



THE ECOLINGUISTIC COMMUNICATION MODEL: THE NEWPARADIGMATIC VIEW ON THE COMMUNICATIVE MECHANISM OF *SILENCE*

Marta Bogusławska-Tafelska (The Łomża State University of Applied Sciences, Poland. Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities)

Resumo: Nesta exploração teórica, revisitamos a noção de *silêncio* na comunicação humana. A hipótese organizadora é a de que o fenômeno *silêncio* pode ser inserido no modelo neoparadigmático, ecolinguístico de comunicação (BOGUSŁAWSKA-TAFELSKA, 2013, 2016) como um mecanismo chave, não como um elemento prosódico ou paralinguístico entre partes de produção de fala. Sugerimos a tese de que o *silêncio* como mecanismo de comunicação possibilita que as modalidades de comunicação cognitiva e não cognitiva sejam ativas e em interação complementar no comunicador humano ou, para ser mais precisos, na situação de comunicação transpessoal, momentânea e emergente em que o comunicador humano se vê envolvido. Essa análise teórica está paradigmaticamente baseada no holismo do século XXI, que, na disciplina linguística, tem se refletido na pesquisa ecolinguisticamente orientada que visa aos fenômenos linguísticos e comunicacionais.

Palavras-chave: Silêncio; Modalidades Comunicativas Cognitivas e Não-cognitivas; Mudança paradigmática; Paradigma Holístico do Século XXI; Ecolinguística.

Abstract: In this theoretical exploration, we revisit the notion of *silence* in human communication. The organising hypothesis is that the phenomenon of *silence* can be inserted in the newparadigmatic, ecolinguistic model of communication (BOGUSŁAWSKA-TAFELSKA, 2013, 2016) as a key mechanism, not as a prosodic or paralinguistic filler in between speech productions. We put forth a thesis that *silence* as a communication mechanism enables both cognitive and noncognitive communication modalities to be active and in complementary interaction within a human communicator, or, to be more exact, within the transpersonal, momentary, emerging communication situation, a human communicator is immersed in. This theoretical analysis is paradigmatically grounded in the 21st century holism, which, in the discipline of linguistics, has

been reflected in the ecolinguistically-oriented research into linguistic and communication phenomena.

Key words: Silence; Cognitive and Noncognitive Communication Modalities; Paradigmatic Shift; 21st Century Holistic Paradigm; Ccolinguistics

1. Introduction

This theoretical paper puts to debate the possibility to insert into the ecolinguistic communication model the phase of cognitive *silence*. Ours is the expanded view on *silence* in communication, as compared to what has been discussed in the fields of modern psychology, psychotherapy, linguistics or sociolinguistics. In the mainstream research, the primary and basic function of *silence* is providing background to speech. *Silence* defines the boundaries of utterance (JAWORSKI, 1993, p. 12). *Silence* defined as pausing belongs to prosodic or paralinguistic tools of language (ibid., p. 14). Cross-cultural uses of *silence* are rooted in the observation of different types of taboo, practical magic, and in varying beliefs as to how much or little talk is necessary in a given situation (ibid., p. 23).

In order to present the expanded model of *silence* in the process of communication, we will delineate here the paradigmatic basis on which we pursue this ecolinguistic task. Specifically, the postclassical framework of the 21stc. holism is introduced in the opening sections, for the intended theoretical model to be shaped.

2. The expansion of consciousness in Western societies is reflected in the paradigmatic shift in Western science: slow and steady wins the race

Today, people in Western societies realize that the status quo of the materialistic, Newtonian-Darwinian reality no longer equates for them stable and sustainable existence and self-actualisation (DAVIS; CANTY, 2015; WALACH, 2019). Models and conceptualisations have been shaking and cracking, be it social models of the organizational cultures based on rigid hierarchy and power struggle, traditional marriage model, educational models, medical models (moving from the disease-care to the health-care model), intrapersonal behavioural models visible and active in our life scripts (i.e. mental models of our ideal lives we strive to live - cf. BERNE, 2007). Old cognitive and behavioural meta-patterns slowly get de-activated because, narrow and outdated as they are already, they are not facilitating successful life outcomes in the expanding reality of western people today. Voices pointing to global crisis to describe the time we are living in now, are substantiated

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indeed. Especially if we perceive the mechanism of crisis as a transition from the collectively accepted and realised, expired life model to the expanded life model (BOGUSŁAWSKA-TAFELSKA, 2019).

In this analysis, we will not stay within this crisis discourse and crisis theme. We propose that the present crisis moment is a relatively short-lived phase personally and globally, an inter-phase towards a new way of life which is in the process of emerging in the Western cultural zone (FRIEDMAN; HARTELIUS, 2015). This emergence of an expanded view of life and living can be noticed not only by scholars in their research data, but by non-academic people as well; it is enough to pay attention to the following movements:

- from hierarchical, systemic and rigid education being technological systems to mass-produce working force, to the expanded educational paradigm and its new school for self-developing and self-actualising humans of all age groups (KALTWASSER et al. 2014; BOGUSŁAWSKA-TAFELSKA, 2006; ZENNER, HERRNLEBEN KURZ; WALACH, 2014).

- from allopathic medicine of the materialistic, pharmacological paradigm to the integrative and CAM (Complementary Alternative Medicine) medicine, focused on regulatory and enhancing strategies towards optimal condition of the organism;

- from massive, global production of relatively unexpensive food, which is of low nutritional value, and often toxic to the human system, to local eco-productions of organic food, not only feeding the person well, but also potentially bringing healing/regulating effects in case of an organism's de-regulation (dis-ease);

- from seeing the world as a machine, the functions of which can be easily determined by the laws of Newtonian physics, to the realisations of a multidimensional, layered life ecosystem, where we humans are nonlocally bringing to existence all sub-existing qualities, values and forms (PLOTNITSKY, 2004; BOGUSŁAWSKA-TAFELSKA, 2013).

In the newparadigmatic thinking and model, '(...) living systems are creative systems capable of co-creation of themselves and the material/exformatted reality around them. On a deep level of sub-existence, subexisting living systems make choices of how they will embed themselves within chosen internal and external environments' (BOGUSŁAWSKA-TAFELSKA, 2013, p. 64-65). The postclassical model of reality does not offer us an already determined, delineated structure of the world as composed of atoms and molecules. On the contrary, the basal life mechanism is the mechanism of co-generation and inciting into being the notions and objects which primarily stay

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as potentials. If, according to postclassical physics, the measuring effect brings concretisation of the potential, we can assume that through our neurocognitive activity, through our thoughts and language, we continually actualise into physical being our world and ourselves. Our bodies and cognition are the measuring tools breaking down the potentialities into the ‘classical’, tangible choices; a loop of life happens here (BOGUSŁAWSKA-TAFELSKA, 2013; 2016). It is useful to bear in mind that humans and other living systems are by nature open systems, and as such should not be treated as the building blocks of the atomistic model of Newtonian reality (COUTO, 2014, p. 127).

When it comes to scientists and the contemporary Western scientific paradigm, the change is happening slowly. Scholars are still bound by the dominating models of reality, by the agreed upon thinking styles in academia (FLECK, 2007a; 2007b; 2007c), and by the Cartesian-Newtonian-Darwinian idea of how reality is constructed (WALACH; VON STILLFRIED, 2011), which is present in the Western sciences from the late Middle Ages, when sciences started. However latent the scientific move is towards the new, postclassical holistic paradigm, it nevertheless is happening, and ecolinguistics is a reflection of this change in the discipline of language and the communication studies. The present concise linguistic study is located within this new paradigmatic territory of modern linguistics.

It is essential to realise that ‘scientific progress is achieved not only by continuous accumulation of knowledge but also by paradigm shifts. These shifts are often necessitated by anomalous findings that cannot be incorporated in accepted models’ (WALACH; SCHMIDT, 2005, p. 52). The move currently happening in sciences is slow but steady. Scholars, the majority of them, do small steps, i.e. they decide to leave antropocentrism to include other living species into the scope of reference of consciousness as the self-awareness of existence (TREWAVAS; BALUSKA, 2011). Another example is a growing number of medical scholars who realise that organismic design and organismic processes are not linear and deterministic (WALLECZEK, 2000), which is a promising step towards acknowledging the living system being a local-nonlocal fully dynamic and holistic construct.

On the other hand, the change is slow enough to keep scientists within the (neuro)cognicetrism of the modern scientific stance, maintaining that (...) living systems are cognitive systems and living as a process is a process of cognition (ibid., p. 1221). As Chemero declares, ‘I hereby define radical embodied cognitive science as the scientific study of perception, cognition, and action as

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necessarily embodied phenomenon, using explanatory tools that do not posit mental representations. It is cognitive science without mental gymnastics' (CHEMERO, 2009, p. 29). Many active scholars find themselves with 'one foot' in the expanded 21stc. holism, where they start looking for models and data referring to consciousness, and other non-cognitive life phenomena, as they cannot and do not intend to ignore them any longer. And with 'the other foot' still in the old paradigm, in the sense that they keep looking for the epistemological motivations of the nonlocal stuff in the neurocognitive structures and processes (i.e. emergentism) and in the Newton and Darwin's material reality (TREWAVAS; BALUSKA, 2011). It is rather peculiar what is now visible in some scientific publications, i.e. in the paper by Trewavas and Baluska (2011, p. 12) utter their readiness to notice the shortcomings of their own stance; they admit that 'it is puzzling that primitive organisms that lack any kind of nervous system show sophisticated behaviours that we assume require a nervous system'. Hence, it is time to acknowledge that nonlocal life processes are not emergent on the neurocognitive or biological processes of the material aspect of life. To study the holistic architecture of life systems we seem to need the complementarity model, where the material aspects and the nonmaterial aspects of life processes are co-primary and intertwined in the architecture of Earth reality (WALACH, 2005; 2015). The two co-primary substances probably both derive from one unified whole, hence we humans and scholars notice the paradox of unity vs. individuality in our world. However, we will not develop this topic further here; partly because it is not in the focus of attention in this study; second, because sciences are at the beginning of the research now to provide some starting-point models of how the universe is structured. We need to wait for the cosmological research to progress.

Coming back to our analysis, in modern, mainstream linguistics things are slowly expanding as well: from material and cognitive forms of the technology of communication, to 'languaging' (COWLEY, 2018; THIBAUT, 2018a; 2018b), being the ecolinguistic model of human communication which places language and communication studies in-between the material paradigm (and structuralism and cognitive linguistics in it), and the holistic paradigm of local and non-local communicating /relating among living systems.

The theoretical proposal of this paper to re-define the communicational mechanism of *silence*, grounds itself theoretically on the very fringe of modern ecolinguistics, where human communication is freed from the framework of cognitivism, neuroscience, social and communicational studies of the classical model of reality. This paper starts from specifying a

shifted paradigmatic framework, where language/communication are defined as *life processes* operating in the post-classical, holistic framework. Much more is included in them than the neurocognitive aspects point out, hence we straightforwardly declare our post-classical starting-point platform (BOGUSŁAWSKA-TAFELSKA, 2013; 2016; 2019).

3. The ecolinguistic multimodality model of human language/communication

Almost a decade ago in our linguistic research we reflected that the mainstream (neuro) cognitivism is not spacious enough to embrace ontologically, epistemologically and methodologically all that we notice about human communication (BOGUSŁAWSKA-TAFELSKA, 2013). We made a paradigmatic choice to move all that we do scientifically to the expanded terrain of the 21st c. holistic paradigm (as already said here, the new paradigm is otherwise referred to as the post-Newtonian paradigm or the post-classical paradigm). What is essential, that metascientific choice does not reject the material, Newtonian reality, because in the 21st c. holism we employ inclusive thinking, rather than exclusive ‘either-or’ heuristics (WALACH, 2019: 82). The materialistic classical paradigm with the classical world model become the special case in the expanded 21c. science. Harald Walach in the Galileo Commission Report (2019. P. 82) writes that ‘this move may well have a further beneficial consequence: it will complement logical thinking with inclusive thinking, which again, are not opposites, but actually complementary pairs of one global rational approach to our world’.

So, to grasp all this together, in the postclassical paradigm a(n) (eco)linguist can work on two complementary levels:

(i) the surface level of forms;

(ii) and the deep level of underlying life processes, potentialities, values and relationships.

What needs to be highlighted, this deep level of analysis is much deeper than the way contemporary cognitive linguistics, (radical) embodied cognitive science (CHEMERO, 2009), etc. see and study it.

The basic definition of communication has it that communication involves ‘transmission and reception of any kind of information between any kind of life’ (CRYSTAL, 2007, p. 3). While mainstream linguistics still focuses on transmission of material signs in human communication. We add to the definition the nonlocal relations as well, where technically there is no transmission or reception; but a dynamic, momentary relation which allows information just to be there; be

shared, instantaneously, in the moment. In our model, we formulate the assumption that the process of communication functions as *a linking process*, a binding aspect inside and in-between living systems; also a binding aspect between the co-primary substances of reality: the material and the nonmaterial. We are plugged to all life via communication processes. The actual transcendence point, *the seam of life*, where matter meets nonmatter and the other way around, is hypothesised and researched to be located in deep intracellular structures/processes, in quantum-electric conjugations of tubulin dimers in a cell's microtubules (BOGUSŁAWSKA-TAFELSKA, 2013; 2016).

Hence, communication is a life process, not only a (neuro)cognitive or a social/cultural process. Communication embraces the (neuro)cognitive processes, social and cultural aspects, and the noncognitive mechanisms, grounded down the systemic organisation of the human body. In the holistic paradigm we stop being only speakers-listeners of linguistic messages; we realise that we are conscious living beings embedded in dynamic, local-nonlocal relationships with the living ecosystem around us. When we apply this inclusive type of reasoning, the process of communication stops to be a linear, external to us exchange of signs, which is managed by our (neuro)cognitive organismic systems. What we propose to be possible and what seems to be happening in human communication processes is that the communication space is *a life space*, and communicators are plugged into the rest of life which equates being immersed in the completeness of all life.

4. *Silence* as a communication tool to activate the non-cognitive communication modalities in the human communicator

In the main stream of modern humanistic research, scholars do acknowledge *silence* in interpersonal communication. It is seen and studied as a (neuro)cognitive, psychological and social phenomenon. Sabbadini (2002, p. 1093) says that *silence* is 'not just an absence (of words) but an active presence'. Mostly, linguistic and psychological research into *silence* in communication has been scrutinising this notion from the perspective of pathological processes and the psychological content it indicates or covers. Silence is studied from the following perspectives:

- as the possible indicator of inner anxiety, fear, anger or depression;
- in the Freudian psychodynamic theory, *silence* speaks about repressed experiences and erotic wishes;

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- as a way to inhibit or withdraw one's fantasies;
- as a sign of severe ego regression (LANE et al., 2002) (cf. also JAWORSKI, 1993; ZEMBYLAS; MICHAELIDES, 2004).

As a result of this strong trend in the conceptualisation of *silence* being the sign of inner pathology of some type, the Western societies hold a particular resistance and fear to *silence* as a communication mechanism. In social settings, communicators would rather exercise small talks, bubbling and chatting; going silent, or remaining in solitude in one's daily routine, are to be avoided as psychologically and personally uncomfortable and awkward. At homes uncomfortable silence is covered by a constant humming of the media from the home electronics like smart phones or personal computers with the online musical playlists. Children are raised with the idea of a constant stimulation of their intellect being welcome, while silence and consequent boredom being qualities to be avoided.

Now, we are ready to address the main point in this preliminary study, namely, that the communication mechanism of *silence* has a vital function when the ecology of communication is considered. In other words, from the theoretical stance of the post-classical, holistic paradigm, and the ecolinguistic multimodality model of communication, *silence* is not an annoying filler placed in-between the language forms linearly flowing from the sender to the receiver in an exchange of a message. Nor is it necessarily a signal of some psychological disfunction. *Silence* is an absence of formal linguistic activeness. And in a healthy, well-balanced self, it is at the same time an absence of major inner cognitive activity, which produces thoughts of various types, as outcomes. We propose that in this inner and outer absence of major mental and formal activity, the human noncognitive communication modalities can enter a person's awareness and the communication material that these modalities process; it can be noticed, acknowledged and benefitted from. We propose that in order that our multimodality communication mechanism be active and helpful, we need to silence down our cognitive communication modality. When we silence down our outer and inner talk, reduce thinking, and get some practice in 'staying in no-mind', and be comfortable in it, then we notice inner knowings coming to our awareness. Realisations, intuitions, subtle preferences and truths. These are the communicational signals from our non-cognitive communication modalities. With time and practice we notice that, actually, a lot of these inner knowings do not come from us and often do not refer to us (WALACH, 2013); they pass us through. We as communicators, are constantly and organically embedded in the communication

space being the space of life; the awareness of this mechanism seems inevitable if we want to consciously use the feedback from all the communicational modalities at work.

5. Conclusions: cognitive silence makes space for non-cognitive communicative material to enter a person's awareness

In this theoretical analysis, the communicational phenomenon of science has been defined from the expanded point of view of the post-classical model of reality. As we propose here, *silence* is a cognition-mediating phenomenon. That is, it puts to suspension most of a person's cognitive processes. If *silence* is a part of the contemplative or meditative process, then it makes it possible to move into the 'now moment', with the emphasis on the working memory, at the same time silencing the predominant activeness of the long-term memory. In the phase of cognitive silence, many cognitive processes get suspended: problem-solving, decision-making, evaluations, expectation structures, etc. These processes slow down and subsequently the person enters the cognitive pause; this is the moment that non-cognitive communication modalities become received and benefited from. We start consciously receiving messages from the multimodality communication mechanism we as humans are equipped with phylogenetically.

Now, the task of ecolinguistics being the expanded science of linguistics, is to work out the adjusted scientific method to empirically investigate this local-nonlocal pulsation of life processes. Traditional scientific method works well for local and linear processes of the forms and structures of language; while to research nonlocal, post-classical phenomena we need a new epistemological and methodological research equipment, which is one of the urgent scientific tasks still before us.

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