Silence in English Cross-Cultural Interaction

Atyaf H. Ibrahim[1], Ramadhan M. Sadkhan[2] & Adil M. Khanfar[3]

[1] College of Education for Human Sciences, Univ. of Diyala, Iraq

[2] College of Arts, Univ. of Basrah, Iraq

[3] University College of Shattul-Arab, Basrah, Iraq

Correspondence: Atyaf H. Ibrahim, College of Education in Human Sciences, Univ. of Diyala, Iraq.

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Abstract

This paper aims to investigate the use of silence during interactions in the English language, cross-culturally, to determine if it is as effective as speech. It seeks to shed light on how British, American, Irish, and Canadian interlocutors use and interpret different types of silence and the functions it fulfills. The hypothesis posits that silence is universally employed by all interlocutors in all cultures and enhances the dynamics of interaction. The data consists of conversations from fifteen video-recorded English TV interviews, adopting Saville-Troike's (1985) and Nakane's (2007) models of analysis. The study concludes that silence serves the function of speech in transmitting and receiving messages, facilitating the aim of communication. Moreover, interlocutors from different cultures within the same language employ silence universally. Verbal and nonverbal communications, including silence, are inseparable, each playing a significant role. Their combined usage enhances the power of communication. Silence serves various functions beyond mere acceptance and refusal; it also encompasses face-saving and face-threatening strategies. Regarding cross-cultural differences in using silence in English, British interlocutors recorded the highest use of silence, followed by Americans, then the Irish, and lastly the Canadians. In addition, the use of silence varies depending on the context of the situation, the conversation's topic, the personalities of the interlocutors, their age, and their level of education.

Keywords: silence, cross-cultural interaction, English TV interviews

1. Introduction

Generally, people socialize, develop, and maintain their relationships with each other through conversation. This form of linguistic communication involves both verbal and nonverbal elements, such as speech, body language, eye contact, facial expressions, and silence. Silence, as a linguistic and socio-cultural nonverbal concept, is highly dependent on the context in which it is used, making it a pragmatic element of communication. Its interpretation is closely tied to the specific situation in which it occurs and the message the interlocutor intends to convey. Silence serves as both a face-saving and face-threatening strategy within the turn-taking system, which can be employed by either the speaker or the listener when deemed appropriate.

Hall (1959) provides a definition of silence as nonverbal human conduct that conveys the beliefs and activities of a particular group or culture. It is described as 'the absence of talk' but still serves specific communicative purposes (Sifianou, 1997). In contrast, Saville-Troike (1985) defines silence as a linguistic element that conveys meaning as speech does, despite being a nonverbal behavior. Silence plays a role in structuring conversations, and its significance is enriched by cultural norms (Archer et al., 2012). With this in mind, the current study aims to investigate the role of silence in cross-cultural interactions.

It is worth mentioning that Nakane (2007) uses the term "cross-cultural" to describe the process of comparing and contrasting groups from diverse cultural backgrounds. The aim is to highlight the differences in the significance of silence during interactions among these groups.

This study aims to present the effectiveness of using silence during interactions as strategies for face-saving or threatening. It also aims to explore how individuals from various cultures of the English language differ in their use of silence."

2. Literature Review

Silence has been studied by different researchers, each from their perspective, including Ephratt's (2008) *The Functions of Silence*. In her work, she examined the eloquent silence within each of the six functions of language found in Roman Jakobson's (1960) communicative model. In addition, Lemak's (2012) *Silence, Intercultural Conversation, and Miscommunication* explored perceptions of silence among Canadian native speakers of English, as well as Chinese, Korean, Russian, Colombian, and Iranian ESL speakers.

Communication, in general, involves the transmission and perception of information between humans and animals. It encompasses all modes of communication (Crystal, 2008), and human senses serve as channels for receiving and sending information. This information exchanged through the senses is collectively known as 'the meaning of communication.' Crystal classifies human communication into five

main modes, with each sense acting as a distinct channel. However, not all five senses play equal roles in communication. Olfactory (smell) and gustatory (taste) senses have minimal roles in communication, in contrast to the auditory (vocal mode), which is a central mode of communication. Speech, being the primary manifestation of language cross-culturally, plays a crucial role. Piaget (cited in Hawkes, 1977) asserts that verbal language is not the sole means of communication. Nonverbal language is also utilized by people to communicate. Linguists often focus on studying not only what is said but also how it is said, as signs of animation, such as gestures and facial expressions, can reveal enthusiasm or emphasis. Additionally, pitch, loudness of voice, strategic pauses, or even silence can convey mood and messages (Kottak, 2006). Kellerman (1992) emphasizes that nonverbal communication encompasses behaviors that do not involve language but rather involve facial expressions, postures, and gestures used to convey messages without words.

Tactile and visual modes serve as channels for nonverbal communication, which includes facial expressions, gestures, and touch behaviors, in contrast to verbal communication involving words and sentences. Commonly, people refer to nonverbal communication as "body language" (Crystal, 2008). Communication offers a wide range of gestures available to communicators. On the one hand, there are spontaneous, non-linguistic signs that accompany speech. On the other hand, there is proper linguistic and non-natural sign language, as described in Grice's sense. Between these two types, there are "emblems" that are "non-linguistic" and "non-natural" in Grice's sense (Wharton, 2009). Verbal communication is typically conducted through speaking or writing, whereas nonverbal communication encompasses visual, vocal, gustatory, tactile, olfactory, artifactual, and chronemic behaviors. Nonverbal communication is multimodal, with multiple cues being used simultaneously by interlocutors (e.g., a person may smile while using gestures and sitting in a slumped position). In contrast, verbal communication typically involves one utterance or word at a time. Nonverbal communication tends to attract more attention than verbal communication. In cases of conflict between nonverbal and verbal cues, people are more likely to believe the nonverbal cues. For instance, if a girl tells her friend that she is doing well, but her voice tone, facial expressions, and postures suggest otherwise, her friend is likely to have a different impression (Guerrero et al., 2008).

Saville-Troike (1996) asserts that in almost all communication events, the intended message is conveyed through either verbal or nonverbal means, or a combination of both. Kellerman (1992) suggests that nonverbal communication should be subject to the same criteria as verbal communication. Human nonverbal communication follows a grammatical organization similar to speech, and both are interconnected. Verbal communication relies on context, which, in turn, includes language. It means that any speaker can understand and produce an infinite number of utterances that have never been encountered before, while also devising new nonverbal behaviors without prior experience. Receivers, on the other hand, are capable of comprehending these new behaviors (Leach, 1972).

Verbal messages require a high level of conscientiousness, control, and intent during construction, although the degree may vary depending on the context and message modality. On the other hand, some nonverbal behaviors are beyond a person's control, such as automatic reflex-like actions like dilation of pupils in response to strong and sudden light or sweating when facing fear (Guerrero et al., 2008). McNeill (1992) describes several types of gestures within 'Kendon's expanded continuum,' which range from natural display and language proper and are categorized into four different continua: gesticulation, pantomime, emblems, and sign language. These gestures are distinguished based on various factors, such as how each gesture conveys a specific meaning depending on its complement to speech, the extent to which gestures possess linguistic properties, the degree of conventionalization of those properties, and the 'character of the semiosis' and 'global-synthetic' characteristics of gesticulation in conveying meaning, as well as the 'segmented-analytic' characteristics of linguistic encoding (Wharton, 2009).

3. Silence Inter-Culturally and Cross-Culturally

Culture is defined by the anthropologist Geertz (1973) as "the set of control mechanisms, plans, recipes, rules, instruments, and instructions for the governing of behavior." People acquire these cultural programs through interaction and gradually internalize a pre-established system that comprises symbols and meanings defining the world, expressing their feelings, and forming judgments about others. This cultural system guides behavior and shapes individuals' perception of the world throughout their lives. Enculturation is the process through which culture is learned and passed down from one generation to the next. Some aspects of culture are universal, while others are more widespread or unique to specific societies, differentiating them from others (Kottak, 2006). Cultural traditions can be learned by individuals irrespective of their genetic differences or physical appearance. Through the process of enculturation, each individual consciously or unconsciously interacts with others and internalizes their cultural traditions. In addition to direct learning, culture can also be transmitted through observation. Parents often advise their children to observe and modify their behavior based on what their culture deems right or wrong, leading to a growing awareness of cultural norms. Furthermore, culture can be acquired through conscious and unconscious modifications of behavior, gradual observation, and personal experiences. For instance, North Americans learn their culture's concept of appropriate interpersonal distance during interactions not by being directly told but through a long and gradual process of observation and learning from their cultural traditions (Kottak, 2006).

Communication may take the form of intercultural communication as classified by Scollon and Scollon (2001), and Otaey (2000) (cited in Nakane, 2007:3), as the communication that occurs in the interaction between interlocutors from distinct cultural backgrounds. The other form known as cross-cultural communication used when people who belong to various cultural backgrounds are measured up for one reason or another. In interaction, silence has regularly been thought of to be linked to intercultural communication, especially in Asian and Eastern cultures, while in Western cultures, it is related to articulation. Japanese people are known to be typical silent Asians (Nakane, 2007).

Nakane (2007) observed and analyzed the interaction between Japanese and Australian-speaking English in the college lecture hall. He made interviews with these students to record and investigate their perception of silence and to make sure of the existence of the perception of the Asian's silence and if this perception does reflect their actual performance.

Several studies have argued that people from specific cultures use silence in a way that is unique to their cultural norms, just like they use other linguistic features. This can sometimes lead to certain misconceptions. For instance, Saville-Troike (1985), building on studies conducted by Williams (1979 and 1978) on silence in Japanese and Igbo cultures, explains that silence in Japan signifies acceptance of a marriage proposal, while in Igbo culture, it reflects rejection. Moreover, the length of silence in cross-cultural interactions can create communication problems. Scollon and Scollon (1981) suggest that Anglo-American English speakers may dominate interactions with the Athabasca Indians because the latter use long switching pauses, leading the Anglo-Americans to label it as 'the machine stops'. However, the Athabasca Indians may view the Anglo-Americans as talkative and rude. Additionally, Danish people may not appreciate excessive talking from Americans, as they prefer silence to talking (Coulthard, 1979). Furthermore, Eades (2000) indicates that Aboriginal Australians prefer to use silence while interacting, and they do not consider it as disrupting the flow of communication. Corcoran (2000) explains that Western cultures may value silence and talk differently. In Aboriginal Australian culture, silence is used both in good and bad times and is seen as meditative and consensual. Finns are said to use long pauses in their speech more than Southern Europeans or Anglo-Americans. Lehtonen and Sajavara (1985, 1997) (cited in Nakane, 2007) found through their ethnographic observations that Finns attach positive values to the use of silence on most social occasions.

Silence can also vary inter-culturally within the same culture. Tannen (1985) explains that there can be various orientations to both silence and speech within American culture. For example, New Yorkers, who speak quickly, criticize Californians for being slow, uncooperative, and withholding in their conversational contributions. Conversely, Californians perceive New Yorkers as too fast-paced, not giving enough pauses, and dominating the conversation. In Japan, the extensive use of silence may lead to intercultural misunderstandings. During interactions, a long silent pause is likely to be perceived as dis-preferred seconds and interpreted as disagreement or rejection rather than as a communicative behavior. This may cause puzzlement to non-Japanese individuals. McCarthy (1986), as cited in Nakane (2007), provides an example of silence in Japanese-American business negotiations. When an American partner in a negotiation receives the response 'yes' from their Japanese counterpart, the 'yes' simply indicates that the Japanese are following the American's suggestion, without necessarily indicating agreement. Similarly, silence from the Japanese partner does not necessarily mean disagreement.

On the other hand, Coulthard (1979) suggests that during dinner gatherings, French children tend to remain silent as their parents encourage them to do so, while Russian children are encouraged by their parents to continue talking. Auracanian men and women differ in their use of silence. Men have the freedom to talk on all occasions, while women are heavily restricted and often remain silent, particularly if the woman is a new bride. In such cases, she may not have permission to talk for several months at the beginning of their marriage. Surprising differences in attitudes towards silence are observed among North-Western Europe societies. For instance, in Iceland, Eskimos are allowed to visit their neighbors only once a day for a limited hour, during which little talk is permitted, and most of the time, they remain silent (Coulthard, 1979).

Some contextual factors can influence the occurrence of silence in intercultural communication, such as the communicator's second language anxiety. This psychological factor affects the silence of Finnish students, as illustrated by Lehtonen et al. (1985). Their study demonstrated that low self-esteem, low personal competence, anticipation of negative communication outcomes, and inability to identify suitable social behavior contribute to communication apprehension in their second language (L2). Communicators using L2 may avoid interaction due to their lack of proficiency in the language. Furthermore, Lehtonen et al. (1985) add that in America, verbal communication is considered one of the most significant indicators of success and a positive self-image.

Moore (2000) suggests that silence occurs because certain communicators in specific cultures are bound by socio-cultural norms, guiding them on what topics to avoid discussing and what is considered unrelated. For instance, in Aboriginal communities in Australia, women are not allowed to talk about men's topics, which are known as 'secret women's business'.

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Guo (2020) studied the Chinese culture regarding the relationship between silence and team-member exchange. The study found an important negative correlation between team-member exchange and silence behavior, while workplace loneliness and silence behavior showed a positive relationship, as did psychological capital and silence behavior. Verouden et al. (2018) also confirmed the silence of Chinese interlocutors. The researchers faced difficulty in obtaining information from them during their experiments. Chinese respondents tended to provide brief answers and use silence frequently, in contrast to the Dutch participants who spoke more frequently and explained their answers comprehensively in response to the researchers' questions.

4. Forms of Silence

Silence occurs in conversation when no party self-selects (i.e., one does not start their part or take their turn), or when the next participant refuses to take their turn, resulting in a disruption of the continuity of talk. Silence is divided into three types: lapse, pause, and gap. These types are assessed based on their position within the turn and its exchange (Sacks et al, 1974). Silence manifests in various forms at different levels. At the macro level, it might involve a complete withdrawal of speech from the interaction. For instance, in ritual or

religious events, unanimous silence among interlocutors may occur, especially in American Indian or African tribal communities. Additionally, individuals might remain silent while others are speaking, as observed by Jaworski and Schdev (1998) in the classroom or by Eades (2000, cited in Nakane, 2007) in the courtroom. Another form of silence is temporary silence, where individuals participating in an interaction stay silent for a period while others continue the conversation (Eades, 2000, cited in Nakane, 2007). In interactions, silence may take the form of small units called 'switching pauses' and 'in-turn pauses.' Walker (1985) defines switching pauses as forms of silence that occur at the margins of speakers' turns, while in-turn pauses happen within a single turn.

From a conversational analytical perspective, Sacks et al. (1974) distinguish between different types of silence occurring in conversation. Silence that occurs during one turn is termed a 'pause,' while silence that takes place at the Transition Relevance Place (TRP), where a speaker change would be appropriate, is termed a 'gap.' At TRP, when there is a space of non-talk and no one holds the floor in communication, the silence is known as a 'lapse.' Goffman (1967) refers to a lapse as a 'lull,' which happens when the participants stop talking and have nothing to say or add. Tannen (1985) argues that the perception of how much silence is observed as a lull can differ and might lead to negative stereotyping. In some instances, silence can be more extensive than a gap and can be considered a silent response that performs an indirect speech act, as illustrated in the following example:

A: "So I was wondering if you would be in your office on Monday (.) By any chance?"

B: ---------- (2 seconds)

A: "Probably not." (Levinson, 1983)

The two seconds of silence after the question was interrupted by the first participant as a response. This silent response means 'no' and constitutes a rejection. It has an illocutionary force, functioning as a turn without using words. It differs from a switching pause or a gap that has no illocutionary force or propositional meaning for fulfilling a turn and conveying a message. The second speaker (B) may have the desire to respond, but he is taking some time, while the first speaker (A) may interpret the silence as intended to achieve the illocutionary act (Nakane, 2007)

The final type of silence is known as 'the hidden silence'. Bilmes (1994) denotes what is not said in any discourse, which is accompanied by an obvious power, as the hidden silence. He adds that this specific type does not have a definite form by itself, but could be recognized by the analyst him/herself. Hidden silence, in Jaworski's (2000) terms, is the absence of something that is expected to be heard on a certain occasion and assumed by others to be there but remains unsaid."

Nakane (2007) in her *Silence in Intercultural Communication*, deals with silence in intercultural environments, specifically that of Japanese and Australian students learning in an English-speaking setting.

Her analytical model for understanding silence encompasses different aspects in linguistic, socio-psychological, and cognitive fields at individual, situational, and sociocultural levels. She provides a cultural and linguistic clarification of how silence is observed and used by Japanese speakers. In her experiential study of intercultural communication, Nakane (2007) presents Eastern stereotypes of silence in contrast to those of the West. She defines silence as a verb, an action taken to prevent the other participant in an interaction from speaking. It could manifest as an inter-pause or intra-turn pause, general non-participation, or more precisely as the absence of partaking in communication, resulting in the non-existence of speech on specific topics and in certain communicating situations. Nakane (2007) further defines ‘intercultural communication’ as the "encounters between people from different cultural backgrounds."

Nakane's model for interpreting silence consists of multiple-layers, encompassing three basic branches: linguistics, socio, and cognitive. The linguistic aspect involves the rules of the turn-taking system and the time a participant consumes in taking their turn and holding the floor. The socio and psychological domains cover factors such as personality, anxiety, and politeness, which are related to face-threatening situations. On the other hand, the cognitive domain deals with knowledge schema and communication-related matters. Nakane's focus lies in perceiving silence among participants in terms of power, social distance, and face-threatening acts, which serve as parameters distinguishing different perceptions. Silence, in this context, serves as a 'super-strategy' employed to avoid face-threatening acts when individuals find themselves in challenging situations and wish to evade confrontation. Nakane makes a distinction between intentional and unintentional silence. Intentional silence is characterized by deliberately avoiding confrontation, while unintentional silence is represented by instances of 'extreme second language anxiety' (Nakane, 2007).

Nakane (2007) observes that some forms of silence are very important and noticeable, while others are unimportant and neglected in the sense that they may not attract the attention of the participants in everyday life communication. She presented the following list of the different forms of silence ranging from the micro to the macro units:

1. Intra-turn pauses: They occur within a single turn, they allow the speaker to keep on holding the floor.
2. Inter-turn pauses: They occur between turns at the TRP. They are also called switching pauses or gaps.
3. Turn silences including those having illocutionary forces.
4. Temporary silence of an individual when s/he does not hold the floor in the interaction.
5. Total withdrawal of an individual from speech in an interaction.
6. Group silence in social or religious events.

7. Discourse silence when overwhelmed by a controlling force at different levels of the organization.

5. Types and Functions of Silence

Saville-Troike (1985), in her book " *The Place of Silence in an Integrated Theory of Communication"* (1985), classified silence into twenty types and grouped them into: individually determined or negotiated, group-determined, institutionally determined and non-interactive. Later on, she excluded some of them and ended with only twelve types as follows:

1. **Wise or Virtuous Silence:** It reflects a refusal to judge severely or definitively.
2. **Modest Silence**: an individual keeps silent simply because he is modest rather than wise.
3. **Cunning Silence:** faced with danger or disfavor, people may lower their heads and shut their mouths as long as they can**.**
4. **Eloquent Silence:** In strong **e**motions like intense anxiety, deep gratitude, or heartfelt love that cannot be expressed by words, leads to silence.
5. **Dumbfounded or Dumbstruck Silence**: one becomes speechless when seeing great beauty, fear or wisdom.
6. **Culpable Silence**: in some situations, we may find ourselves morally obliged to speak because keeping silent may result in harm.
7. **Strong Silence**: sometimes it is a sign of sensitivity rather than feeling proud or threatening.
8. **Weak Silence:** When a person who is expected to talk, holds back his words.
9. **Ceremonial Silence:** It is used by religious men as well as by those who appreciate silence in our noisy and secular world.
10. **Satisfied Silence:** keeping silent at least for a short time when physically content and in good harmony with the world.
11. **Idle Silence**: People may appear to be silent for no reason, but it could be considered by some to be an abdication of responsibility.
12. **Dead Silence:** It occurs on occasions of mourning.

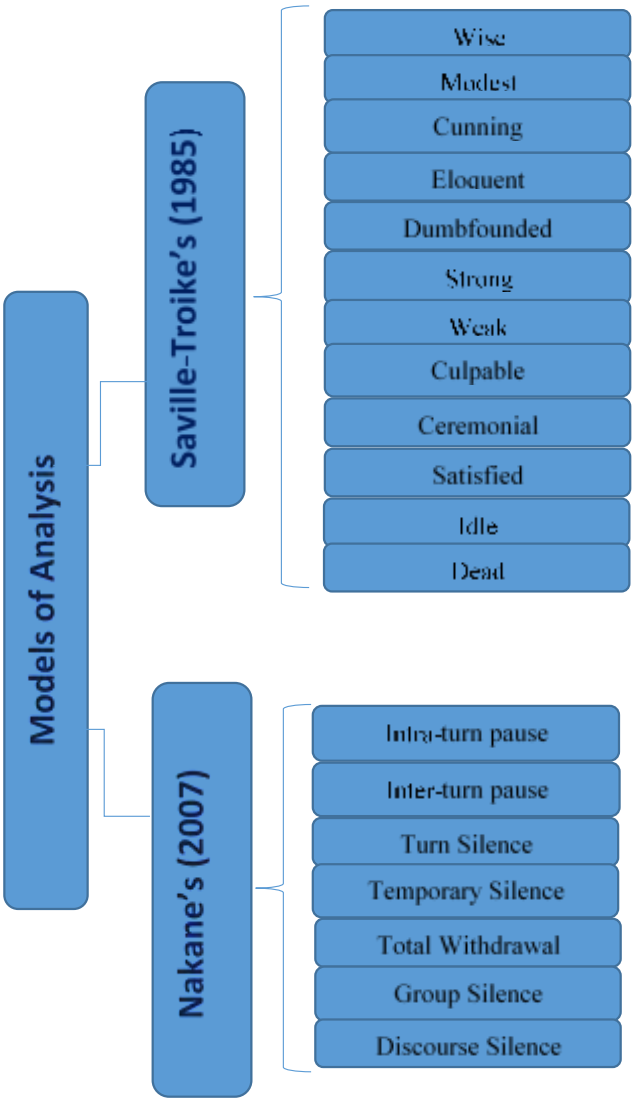
6. Methodology

Since silence cannot be interpreted without referring to the real context of the situation in which it occurs, the current paper depends on a pragmatic way of analyzing silence. It interprets the intentional meaning of the interlocutors behind using silence by investigating and analyzing silence as observed and practiced by the interlocutors of different English cultures including Americans, British , Irish and Canadians.

6.1 Data Collection and Models of Analysis

The present study takes an eclectic approach by combining two models to understand and analyze silence in intercultural communication. The first model is Nakane's (2007) classification of forms of silence in interaction, as outlined in her work *Silence in Intercultural Communication*. This model includes various types of silence such as intra-turn pauses, inter-turn pauses, temporary silence of an individual, total withdrawal of an individual, group silence, and discourse silence. The second model incorporated in the study is Saville-Troike's (1985) classification of types and functions of silence, presented in her work *The Place of Silence in an Integrated Theory of Communication*. This model categorizes silence into different types with specific functions: wise silence, modest silence, cunning silence, eloquent silence, dumbfounded silence, culpable silence, strong silence, weak silence, ceremonial silence, satisfied silence, idle silence, and dead silence.

The researchers added two more kinds of silence; the “initiative silence” at the opening of each interview. The interviewer uses it after welcoming the guest. Such licence allows the interviewee to get ready. The other type of silence is the “closure silence”, the interviewer uses it to declare the end of the interview. The following figure illustrates these two models:



The data for the present study consists of 15 English video-recorded conversations from TV interviews. These interviews were broadcasted on various programs, including *The Graham Norton Show*, *The Ellen Show*, *BBC News* on the BBC TV channel, and *CNN Politics* and *Piers Morgan Live* on the CNN TV channel. The interviews vary in duration, ranging from 3 to 30 minutes each, with a total combined duration of 131.25 minutes (or 7875 seconds). The interviews cover a wide range of topics, including political, social, and ethical issues, and were recorded between 2012 and 2020. The researchers made a deliberate choice to use recorded data to avoid any sound delays, which could lead to inaccuracies in measuring the duration of silence. To provide easy access to the analyzed interviews, the website links for each interview have been included within the tables.

The first step is measuring and analyzing silence in terms of type, form, and function. Every single interview is analysed according to the occurrence of silence starting from one second up to several minutes so that the form is identified correctly. The second step is identifying the types and functions of silence in the interaction. Repeated kinds of silence such as those following the interlocutor's questions are grouped to avoid redundancy. The occurrences of silence are arranged chronologically to help the reader to follow the interview easily. The interlocutors, males and females, in these interviews, represent American, British, Irish and Canadian cultures of the English language of different ages, jobs and social ranks.

6.2 Results and Findings

Based on the analysis of the collected data, the researchers have arrived at a significant finding: silence plays a crucial and impactful role in interactions that accompany verbal communication and can occupy a considerable amount of time during communication. Contrary to the notion that silence indicates passiveness, the results reveal that individuals who remain silent still have a strong influence on the interaction, comparable to active speakers. Silence, in this context, is found to be a powerful means of communication, allowing participants to deliver messages, express emotions, provide reactions, and respond to others non-verbally. The researchers have identified various types of silence, each bearing different meanings and serving distinct functions in the interaction.

Initiative silence plays a significant role in guiding the flow of communication and setting the stage for upcoming questions. In the example provided from interview 6.2.1, an inter-turn gap is observed at 00:01-08, when the interviewer makes a strategic pause after asking the interviewee, "How are you?" This particular type of silence can be characterized as cunning and eloquent. By employing this well-timed and deliberate silence, the interviewer skillfully designates the next interlocutor to respond, allowing them to ease into the interview's mood and mentally prepare for the upcoming questions.

Silence indeed holds a unique power and expressiveness in interactions. As a non-verbal communication tool, it allows communicators to convey messages effectively without uttering a single word. In the case of interview 6.2.2, silence is observed to have a significant impact on the interlocutors' perception and reactions, akin to the effect of speech. At 00:12 in the interview, a noteworthy moment occurs when the interviewer congratulates the interviewee for her success in the fashion industry. During this point, an inter-turn pause lasting for 2 seconds takes place. This silence is regarded as eloquent, as it carries the message of happiness and contentment.

Silence indeed serves as an effective strategy for both face-saving and face-threatening situations in communication. In certain instances, speakers may employ silence to navigate challenging matters or when they feel uncertain or ambiguous about a particular topic. In such cases, silence acts as a face-saving strategy, allowing the participant to avoid negative perceptions while managing the situation. In this interview 6.2.3, an example of this face-saving strategy is observed. At 00:07, the guest Stormzy experiences an intra-turn pause and fills it with hesitation sounds like 'eehh,' accompanied by a hand shake, indicating his uncertainty and instability. This eloquent silence reflects hesitation and is categorized as a dumbfounded silence since he is unable to articulate his thoughts verbally. By utilizing this silence as a face-saving strategy, Stormzy avoids expressing confusion or reluctance in a potentially challenging moment during the interview. Instead of struggling to find words or potentially saying something he might regret, he chooses to remain silent, preserving his face and reputation as a speaker.

Indeed, silence can also be employed as a face-threatening act, where speakers use it to challenge, corner, or embarrass others, pressuring them to respond to uncomfortable issues they may not want to address. In these situations, silence becomes a strategic tool to exert pressure on the interlocutor and create a face-threatening situation.

In the context of interview 6.2.8, an example of this face-threatening strategy is observed. At 02:27, the interviewer Norton initiates an intra-turn pause by making a total withdrawal from the conversation. This pause follows his act of making fun of Joshua's opponent. By remaining silent and creating a brief moment of tension, the interviewer seeks a reaction from both Joshua and the audience. This cunning silence puts Joshua in a challenging position, as he is expected to respond to the interviewer's taunt. Moreover, the loud laughter from the audience indicates that they are also eagerly awaiting Joshua's reaction, further amplifying the face-threatening nature of the situation.

Concerning the duration silence takes, apparently, people of a single culture have an agreement on a specific time of the acceptable silence between turns or within a single turn. Taking more than this duration means that there is a lack of communication, therefore lapses of turns occur. For instance, for someone to remember something or calls back an idea, a dumbfounded silence of 2-3 seconds is allowed, otherwise the individual seems to indicate that he surrenders because s/he is unable to go further in the interaction and this signals a withdrawal from the interaction. For example, in the interview 6.2.5, an intra-turn pause occurs at 00:09, when the interviewee prince Harry pauses for 2 seconds after receiving the interviewer's first question and filled with “a,a,a”. This silence is dumbfounded and wise, the interlocutor is taking some time to think of his answer clarifying the way he proposed to Markle. He avoids rushing in giving the answers.

Although each culture has its system and rules for using silence, it is obvious that silence is affected to a large extent by the individual’s gender, age, experience, personality, education and one’s style of communication and the norms of his culture. The influence of these variables is clear in the occurrence of silence. This is reflected in the interviews when old interlocutors pause for a rather long time compared to young ones especially when they start their turns. Taking this initiative pause paves the way for the upcoming speech and permits the speaker to get ready for the next questions, to have some tie to think properly, arrange his/her thoughts, not rush giving answers and comments, and avoid saying what may lead to regret.

The observation that inter-turn gaps are more frequent than intra-turn pauses in interactions suggests that English speakers tend to use silence as a means of signaling their desire to withdraw from the interaction after providing their answers. This usage leads to occurrences of total withdrawal silence being more common than temporary silence.

Inter-turn gaps, which are pauses that occur between turns in the conversation, can serve as signals that the speaker has finished their contribution and is ready to relinquish the floor to the other interlocutor. In this context, silence acts as a non-verbal cue, indicating that the speaker has completed their turn and is prepared to move on in the interaction.

Regarding the cross-cultural differences, the results show that there are certain differences in the use of silence, still they are individual differences affected by being an interviewer or interviewee, personal traits, his or her social position, and the nature of the subject of the interview. These differences do not necessarily represent that specific culture. However, British interlocutors recorded the highest in keeping silent, and then come the Americans, the Irish and the Canadians. Despite these results, there are certain differences among the individuals of the same culture.

The percentages of the occurrence of silence are illustrated in Table 1 and figure 1:

Table 1. Statistics of the Occurrence of Silence in English TV. Interviews

Number of interview	Duration/ Second	Interlocutor	Culture	Form of Silence	Type of Silence	Frequency	Duration of Silence / Second	Silence Duration	Percentage
6.2.1	201.6	Interviewer	Irish	Inter-turn	Dumbfounded	1	3	138	68.4%
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1t-OOyePuw				Inter-turn	Cunning & Satisfied	5	135		
		Interviewee	British	Intra-turn	Wise	1	2	59	29.2%
				Intra-turn	Cunning	2	3		
				Intra-turn	Modest	1	4		
				Intra-turn	Cunning & Dumbfounded	10	23		
				Inter-turn	Modest	1	8		
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded	2	5		
				Intra-turn	Eloquent & Satisfied	2	5		
				Inter-turn	Cunning	1	2		
				Intra-turn	Eloquent	2	4		
				Inter-turn	Eloquent	1	3		
6.2.2	444.6	Interviewer	American	Intra-turn	Eloquent	1	2	98	22%
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fKSLB84z58				Inter-turn	Eloquent	1	2		
				Inter-turn	Cunning	1	2		
				Intra-turn	Cunning	3	8		
				Intra-turn	Modest	2	11		
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded	3	9		
				Inter-turn	Wise & Strong	1	2		
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded & Culpable	1	3		
				Inter-turn	Cunning &Wise	5	59		
		Interviewee	British	Intra-turn	Modest	3	10	79	17.7%
				Inter-turn	Eloquent & Satisfied	1	3		
				Inter-turn	Cunning & Wise	1	6		
				Inter-turn	Culpable &Weak	1	2		
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded & Cunning	1	2		
				Intra-turn	Cunning	1	2		
				Inter-turn	Cunning	3	14		
				Intra-turn	Satisfied	1	7		
				Intra-turn	Eloquent	2	16		
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded	2	4		
				Group silence	Satisfied	1	15		
6.2.3	303	Interviewer	Irish	Inter-turn	Strong & Eloquent	1	7	256	84.4%
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEdVYeQMQrs				Inter-turn	Cunning & Wise	9	186		
				Intra-turn	Eloquent	1	2		
				Inter-turn	Cunning & Eloquent	3	61		
		Interviewee 1	British	Intra-turn	Cunning & Modest	1	3	33	10.8%
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded & Eloquent	1	6		
				Intra-turn	Eloquent	2	9		
				Inter-turn	Eloquent	1	7		
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded	1	3		
				Intra-turn	Cunning	1	3		
				Intra-turn	Culpable	1	2		
	82	Interviewee 2	American	Intra-turn	Strong & Cunning	1	6	13	15.8%

				Inter-turn	Cunning	1	7		
6.2.4	255	Interviewer	British	Inter-turn	Eloquent & Satisfied	1	3	160	62.7%
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ueNH6U84qI				Intra-turn	Wise	2	28		
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded	1	2		
				Inter-turn	Cunning	1	2		
				Inter-turn	Cunning & Wise	8	125		
		Interviewee	American	Intra-turn	Dumbfounded	2	4	29	11.3%
				Intra-turn	Modest & Culpable	1	15		
				Intra-turn	Eloquent	1	3		
				Intra-turn	Wise	1	3		
				Intra-turn	Satisfied	1	4		
6.2.5	1215	Interviewer	British	Inter-turn	Cunning	28	1031	1035	85.1%
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQicq60aJaw				Intra-turn	Cunning & Eloquent	1	2		
				Intra-turn	Wise	1	2		
		Interviewee 1	Welsh	Intra-turn	Eloquent	1	3	465	38%
				Intra-turn	Modest	6	19		
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded	2	6		
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded & Wise	1	2		
				Inter-turn	Strong & Modest	22	432		
				Intra-turn	Eloquent & Culpable	1	3		
		Interviewee 2	American	Intra-turn	Eloquent	3	7	444	36.5%
				Intra-turn	Modest	3	8		
				Inter-turn	Wise & Cunning	23	408		
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded	2	4		
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded & Wise	3	6		
				Intra-turn	Weak	1	4		
				Intra-turn	Satisfied & Eloquent	1	4		
				Intra-turn	Weak	1	3		
6.2.6	255.6	Interviewer	American	Inter-turn	Cunning & Eloquent	1	2	164	64.1%
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLHo6uyICVk				Inter-turn	Cunning & Wise	10	150		
				Intra-turn	Eloquent	1	3		
				Intra-turn	Culpable & Weak	3	6		
				Intra-turn	Satisfied & Eloquent	1	3		
		Interviewee	American	Inter-turn	Cunning &Wise	9	73	104	40.6%
				Intra-turn	Cunning	2	7		
				Intra-turn	Modest	1	4		
				Intra-turn	Eloquent	2	7		
				Inter-turn	Dumbstruck	2	4		
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded & Wise	1	3		
				Intra-turn	Wise	1	3		
6.2.7	328.2	Interviewer	American	Inter-turn	Satisfied & Eloquent	1	4	281	85.6%
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2JYLc7a8Og				Inter-turn	Cunning &Wise	18	122		
				Intra-turn	Cunning	3	24		
				Inter-turn	Modest & Eloquent	1	8		
				Inter-turn	Wise & Modest	11	79		
				Intra-turn	Modest	1	44		

		Interviewee	American	Inter-turn	Cunning & Eloquent	2	4	39	11.88%
				Intra-turn	Culpable & Weak	1	6		
				Inter-turn	Eloquent	1	8		
				Intra-turn	Cunning	1	2		
				Intra-turn	Eloquent	2	8		
				Intra-turn	Satisfied & Eloquent	1	8		
				Inter-turn	Cunning	1	3		
6.2.8	205.8	Interviewer	Irish	Inter-turn	Cunning	9	27	46	22.3%
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HDP3XFVGqA				Intra-turn	Strong & Modest	1	2		
				Intra-turn	Cunning &Eloquent	1	2		
				Intra-turn	Satisfied & Eloquent	1	7		
				Intra-turn	Dumbstruck	1	4		
				Intra-turn	Cunning	1	4		
		Interviewee	British	Intra-turn	Dumbfounded & weak	1	2	53	25.7%
				Inter-turn	Modest	1	3		
				Intra-turn	Modest	1	8		
				Intra-turn	Satisfied & Eloquent	1	20		
				Inter-turn	Cunning & Modest	1	3		
				Intra-turn	Modest	1	10		
				Inter-turn	Cunning	1	3		
				Intra-turn	Dumbstruck	1	4		
6.2.9	252.6	Interviewer	Irish	Inter-turn	Cunning &Modest	7	142	161	63.7
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFjwbKMlmF4				Intra-turn	Cunning	3	19		
				Group	Satisfied & Eloquent	1	70		
		Interviewee	American	Intra-turn	Dumbfounded	1	5	79	31.2%
				Intra-turn	Eloquent	1	3		
				Intra-turn	Modest	1	3		
				Intra-turn	Wise & Cunning	5	52		
				Intra-turn	Dumbstruck & Eloquent	3	10		
				Intra-turn	Satisfied & Eloquent	1	6		
6.2.10	275.4	Interviewer	American	Intra-turn	Dumbfounded & Wise	1	6	125	45.3%
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nK2llTweyLQ				Inter-turn	Satisfied & Eloquent	1	6		
				Intra-turn	Cunning	6	19		
				Intra-turn	Wise & Cunning	16	75		
				Intra-turn	Eloquent	3	17		
		Interviewee	American	Intra-turn	Dumbfounded & Wise	1	2	233	84.5%
				Inter-turn	Cunning & Wise	20	222		
				Intra-turn	Cunning	1	5		
				Intra-turn	Eloquent	1	2		
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded & Culpable	1	2		
6.2.11	448.2	Interviewer 1	British	Inter-turn	Cunning	9	242	397	88.5%
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0oLIhd9Pbk				Inter-turn	Cunning & Strong	8	155		
		Interviewer 2	British	Inter-turn	Cunning	14	366	379	84.5%
				Group	Satisfied	1	11		

		Interviewee	Canadian	Intra-turn	Modest & Weak	1	2	86	19.1%
				Intra-turn	Modest & Culpable	4	24		
				Intra-turn	Satisfied	1	5		
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded	7	19		
				Intra-turn	Culpable & Weak	2	4		
				Intra-turn	Cunning	1	3		
				Intra-turn	Modest	1	6		
				Inter-turn	Dumbstruck &Eloquent	1	3		
				Intra-turn	Weak & Eloquent	1	2		
				Intra-turn	Cunning & Modest	1	3		
				Inter-turn	Eloquent	1	15		
6.2.12	331.8	Interviewer 1	British	Inter-turn	Wise	1	134	165	49.7%
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s5zgLFqAP3E				Inter-turn	Cunning	1	29		
				Intra-turn	Cunning	1	2		
		Interviewer 2	British	Inter-turn	Eloquent	1	50	287	86.4%
				Inter-turn	Modest & Cunning	1	237		
		Interviewee	British	Inter-turn	Cunning	7	69	174	52.4%
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded	1	2		
				Intra-turn	Eloquent	2	14		
				Intra-turn	Wise	1	4		
				Intra-turn	Modest & weak	5	58		
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded & Eloquent	2	5		
				Intra-turn	Culpable	1	22		
6.2.13	1140	Interviewer	British	Inter-turn	Eloquent	2	21	944	82.8%
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqRCAI9pqxY				Intra-turn	Modest	7	81		
				Inter-turn	Cunning	23	836		
				Intra-turn	Cunning & Eloquent	1	6		
		Interviewee	Canadian	Inter-turn	Cunning	4	10	85	7.4%
				Intra-turn	Cunning	1	3		
				Intra-turn	Eloquent	4	16		
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded	6	14		
				Intra-turn	Eloquent & Dead	2	5		
				Inter-turn	Eloquent	2	5		
				Intra-turn	Eloquent & Dumbfounded	2	7		
				Inter-turn	Satisfied & Eloquent	2	10		
				Intra-turn	Satisfied	1	5		
				Intra-turn	Modest & Strong	2	10		
6.2.14	556,8	Interviewer	American	Inter-turn	Dumbfounded & Cunning	1	5	222	39.8%
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBF41HI9GxA				Intra-turn	Cunning	4	62		
				Inter-turn	Cunning	1	3		
				Intra-turn	Eloquent	1	17		
				Inter-turn	Cunning	6	116		
				Intra-turn	Eloquent	2	17		
				Inter-turn	Eloquent	1	2		
				Inter-turn	Wise	1	23		
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded	1	2		
		Interviewee	Canadian	Inter-turn	Modest	5	79	114	20.4%
				Intra-turn	Modest & Culpable	1	3		
				Inter-turn	Eloquent	1	20		
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded &Wise	3	7		

				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded & Modest	1	2		
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded & Eloquent	1	3		
6.2.15	1463.4	Interviewer	British	Inter-turn	Cunning & Eloquent	2	21	895	61.1%
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKD5nwcteBM				Inter-turn	Cunning & Modest	29	863		
				Intra-turn	Modest & Strong	2	8		
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded	1	3		
		Interviewee	American	Inter-turn	Culpable	1	15	501	34.2%
				Intra-turn	Dumbfounded	6	37		
				Intra-turn	Cunning & Eloquent	1	2		
				Intra-turn	Culpable & Dumbfounded	1	3		
				Intra-turn	Modest	8	24		
				Intra-turn	Dumbstruck & Eloquent	1	9		
				Intra-turn	Cunning & Satisfied	1	21		
				Inter-turn	Cunning	27	390		

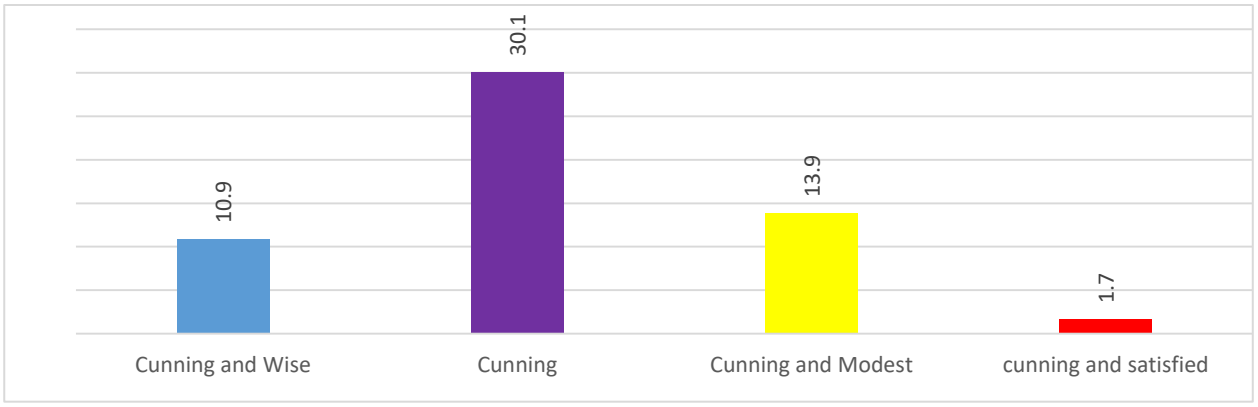


Figure 1. Silence of Highest Occurrence in English TV. Interviews

7. Conclusions

Verbal and nonverbal communications, including silence, are inseparable. Each plays a significant role, and they become more powerful when used together. However, nonverbal communication, specifically silence, often receives the least attention despite its importance in interactions. Silence is recommended in most situations as it holds great value worldwide, present in almost all cultures, and serves various essential roles without requiring extensive speech. It can precede, occur in between, or follow speech, with a crucial function in all cases. Interestingly, the occurrence of silence does not solely depend on the length of the interaction; many interviews may take a short time but contain numerous pauses and gaps, while others may be lengthy with minimal silence. Silence is used differently based on certain aspects related to the personality of the interlocutors, such as gender (male/female), age (young/old), education level (educated/uneducated), and the subject being discussed in the interview. Within the realm of silence, some types are highly important and regularly used by interlocutors, while others are of less significance and rarely utilized.

Silence plays a significant role in turn-taking. When someone stops talking for a period, it signals an opportunity for others to take their turns. During interviews, inter-turn and switching silence occur after the interviewer asks questions. They function as a signal that the current speaker has completed their role, and they nominate the next speaker to respond. These silences are classified as cunning silence, seeking a reply or reaction to specific matters.

Interlocutors employ various types of silence, such as dumbfounded, modest, and wise silence, as a face-saving strategy. This off-record approach allows them to achieve their goals indirectly, avoiding direct confrontation or embarrassment. By staying silent, individuals can preserve their dignity and refrain from impolite behavior. Cunning silence, on the other hand, can be used as a face-threatening strategy to embarrass the other interlocutor, as it creates tension and pressure for a response. Additionally, remaining silent while others are talking is

generally considered a polite nonverbal behavior, reflecting respect for the speaker and active listening. However, it can become impolite if used as a sign of ignorance or disregard for the conversation. In interviews, initiative silence is regularly used by the interviewer as an etiquette to show respect and allow the interviewee to respond thoughtfully

Each intra-turn pause, however, occurs temporarily, as the interlocutor withdraws for a limited period within one turn before resuming speech while retaining their turn. Initiative silence, represented by cunning and wise or cunning and modest silence, typically manifest as inter-turn gaps and lapses at the beginning of the interview, after introducing the guest, and following the interviewer's questions. Certain types of silence, like weak and strong silence, do not occur together as their functions are contradictory. Weak and culpable silence are similar in that they both convey negative impressions. If silence is classified as culpable, it is also categorized as weak silence since both indicate an inability to continue speaking when required. On the other hand, certain types of silence, such as dumbfounded silence, require less time, allowing the interlocutor to reconsider the issue in their mind while retaining their turn. When silence is classified as satisfied, it is also classified as eloquent silence, as both are filled with strong feelings and effectively express the emotional state of the interlocutor.

The research findings indicate that among the English-speaking interlocutors, British individuals tend to use silence more frequently than others, followed by the Irish, Americans, and Canadians, in descending order of frequency of silence usage. However, it is important to note that even within the same culture, differences in the use of silence exist. These variations can be influenced by several factors, including the specific topic of the interaction, the role of being a guest or presenter, and other social considerations. These individual differences within a culture highlight the complexity of silence in communication and its multifaceted nature.

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