

**Nataliya Shumarova**

Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv

## CONCEPT OF SILENCE IN MODERN SPEECH PRACTICES

Development of communicative linguistics has greatly deepened interest of linguists in the role of linguistic and extra-linguistic means in interpersonal communication. Silence became an object of linguistic/linguistic and cultural analysis in the second half – at the end of the twentieth century. First works devoted to the study of semiotic-communicative phenomenon in Soviet science were researches published by G. G. Pocheptsov and V. Bogdanov in 1986. Today there is a great number of works which on different grounds and at different angle consider communicative power of the phenomenon in question, outline its pragmatic possibilities as well as describe its linguistic and cultural potential.

Scholars consider silence in philosophical [Heidegger 1927, Bakhtin 1986, Bogdanov 1997, Mamardashvili 1999], semiotic [Pocheptsov 1986, Kreidlin 2005], psychological or linguistic aspects. Linguists define the meaning of silence, outline the circle of tokens that convey the meaning of silence (silence, quietness, stillness/ *movchannya*, *tysha*, *bez-hominnya*), point out the difference in their semantic potential [Babenko 2003, Martynova 2016], contexts of their use [Arutyunova 1994], represent silence as a category [Kreidlin 2005, Anokhina 2008], describe as one of the core concepts of the culture of the Middle Ages and contemporary religious discourse (Karabykov), consider symbolism and semantics of silence, its communicative significance (Bogdanov 1986, Shestopalova 2014), as well as its role in texts of fiction [Pidubna 2013, Shestopalova 2014, Korwin-Piotrowska 2015, Kopylova 2016] and interpersonal communication of average speakers [Goncharuk 2017].

For the most part, phenomenon of silence is considered from the communicative-pragmatic point of view, which allows determining effectiveness of communication alongside causes and purpose of the process of silence in communicative activities of the addressee and the addresser, or conceptual point of view whilst looking for a hierarchy of meanings in

the conceptual field of “silence”. In contemporary Ukrainian and Russian linguistics silence is presented as a concept important for understanding the specifics of the national mentality, psychology and emotional world. “Concepts do not have nationality in the generalized sense, “nationality by passport.” But the concept has a “native spirit” captured by the traditional and favourite way of thinking” [Stepanov 2007: 63].

The proposed research presents results of the analysis of the concept of “silence” and its implementation in such stylistic registers as artistic and journalistic. The study was carried out on two types of materials. The first one led by Doctor of Philology Natalia Darchuk [[www.mova.info/corpus.aspx](http://www.mova.info/corpus.aspx)] comprises all word forms of the lexical token of silence recorded in the Ukrainian corpus set up by a group of researchers from computer linguistics laboratory of the department of Ukrainian language of the Institute of Philology of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. The second type comprises associations with the given word provided by 1-2-year students of the Institute of Journalism of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (105 people) and their responses with regard to situations of silence in interpersonal communication. Such material provided below in the form of phrases and sentences recorded in the Ukrainian corpus, alongside youth associations, in our opinion, will objectively characterize the linguistic picture of Ukrainian society, hence, allow presentation of the concept of silence by contemporary Ukrainian prose writers and publicists as well as aspiring journalists, active users of modern standards of linguistic practice.

Silence is an integral part of communication. It gets its meaning from “the context, situation, rules and regulations of social behavior” [Arutyunova 2000: 418]. As a communicative move it can be used both by the addressee and the addresser. In the first case it can be caused by many reasons, namely, psychological state, fear of expression, expressing consent or disagreement, reluctance to answer a question or offend the interlocutor, even ignoring the interlocutor, drawing attention to something else, comprehension of the received information, unwillingness to show their incompetence, etc. [about the contexts of the use of the phrase “to keep silent”<sup>1</sup> see: Arutyunova 1994, 2000; Fay 2015]. The addresser tries to be active, to achieve the linguistic response of the addressee, therefore can assess silence in different ways: as confirmation of his righteousness, as a hint that silence conceals something significant or threatening to him, for example, the end of a conversation etc. Such silence is called communicatively meaningful. Its kinds are described in the system of a dialogue. Communicatively insignificant (non-communicative) silence as a strategy manifests itself outside the dialogue and beyond the concrete communicative influence [Kreidlin 2005: 29]. Classifications of types and functions of silence are created on different grounds, namely, the reason for silence, types of

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<sup>1</sup> In Ukrainian it is one word “movchaty”.

information containing silence, semiotics, etc. For more details, see, for example, in [Krestinsky 2011].

The process of silence in various situations is fixed to a great extent in works of fiction. Sometimes it does not correlate with the communicative act, refers to the environment, thus revealing the content of the concept, its significance for the psychological and emotional life of man, its communication with nature and the world. Describing the state or actions of the characters, pauses in their conversation, surroundings, silence in a particular situation, which reflects emotions of the characters, the author characterizes and evaluates silence, defines it directly or through various kinds of metaphors to present it then to the reader. Text analysis shows that description of silence in all its diversity reveals typical models of presentation of this process by different authors, similarity of its meaning as well as reflection with certain lexical and syntactic means, and, therefore, allows speaking about representation of this phenomenon in language and ethnic picture of the world.

As a component of verbal and non-verbal communication silence has its psychological dimensions, which are reflected in numerous texts of fiction through the system of time-spatial, physical, psychological and axiological coordinates. Texts show that as a component of human communicative activity silence can be measured, and its functional capacity can be determined and evaluated in cultural-psychological parameters.

Dimensions of silence are displayed through time, spatial, volumetric, velocity and other characteristics.

Time characteristics are represented by compounds with precise time ratings (second, minute, hour) or lexemes to indicate the duration of the flow (long, longer, prolonged etc.), for example: after a few seconds of silence, a few seconds of silence; long silence, quite long silence, short silence, lingering silence, eternal silence/ *po kil'kokh sekundakh movchannya, kil'ka sekund movchannya; dovhe movchannya, dosyt' dovhe movchannya, korotke movchannya, zatyazhne movchannya, vichne movchannya*. Sometimes definitions come from spoken language (after short wave of silence, after long wave of silence/ *po nedovhiy khvyli movchannya, po dovhiy khvyli movchannya*), where the wave means “minute” and in the dictionary is marked “colloquial” [Ukrainian Dictionary 2012: 1236].

Out of 168 adjectives used with the word “silence” representing 350 collocations, 20.1% are definitions that convey temporal characteristics (long, not long, short, eternal silence etc. / *dovhe, nedovhe, korotke, vichne movchannya*), where long silence dominates and comes to 8.3% of all definitions or 41.2% of the temporal ones. If we add to the adjective temporal definitions of silence noun collocations such as a minute of silence, years of silence/ *khvylyna movchannya, roky movchannya*, etc., it can be argued that time limits is an extremely active method whilst presenting silence. This is also confirmed by the data obtained by Russian researchers during analysis of adjectives that are used with the word “silence” in

texts of Russian literature recorded in the Russian corpus [Grudeva, Trubkina 2014]. According to their findings, more than 250 adjectives are used with the word “silence”, the most frequent ones are deep, complete and long / *glubokoye, polnoye* and *dolgoye* [Grudeva, Trubkina 2014: 39], and among the thematic groups a group with time characteristics prevails quantitatively. According to the material from the Ukrainian corpus, silence is presented in two ways, namely, style of fiction and journalistic style, the emotional “set” of indicators of silence in them being quite similar. Journalistic texts also contain time characteristics of silence (for example, long silence, prolonged, quick silence<sup>2</sup>), but, firstly, the set of definitions is much narrower, and secondly, among numeral and noun collocations (twenty years of silence, seventy years of silence, “the day of silence” – a non-violent protest action), of course, dominates a minute of silence, which marks the ritual of honoring the killed or the dead. This is absolutely understandable since most of the materials are taken from the newspaper texts of recent years, which contain many stories on the events in the East of Ukraine and the hybrid war with its victims as well as grief of relatives and friends [Grudeva, Trubkina 2014: 42].

The space that can cover silence is represented through depth and length, alongside the name of an object filled with silence. In itself, it can be endless, deep / *bezkinetchnym, hlybokym*, or cover a certain volume and be spatially limited: the silence in this house, the room was silent, the silence set in the room, the house was filled with silence / *movchannya v ts'omu domi, v kimnati zapalo movchannya, v kimnati panuvalo movchannya, movchannya ohortalo dim*.

Silence may be presented as a homogeneous environment, without any foreign elements which are primarily indicated by noise: complete, continuous, absolute, impenetrable silence<sup>\*</sup>/ *povne, sutsil'ne, tsilkovyte, nepronyklyve movchannya*. The first three of them were recorded in journalistic texts too.

Presentation of silence often contains a metaphor based on various physical properties of objects, for example, weight (heavy silence/ *vazhke movchannya*) or nomination of materials perceived by speakers as heavy (iron, cast iron silence<sup>\*</sup>/ *chavunne, zalizne movchannya*), speed of onset (fast, instant silence<sup>\*</sup>/*shvydke, myttyeve movchannya*), action of the force of electromagnetic fields (intense silence/ *napruzhenne movchannya*).

In people's minds, their naive picture of the world silence is closely related to sound, more precisely to the absence of the latter. In essence, it is lack of speech activity, not speaking, although, as N. Arutyunova points out, analyzing semantic correlation of Russian phrases “to keep silent/*molchat*” and “not to speak/*ne govorit*”, their replacement with each other is highly questionable [see more Arutyunova 2000: 421]. Yet for average speakers silence opposes speaking, it answers the questions, that is, it has a meaning, “sounds” without sounds, in a kind of way

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<sup>2</sup> Marked with asterisk are examples from Ukrainian that do not have direct equivalents in English and that is why are translated word for word (literally).

raises, represents a meaning, therefore, it is obviously sometimes characterized by sound associates such as adjectives, indicating the presence/absence of sounds. For example, writers in their works often use collocations “deaf silence\*/ *hlukhe movchannya*”, “eloquent silence/ *krasnomovne movchannya*”, and “significant silence/ *promovyste movchannya*”. A deaf person is a person who does not hear, and therefore can not answer a question or a remark, that is, keeps silent; eloquent silence is the one that very clearly indicates something, can draw attention to something, highlight, emphasize a particular situation. Figurative meaning of this adjective is “convincing” [Ukrainian Dictionary 2012: 469].

Silence may become a barrier for communication, interfere with the natural course of conversation, cause negative emotions, generate awareness of the need to overcome the barrier on its own or with the help of someone or something: a wall of silence\*, a veil of silence\*, a dam of silence\*, a cocoon of silence\*, and a picket fence of silence\*/ *stina movchannya, zavisia movchannya, damba movchannya, kokon movchannya, chastokil movchannya*. For example, at last the veil of silence was broken\* / *Nareshti zavisu movchannya bulo porusheno* (L. Starytskaya-Cherniakhivska); And the dam of silence broke through\*/ *I dambu movchannya prorvalo* (M. Mathios).

A number of adjectives present social aspects of communication. First, this is the knowledge of etiquette, the rules of communication: diplomatic, polite, tactful silence/ *dyplomatychni, vvichlyve, taktovne movchannya*. Secondly, these are social characteristics: slave\*, solidarity\*, preventive silence\*/ *rabs'ke, solidarne, zapobihlyve movchannya*.

Intellectual characteristics provided by the recipient to the process of silence, are expressed by such adjectives as understandable, incomprehensible, meaningful, ambiguous/ *zrozumile, nezrozumile, osmyslene, bahatozmistovne*.

Describing silence in his writings, the author who applies the language and the language and cultural consciousness of his people reproduces the phenomenon in figurative forms, which the reader can easily perceive, understand and appreciate.

Silence is often filled with emotions, or it can cause emotions – either positive or negative, silence is so to say burdened with “emotional meaning”. Writers communicate it using tactile and visual characteristics. Tactile sensation is one of the most important sources of human perception of objective [Ananiev 1961: 155]. In household consciousness they include not only the very touch, the quality of the object surface acting on the receptors (roughness, smoothness, etc.) [Ananiev 1961: 263], but also other sensations, especially temperature.

Actual temperature characteristics are presented as figurative meanings of the adjective cold: “associated with the sensation of inner, emotional cold”, “one in which deep, warm feelings are not revealed to anyone” [Ukrainian Dictionary 2012: 1245]: cold silence/ *kholodne movchannya* or indirect nomination of temperature characteristics due to actualization of the semanteme ‘cold’: winter silence, ice

silence\*, snow silence\*/ zymove movchannya, l'odove movchannya, kryzhane, snihove movchannya.

Metaphorical characteristics through perception of objects' colour are based on visual impressions, which is the most important channel of perception of the environment. The Ukrainian corpus presents only two colors that communicate emotions of the author – white and black. They both relate to the basic colors of the Slavic culture [for more details see Yavorska 2001]. Black color in Ukrainian culture is mostly the color of grief, predicament, hard times (black hour\*, black days\*/chorna hodyna, chorni dni). It is also associated with death (black death\*/chorna smert'), something negative, directed at oneself or others (black thoughts/chorni dumky, black deeds\*/chorni spravy, black mouth /chorni rot\*), quarrel (between them a black cat ran\*/mizh nymy chorna kiska probihla), harassment (to keep in black body\*/ derzhaty v chornomu tili), with unholy power (black magic, black spell\*/ chorna mahiya, chorni zaklynannya). Such connotations allowed the writer to pick the color as a characteristic of the break in communication: “Kept silent by black silence instead of speaking\*/«Vymovchav chornym movchanniam zamist' hovorinnya» (M. Mathios).

At the same time black has positive connotations. It is worth mentioning collocation black oil/chorna nafta or, as they often say, using paraphrases, black gold / chorne zoloto to describe oil or coal, emphasizing the importance of these minerals for human life. A positive connotation has the expression black soil\*/chorna zemlia which stands for fertile soil. Black color “is most closely associated with the hidden energy of nature” [Serov: 169]. In embroidery, black color is the color of wisdom, experience, fertile land, perhaps sadness. In D.V. Pavlychko's poem “As I was small in the spring I was going to...”/«Yak ya malym zbyravsyia navesni», which was put on the music by O. Bilash, there are lines about two colors, which embroidered a shirt: “Red is love, and black is sorrow/ Chervone – to lyubov, a chorne – to zhurba”.

The white color in Ukrainian culture is a symbol of purity, virginity. In the definitions of the adjective *white* the first meaning of the color is given by assigning it to the coloring of objects – chalk, milk, and snow [Ukrainian Dictionary 2012: 59], which are neutral values devoid of expression. Positive connotations can be found in other meanings of the word: “which is of bright color”, “light-fair, blond”. In the texts the phrase white silence\*/ bile movchannya is synonymous with the expression “white stillness\*/ bile bez-hominnya”, which correlates with the Russian word combination “beloie bezmolviie” and refers to the winter nature, forests, mountains, steppes, cities and villages covered with white snow. Eg: Freezing weather was setting in, loud crunching of snow, ... white silence of the snowy deserts (Y. Yanovsky)/ Nazustrich ishly morozy, holosne rypannya snihu,... bile movchannya snihovykh pustel'; In the boundless white silence lay snowy farms (G. Tutiunnik)/ U bezmeznomu bilomu movchanni lezhaly prysypani snihom

khutory; I really loved this brutal snow beauty, this “white silence”, this purity of frozen existence (A. Sirenko)/ Ya duzhe lyubyv tsyu zhorstoku snizhnu krasu, tse «bile movchannya», tsyu chystotu zavmerloho buttya.

Emotions and feelings of the speaker or observer convey the following descriptions of silence: terrible, fierce, threatening, sinister, dark, difficult, stubborn, mournful, grave, harsh, sad, gloomy, despicable, timid, corrupt, oppressive, boring, strange, grateful, pleasant, friendly, gentle. And only the last three are actually positive. The Ukrainian corpus confirms the prevalence of neutral and negative connotations over positive ones.

In certain situations, a person is afraid of silence, he/she does not expect anything good from it, for example: Daria’s soul was full of ecstasy – the girl wanted to talk and cry, and laugh, but Nida was silent, and this silence embarrassed her (Starytsky) / Dusha Daryny bula spovnena ekstazom – divchyni khotilosya i hovyryty, i plakaty, i smiyatysya, ta Nayda movchav, i tse movchannya bentezhylo yiyi; And only at this moment I see how disturbed and worried I was by long silence of Claudia Petrovna / I til’ky v syu myt’ ya bachu, yak duzhe turbuvalo y nepokoyilo mene dovhe movchannya Klavdiyi Petrivny (V. Vinnichenko).

People often associate silence with quietness – silence has set in, quietness has set in / zapalo movchannya, zapala tysha. Semanteme ‘absence of sounds’ (in nature or human speech) brings together these two Ukrainian tokens, making them synonyms [Babenko 2003: 70] with a certain difference in meaning and associative characteristics. For example, figuratively one can say quietness in soul\*/ tysha v dushi, but we do not say silence in soul\*/ movchannya v dushi. The same tendency we can observe in Russian. Considering the difference between Russian words “quietness/tishina” and “silence/molchanii”, N. Arutyunova pointed out: “In Russian, absence of natural sounds and absence of human speech are communicated differently. At the same time, quietness is associated with calmness and silent sadness, and silence is associated with cold, alienation, anxiety” [Arutyunova 2000: 432]. Students’ associations also display negative attitude towards silence, which is sadness, loneliness, mourning, and misunderstanding.

In the structure of a communicative act, silence is a binding and multifunctional element of communication that expresses consent or disagreement, a reluctance for some reason to answer or continue the conversation (silence is a sign of consent, in response there was silence, in response – silence / movchannya ye oznaka zgyody, u vidpovid` bulo movchannya, u vidpovid` – movchannya) or a marker of a new topic, another style of communication. Among functions of silence, one can distinguish between unifying and unbinding (compare: they were surrounded by silence; between them there was a wall of silence\*) (jih ogornulo movchannya, mizh ny`my` postala stina movchannya), expression of comfort or discomfort (to get around the inconvenience of silence, comfort of silence) (shchob objyty` nezruchnist` movchannya, komfort movchannya), reaction to coercion or “implementation” of

self-coersion: forced silence, promise of silence (vy`mushene movchannya, obitny`cya movchannya).

It can be a burden (burden of silence/tyagar movchannya, chains of silence/very`gy` movchannya), represent danger (threatening, formidable/zagrozly`ve, grizne), for example: "For me, silence is war" ((Dlya mene movchannya – ce vijna). It is linked to a crime (silence is a crime/movchannya – zlochy`n), death (grave\*, dead silence/grobove, mertve movchannya). As we have already mentioned, negative and neutral characteristics of silence take place much more often than positive ones.

Subjects that keep silent are specific people, groups, crowds as well as natural objects like forests, fields, mountains, for example, the silence of old rocks, silence of the forest/movchannya stary`x skel`, movchannya lisu. In newspaper articles subjects of silence are people and institutions or organizations: silence of ex-presidents, deputies, administration, the Verkhovna Rada, the EU and the US/movchannya eks-prezy`dentiv, deputativ, administraciyi, Verxovnoyi Rady`, YeS i SShA, that is, it is institutionalized and burdened with sociopolitical subtext.

Silence is spiritual, effective; it "behaves" as a living object. The verbs which collocate with silence turn it into a living object, characterize it through a metaphor. Silence may hang, breathe, fill the house, fall, take over (heaven and earth), exhaust, disturb, etc. (vysity`, dykhaty`, ogortaty` dim, padaty`, ovolodivaty` (ne-bom i zemleyu), vtomlyuvaty`, ne davaty` spokoyu). And at the same time it is a process that often happens beyond the will of man: it lasts, continues (try` vaye, prodovzhuyet`sya).

At the same time, it can be an object that depends on the will and action of a person, it can be kept, broken, interrupted, cut, understood (zberigaty`, porushy`ty`, perery`vaty`, urvaty`, rozumity`)`.

Silence as a ritual is present in socio-cultural acts of many nations of the world. In Ukrainian and Russian traditions before leaving the house relatives sit on a chair and keep silent for a few seconds. It is believed that after that trip will be easy and successful. Poles, for example, do not have this tradition.

A minute of silence as an important ritual takes place when people gather together and would like to commemorate the killed or the dead. This is a tribute of great respect to those who left us.

Students' responses to the word *silence* contain only seven adjectives (long, dumb, loud, necessary, unfair, oppressive, painful / dovge, nime, guchne, neobkhdidne, nespravedly`ve, gnityuche, bolyuche), most of which are negatively connotated. The most common responses (75 people, i.e. three quarters of the respondents) are the nouns *quietness* ty`sha (48 people), *gold* zoloto (10 people), *peace* spokij (8 people), *loneliness*, *lips*, *teeth* samotnist`, guby`, zuby` (4 people), *voice*, *mouth*, *sadness* golos, rot, sum (3 people) and some others (1 person). Among responses from stylistically expressive viewpoint neutral words prevail (source, voice,



water, film, speaking, lecture, conversation, thoughts, lips, teeth, etc.) (dzherelo, golos, voda, fil'm, govorninnya, lekciya, rozmova, dumky', guby', zuby'). Negative emotions, as has already been pointed out, are hidden in the reactions of sadness, darkness, insult, etc. (sum, temnota, obraza), as well as in the above-mentioned adjectives. Positive characteristics are conveyed by the nouns silence, calmness, modesty, inspiration, comfort. In general, in students' responses prevail neutral characteristics of silence, while in the detailed answers to the question "What do you normally associate with silence?" prevail negative associations: sadness, grief, sorrow, mourning, apathy, negative emotions, indifference, break up, exhaustion, loneliness / z pechallyu, z gorem, zhalóboyu, traurom, z apatiyeyu, negaty'vny'my' emociyamy', bajduzhisty, z obry'vom, vy' snazhenisty, samotnisty. The palette of silence associations in students' responses pales in comparison to texts of fiction for example, which can be explained not only by the age of respondents or their cultural experience, but also by the task itself: they were to utter the first reaction to the word silence. Such reaction demonstrates close connection between concepts in the human mind, hence the axiological dominant perception of the concept.

Interpretation of lexemes selected from Ukrainian texts of fiction, which are used by writers to convey their ideas, and students' associations confirms language potential in reproducing semantic nuances, let alone functional role of these units, semantic demand, perception of the phenomenon of silence by the author and the recipient, as well as the speaker's aspirations to convey the whole range of emotions – from joy to fear. A person gives silence the same feelings and sensations he/she experiences. Analysis of the concept shows the context of culture in which the text is written, actualizes the most important words and connotations, and demonstrates cultural and psychological mood of society.

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## KONCEPT „MILCZENIE” WE WSPÓŁCZESNEJ PRAKTYCE JĘZYKOWEJ

### Streszczenie

W artykule został rozpatrzony koncept „milczenie”, jego wyobrażenia we współczesnym stylu artystycznym i dziennikarskim, a także w reakcjach asocjatywnych młodego pokolenia – studentów Instytutu Dziennikarstwa Narodowego Uniwersytetu imienia Tarasa Szewczenki w Kijowie, jako aktywnych użytkowników współczesnych norm komunikacji językowej. Podstawą analizy stylowej są materiały Elektronicznego Korpusu Tekstów Języka Ukraińskiego, stworzonego przez zespół badaczy wymienionego wyżej Uniwersytetu. Zanalizowano fizyczne, psychologiczne, aksjologiczne wymiary milczenia. Opisano osobliwości jego definicji w tekstach badanych rejestrów stylistycznych, wyodrębniono typowe metaforyczne modele rozszerzenia konceptualnego pola „milczenie”, a także przytoczono emocjonalne cechy charakterystyczne. Określono reakcje studentów i ich skojarzenia związane z wyznaczonym konceptem.

**Słowa kluczowe:** milczenie, komunikacja interpersonalna, metafora