmed up a little later. Started to talk. Mehran remained silent. Looked at Afsane and listened to her (p. 87).

**Silence as a sign of anger**

Sometimes the listener is so nervous and annoyed by the speech or behavior of the speaker that he prefers not to speak. But he shows his anger in his face and his movements.

Afsane suddenly gets angry, smites the package to the ground and says: "do whatever you want" and walks away: "tell whoever you want". Faramarz is shocked. Says: "Mom!" Afsane says nothing. Faramarz says loudly: "Mom Afsane." Afsane reaches the veranda, sees that aunt Taji has pulled the window's curtain aside and is watching (p. 685).

**Silence as a sign of consent**

We have an idiom from the past that "silence is a sign of satisfaction" but silence as the sign of satisfaction is one of the meanings of silence. And that means the listener agrees with the acts or words of the speaker.

The young man comes close and looks at the carpet from the cover's tear and touches it and says

- Is it silk?

- The green-eyed man nods. The young man says

- Can I see it? If you take it out, you can sew better.

The green-eyed man says nothing, opens the strap and the cover, gives the silk rug to the young man and starts to sew the black and white plaid which is the rug's cover (p. 687).

**Silence as a sign of getting tired of talking**

Sometimes the speaker talks about something so much that gets tired and silent.

...The fig tree of temples is a fruitless tree but with the narratives from the first standard-bearer that have been accepted by minds and hearts of people and get more and more everyday it's not a tree like all other trees anymore! Now it has turned to a sign of people's power and belief! So you have to have respect for both the standard-bearer and the tree! As if he got tired of talking. He moved on the chair and got silent and looked at me (p. 90).

**Silence as a sign of thinking**

According to Brown and Gilmour, "Anyone may choose to think, worship, or do any activity that requires silence. An activity that does not interfere with distractions or preventing other people from engaging in such activity." (Corzon, 2007- B: 292).

**Examples:**

Says: "Where did these pigs come from? God pardon me". Says: "but it's not all my fault – it was not ordained, these "pigs" wouldn't come to my mind like this clear and obvious – Do you even remember when, where or from who you heard about this illness? - there is no god except Allah!" Puts on her glasses: "As long as God doesn't want, no leaf will fall off a tree!" gets silent, after some seconds says: "these are all just excuses Taji – Yes, without God's order nothing happens! But the same God has given you reason..." (p. 717).

### **Silence as a sign of secrecy**

Sometimes we find ourselves in situations where we don't want others to know about our situation. As a result, we remain silent to hide our secrets.

They hear the noise of room's door. Hassanjan takes a look at Faramarz: "who is that" Faramarz stands up: "No one. It must be Fereydoon he came to take the dinner tray."

He picks up the tray and goes behind the door says nothing for seconds. Then the door is knocked on. Faramarz goes back to the middle door and says quietly

- Collect all of them and put in the suitcase.

- As Hassanjan has not completely pulled fastening he starts to collect the stuff: "Who is it Faramarz?" Faramarz puts his finger on his lip: "Do not say anything- shut the middle door" (p. 523).

### **Compulsive silence**

Sometimes the situation requires silence even though we have something to say. This compulsive silence is either for fear or for security or other reasons.

The officer gives the knitting pin and the pen sheath to Fazel the salt seller: "Tell!" Fazel becomes pale: "what should I tell, officer?"

Officer says

- Whatever you saw and know

Fazel takes a look at Tajolmoluk and puts his head down: "well, he came to Golshahr, opened an office, he said he was educated-"

Tajolmoluk interrupts Fazel: "an office?" Fazel says

- Yes ma'am. God knows that his doctoring was good, he had a good temper and he was a good person, he helped people – officer says

- Enough!

Fazel becomes silent. Tajolmoluk smiles (p. 710)

Sometimes, the listener remembers a memory or a word among the speaker's words and contemplates and becomes silence.

Faramarz's lips move: "What a dastard!" Mohammad shaves Faramarz's beard and says

- Who, lord? Who is a dastard?

Faramarz says

- Yarvali!

- So you accepted my words

- Do you remember that day he drank two cups of tea and –

It wasn't much important, lord. When we came back to the shop I was so hit that my whole body hurt for a week!

Faramarz says nothing. As if he is thinking about someone, something or somewhere (p. 76).

### **Silence as a sign of doubt**

Sometimes the speaker is in a position to speak, but he is hesitant if what he wants to say is right in this situation. As a result, he remains silent so he can make the right decision.

The principal opens a way through the crowd and comes to the green-eyed man, the deputy head and five teachers- out of fourteen teachers of the school- are behind him. The principal first looks at the old man who has teary eyes then turns around looks at those who are separated from the crowd and have come close and made a ring around the green-eyed man and the old man. He is silent for a moment. As if he is hesitant to talk. As if he is scared that nobody is going to listen to him if he says they go back to class (p. 898).

### **Silence as a sign of dying**

And the worst silence is the silence that one cannot speak at all.

Mostafa rolls the ball beside his feet and comes. The standard-bearer goes to Tajolmoluk. Calls her, as if Tajolmoluk looks at him and says nothing- says nothing. The standard-bearer says

- Mrs. Tajolmoluk, do you have pain anywhere in your body?

Mostafa shoots the ball with his right foot, which still limps because of paralysis, comes and bumps into Tajolmoluk's stick, the stick's legs goes away and Tajolmoluk with open eyes slithers next to the cement vault of the altar (p. 864).

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this research show that silence has two types. The first type is unintentional and without any purpose. The second type is purposeful and is to express a purpose. This type of silence, which is purposeful, can have different meanings in various situations, including sadness, anger, not caring, consent, thinking, and so on.

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