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Voiceless Influence: The Role of Silence in Politics

التأثير الصامت: دور الصمت في السياسة

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Abstract:

One of the most important areas of research in political science is silence, which serves many important purposes and is thus a central issue in the field of English linguistics and politics. In particular, it delves into the significance and role of silence for a number of prominent contemporary leaders, including Trump, Obama, and Bush. The rationale behind this choice stems from that these political figures tend to have silent pauses for particular purposes such as disagreement, and insulting. Drawing on Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's "Spiral of Silence" paradigm and van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis, this study also seeks to answer the following main question: what types of silence can be deduced from former US presidents and how can we explain silence from this and other perspectives. It also reviews the interpretation of silence in different contexts and discusses the functions and types of this concept. Silence can display a variety of types of communication functions, according to this study's data analysis. Several purposes of political discourse silence can be communicated, according to this study. Some examples of these are impacting, connecting, face-saving, and assessing. Further evidence from the results points to the possibility that speakers (politicians) aim for victim equality by refraining from naming particular victims. This is because certain names have the potential to spark discussions about race, religion, politics, and other sensitive topics. Another example might be a speaker trying to avoid bringing up a certain family member's name but yet seeming downcast. Therefore, that family's grief might intensify. Keywords: silence, discourse analysis, politicians, political speeches, human reaction.

الخلاصة

يعد الصمت أحد أهم مجالات البحث في العلوم السياسية، إذ يخدم أغراضاً مهمة عديدة، ما يجعله قضية محورية في مجال اللغويات والسياسة الإنجليزية. وتتناول الدراسة، على وجه الخصوص، أهمية الصمت ودوره لدى عدد من القادة المعاصرين البارزين، بمن فيهم ترامب وأوباما وبوش. وينبع هذا الاختيار من ميل هذه الشخصيات السياسية إلى التوقيفات الصامتة لأغراض محددة، مثل الخلاف والإهانة. واستناداً إلى نموذج إليزابيث نويل-نيومان "دوامة الصمت" وتحليل فان ديك النقدي للخطاب، تسعى هذه الدراسة أيضاً إلى الإجابة على السؤال الرئيسي التالي: ما أنواع الصمت التي يمكن استنتاجها من رؤساء الولايات المتحدة السابقين، وكيف يمكننا تفسير الصمت من هذا المنظور ومن منظورات أخرى؟ كما تستعرض تفسير الصمت في سياقات مختلفة، وتناقش وظائف هذا المفهوم وأنواعه. ووفقاً لتحليل بيانات هذه الدراسة، يُمكن للصمت أن يُظهر أنواعاً متنوعة من وظائف التواصل. ووفقاً لهذه الدراسة، يُمكن التعبير عن أغراض متعددة لصمت الخطاب السياسي. من الأمثلة على ذلك: التأثير، والتواصل، وحفظ ماء الوجه، والتقييم. وتشير أدلة أخرى من النتائج إلى احتمال سعي المتحدثين (السياسيين) إلى تحقيق المساواة بين الضحايا من خلال الامتناع عن تسمية ضحايا بعينهم. وذلك لأن بعض الأسماء قد تُثير نقاشات حول العرق والدين والسياسة وغيرها من المواضيع الحساسة. مثال آخر: قد يحاول متحدث تجنب ذكر اسم أحد أفراد عائلته، ولكنه يبدو حزيناً. لذلك، قد يتفاقم حزن تلك العائلة.

1. Introduction:

Observations of people's lack of speech that, taken individually, could convey approbation or dislike. Cultural factors impact these understandings. Thus, they might not be able to avoid becoming relative and subjective. So, cultural and contextual factors impact the choice to remain silent (Jaworski, 1993). Silence may be perceived as a good sign of communication intent in certain cultures, such as Eastern ones. In contrast, quietness is often seen as a manifestation of social distance or an indication that individuals are unwilling to cooperate in Western societies (Tannen, 1985). It might also mean the speaker doesn't know what they're talking about (Irvine, 1978).

A subfield of critical linguistics, critical discourse analysis investigates how cultural, social, and political variables interact with discourse occurrences. Contrast this with "text linguistics," which covers the structural features of texts by displaying formal linguistic principles. Having said that, there may be some overlap between the spheres of influence of the two fields. It would be hasty, for instance, to offer a fundamental differentiation between the two fields because of their shared emphasis on cohesiveness. "In semantics, it is used in reference to a variety of things, ideas, contexts, etc., to which a specific speech event pertains." According to Crystal (2006: 149).

According to Trask (2007:61), writings may be studied in the context of their social environment. Sure, you may examine material via the lens of its vocabulary and evolution, the phonetic techniques it uses to connect different parts, etc. What makes basic discourse analysis stand out, nevertheless, is its fundamental curiosity regarding the social context of content creation. What was the rationale for creating this content? Who is it for, and why is it treated that way? Is there a hidden agenda on the part of the writer or speaker? If so, what could it be? To what extent does the content depend on hidden biases and assumptions? Questions like this are what the test is aiming for. This research aims to explore the ways in which politicians use silence to obfuscate or otherwise convey certain messages. Language analysis techniques used in these types of tests are typically rather critical.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. The Concept of Silence

The absence of sound is what the word "silence" describes. It has several functions and may happen anyplace. It demonstrates how an actor ought to behave in a pertinent scenario when their lack of behavior differentiates from their key wants. The relationship between wanting to be "silent" and being able to detect its presence is fascinating to watch: for what is often called "silent," which is less of a problem with reality observation than with actual speech. A society product would be someone who completely doesn't want to be heard. When someone's inactivity is strikingly different from everyone else's, it's called quiet. There is a difference between the concepts of voice and quiet when evaluating the strengthening of democracies. This separation is not inherently wrong, but it is unnecessarily broad and sometimes made without meaning to. For instance, the majority of academics don't investigate the possibility that, similar to speaking up, being silent may be a decision that facilitates action (Gray, 2014:7).

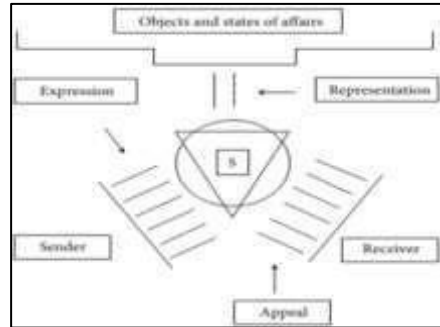
When one side flat-out refuses to talk about something the other would normally bring up to keep control, that's an example of strict silence as a form of dominance. On the other hand, a moment of quiet might give each side a chance to reflect on their statements and decide how to proceed. It is not necessarily the case that there is no means of communication at all, just because there is no spoken language. At the conclusion of a conversation, the flow of communication might be affected in several ways. The ability to see things from another person's perspective may improve as a result. Additionally, it demonstrates the capacity to severely restrict the other person's capacity to express themselves fully (Gendron, 2011:1-2).

Ideologies, political disputes, and the development of human identity are all entangled with language's role in human reaction and construction. It is a well-known fact in politics that the ability to communicate and express oneself freely is essential for establishing strong communities and taking part in political activities. But the idea that language is easy to understand and always used in the same way is only a proverb: language is used extensively without problems. The source cited is Ferguson (2002:2).

Entities with few outwardly apparent indications that may be used to illustrate events in the outside world and/or convey multiple types of meaning are often given to communication models. There are a variety of models that could involve message twists, situational components, or language abilities. But without these three parts, which are at least somewhat separate, no model can be complete.

Almost everyone acknowledges that silence may convey meaning. But it seems like a basic but important part of this communication strategy is lacking. According to Schröter (2013:13), the fact that (Bühler, 1934) has also taken language into account as a method of communication gives a solid foundation for thinking about what happens when the task is completed without the tool.

"Bühler's model of communication" can be seen in the following figure:



See **Figure 1** for "**Bühler's Model of Communication (Speech)**". The word "silent" is shown in Figure (2) as an example. In the absence of the indication, represented by the triangle with a S within, no action is taken. This means that in order for a communication to be understood, there must be a hint that suggests what the sender wants to say and a trigger that forces the receiver to connect the clue to the message itself.

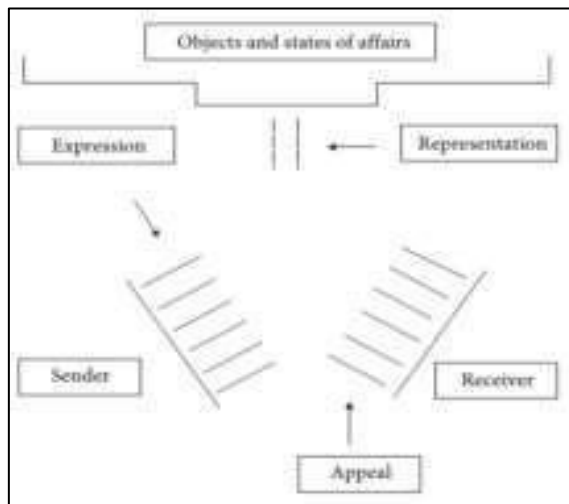


Figure (2): Silence as adopted from (Baytimur et al., 2020)

In a communicative setting, politicians can choose to talk or stay silent. Considering that it is possible to communicate makes its absence seem less significant. Because signals are necessary for denotation, the many interpretations and meanings of the word "silence" appear to be situationally dependent. As stated by Schröter (2013), there were fifteen.

The absence of sound is a defining feature of a significant political event. Participation in politics of this kind changes the status quo by shifting power dynamics and gives rise to novel political subjectivities. A tactic used by political collectivity to organize itself noticeably, proclaim a form, and challenge organization control is for politicians to remain mute in disagreement and express it. To rephrase, the review's quiet occasion not only invites us to focus on a tool that differentiates politics from speech, but it also prompts us to reassess our conventional understanding of political participation. Because it shows an alternative way of being and doing, being silent might be a basic practice. But it blocks previously established ideas of behavior and cognition in

this way, especially the hard contrast between speaking and remaining silent. Sitting on one's hands does more than just avoid talking about a problem; it may also make the other person feel less heard and less invested in the conversation overall.

Silence may be used aggressively in a variety of contexts, from a single encounter to a more systemic tactic aimed at a specific individual or group. (Hatzisavvidou, 2015) and (Lusternberger and Williams, 2009 quoted in Gendron, 2011:3).

Individuals, teams, or entire organizations might suffer when there is a lack of open dialogue. As an illustration, a victimized coworker can find themselves deprived of access to data and programming that are vital to their job success. The parties' trust would be weakened when data access is restricted through the use of silence. In this context, it implies to be quiet so as not to propagate false beliefs and assumptions (Gendron, 2011:3).

The Meaning of Silence

The analytical unit differentiates between the functions and meanings conveyed by nonverbal cues. In terms of communication clarification, functions demonstrate people's sensitivity and meanings disclose the quality of message explanation. This is due to the fact that they may draw on theories of nonverbal communication, such as interactionism, cognitivism, or systems theory, all of which provide a priceless framework for studying nonverbal conduct.

The context determines the meaning of silence. This is how they function:

1. A person employs "Positive Silence" when they communicate with another person by remaining silent, which helps to develop or preserve the connection.
2. "Negative Silence": Keep in mind that when you don't say anything, it seems like you're ignoring or isolating other people. That you are arguing against their views is another implication.
3. "Neutral Silence": The absence of emotional expression in this form of quiet most strongly indicates thoughtfulness, whether one is hurting or repairing a relationship.
4. "No Silence" refers to situations in which the speaker want to continue talking, whether formally or informally (Ling, 2003: 132-133).

2.2. Features of Silence

Features that are attributed to silence are as follows:

1. Silence has a relationship with other people's acknowledgment, even if you don't understand it. Silence cannot be assumed from the actions of a single actor; therefore, it cannot be sustained independently. For there to be quiet, there must be other people, and that quiet must be oriented towards them. The social aspect of silence sets it apart from other ideas that are sometimes confused with it, such as separation and isolation. These previously discussed ideas, on the other hand, are more private and less conducive to communal life. When compared to being alone, being silent allows one to feel more connected to the world around.
2. The presumption of presence is one of the many qualities of silence. Unlike when individuals flee an argument, a political party, or their home country because it doesn't suit them, a quiet performance makes us feel like we're linked to them and that the connection hasn't merely broken off. No one can take credit for it unless they say nothing (Gray, 2014:8).

The conceptual difference between egress and silence is that the former presumes presence, whether direct or indirect, while the latter is absent (Dowding and John 2012; Hirschman 1970; Warren 2011 quoted in Gray, 2014:9). Egress has been extensively documented in democratic theory and practice, but its location and functions are different from silence.

2.3. Types of Silence

The word "expression" is being used loosely since, in its most literal definition, silence is not an expression. A distinct form of quiet, one that does more than you might think, is often meant when individuals speak about communicative silence. One theory holds that communicative silences and other nonlinguistic residuals of choice could provide voters a glimpse into a politician's personal decisions, sentiments, or preferences. The converse is also true: when silence is acknowledged as a given, it becomes a powerful instrument for communication. it is non-behavior; nevertheless, when an audience perceives it as a deliberate declaration of choice, it transforms into communication.

While politicians who remain mute may be perceived as "active" or "silent," they are really working toward a goal. On occasion, vague motivations, such as underlying discomfort or anxiety, may lead to active silences. Source: Gray (2014), p. 17.

If you want to know when silence is real communication, you have to be able to tell the difference between voice-based and silence-based communication. Voice is typically defined by researchers as a public statement of choice that swiftly decodes as a linguistic medium or appears phonetically in substance. Nevertheless, within a framework founded on laws, communication can take several forms. Academics are very interested in empowered voice communication due to its potential uses in many contexts such as disputes, campaigns, deliberations, petitions, and voting. According to Gray (2014:18).

By discriminating between non-behavior-based non-linguistic signals, communicative silence may be employed. Whether silence is understood rightly or wrongly, it impacts collaborative decision-making. This isn't limited to interpersonal interactions; it may occur in group dynamics as well. Silence is communication in and of itself, especially when accompanied by verbal flourishes; for example, when silent rebels utilize banners or pennants to make their silence more apparent. Apathy, roadblocks, disentanglement from groups, and tacitly agreed-upon group decisions all function as forms of silence in this setting. according to the same source (2014:19).

When thinking about the consequences of a certain decision to be quiet, it's important to ask yourself what the scenario calls for in terms of silence. The consequences of being silent often fall into one of four categories:

❖ **"Affective silence"** "is about the communicative use of silence to induce others to make decisions or actions in line with one's preferences, typically by choosing silence as a punitive sanction until others alter their behavior."

❖ **"Demonstrative silence"** "is about the communicative use of silence to lead others to form specific beliefs or expectations about oneself, usually as the result of a decision to remain silent in response to direct cues, questions, or promptings."

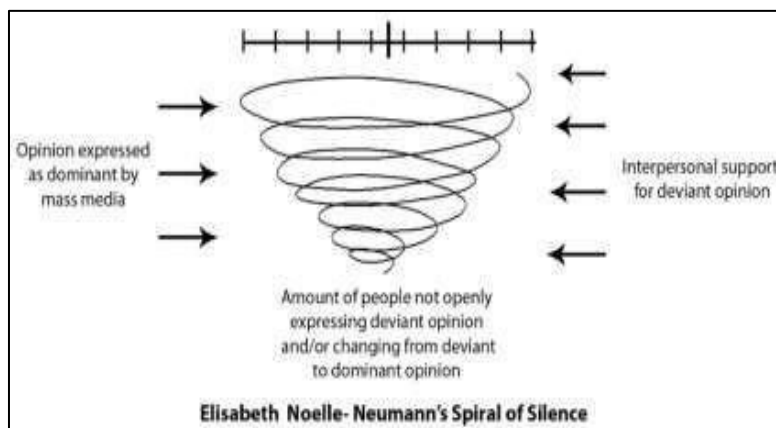
❖ **"Emulative silence"** "is about the communicative use of silence in compliance with formal institutions and organizations whose rules entitle some to speak instead of others in particular settings, or none at all."

❖ **"Facilitative silence"** "is about the communicative use of silence in conformity with informal conventions that structure social and political interaction, through norms of civility, listening, tact, and cooperative conduct" (Gray, 2014:20).

2.5 Theories of Silence

Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, a famous political scientist, came up with the "Spiral of Silence" model. Neumann was president of the "World Association for Open Opinion Research," which she and her husband had co-founded in 1947, from 1978 to 1980. Noelle-Neumann (1974) uses the notion of the Winding of Hush to implicitly describe the situation of the Jews during Nazi control in WWII. The little Jewish community of the nation was compelled to remain silent due to the dread of Adolf Hitler's totalitarian reign. Because their followers were compelled to remain silent, several of these schools of open mindfulness eventually went away.

That is, when individuals are worried about alienating or dividing the majority, they are less likely to speak up.



"Figure (3): Noelle Neumann's spiral of silence, as adopted from Noelle-Neumann, E. (1993)"

Consider a scenario where the CEO of a firm chooses to send an email to all workers announcing a change in the company's working hours from 8 to 10. With the exception of a handful who aren't keen on the new offerings, most of them are cognizant of the passage of time. Nevertheless, they show little to no willingness or ability to openly express themselves. The following can be said to explain this:

1. The employees felt unsupported, especially by their coworkers.
2. They are worried about being left out or possibly relocated.
3. they worry that the public will disregard their unique viewpoint.
4. Another issue is the fear of job loss that might arise from openly expressing their opinions. "Porten-Cheé & Eilders, 2015".

Several assumptions form the basis of the Framework (Noelle-Neumann, 1991). According to this idea, there are many different ways in which silence might be understood (Oliver et al., 2013).

1. A multi-stage procedure is shown by the spiral of silence hypothesis. most airtime for society's most prominent members and remarkably less airtime for minorities are results of the media's tendency to forecast nearly open outcomes.
2. People in this social situation are afraid of being rejected, and they are also aware of the behaviors that increase the risk of rejection. "Fear of Isolation" is how it is characterized.
3. Belonging to a minority group that is underrepresented. People lose confidence and refrain from voicing their opinions due to fears of jail or feelings of isolation or lack of support.
4. To avoid persecution by the majority, members of minority groups may avoid publicly arguing their points of view.
5. A larger portion of society gives voice to the majority, whereas minority either do not have a voice or are completely silenced.

Among the pros and cons of this theory are the following:

1. It provides examples of processes at both the microscopic and macroscopic levels.
2. The hypothesis works well in contexts like political campaigns, discussions in the Senate, and Parliament.
3. It elevates the media's function and responsibility in society.
4. When it comes to explaining silence, the theory is missing the mark in considering the flip side. The majority opinion may seem more valid than one's own in some situations (Porten-Cheé & Eilders, 2015).
3. Method and Results

The function of silence in American political speech is the focus of this research. This research examines the use of silence in speeches given by previous US presidents using the "Spiral of Silence" model developed by the famous political historian Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann. The study's data came from a database of speeches delivered by past presidents of the United States. An outline of the findings from the analysis of the data collected for this study is provided in this section. It begins with some practical notes on how politicians, and the president in particular, employ quiet. Also included here are the findings from an examination of the use of silence in George W. Bush's political speeches.

3.1 Findings of Functions of Silence

When we examine the literature more closely, we find that silence in speech serves several purposes. A review of the types of silence's communication roles is given by Jensen (1973, cited in Ling 2003, 138-139). The following provides evidence for several purposes that political discourse may serve by using quiet. To examine the data, qualitative content analysis is employed. It is one of several qualitative approaches to data analysis and interpretation that are now accessible. A systematic and objective way to describe and measure occurrences, it is a research approach (Schreier, 2012). If the researcher wants to look at latent material as well as visible content (notice silence, sighs, laughing, posture, etc.), this is very important. In 1988, Catanzaro

1. "Face-saving": One's facial expression conveys a positive self-image. Instead of attempting to hide things or blend in when there are a lot of people around, or projecting or preserving one's self-image, if that's even possible. So, it's about hushed conversations that are prompted by things like unfamiliarity, modesty, or external circumstances. The fact that Bill Clinton chose to keep quiet following his controversy is an example of this:



Figure (4): Bill Clinton after Scandal

2. "Affecting": Silence has the power to both mend and hurt. It may either fortify or undermine a bond. There are potential benefits and drawbacks to it. I don't understand. Trump, for instance, remains mute but communicates with the audience with the ok sign:



Figure (5): Trump with OK Sign

3. "Evaluating": "silence" displays opinions on the "character, motives, and personality of other participants," including features like agreement or disagreement, as well as acceptance or disapproval. " The photo of Obama remaining silent provides an example:



Figure (6): Obama shows Disfavor

4. "Linkage": Just as silence may unite individuals, it can also drive a wedge between them. It has two possible readings. Here we see George W. Bush demonstrating his willingness to remain silent in solidarity

with the 9/11 victims' families..



Figure (7): G.W. Bush after 9\11 attacks

3.2 *Results of Analysis of Selected Speeches*

• *Speech of G.W. Bush :*

"The speaker: George W. Bush"

"Occasion: The World Will Always Remember 9/11" "Time: delivered December the 11th 2001"

"This republic is young, but its memory is long. Now, we have inscribed a new memory alongside those others. It is a memory of tragedy and shock, loss and mourning, not only loss and mourning. It is also a memory of bravery and self- sacrifice, and the love that lays down its life for a friend -- even a friend whose name it never knew".

"We are privileged to have with us the families of many of the heroes on September the 11th, including the family of Jeremy Glick of Flight 93. His courage and self-sacrifice may have saved the White House. It should be here we pay our respects".

"In time, perhaps, we will mark the memory of September the 11th in stone and metal-something we can show children as yet unborn to help them understand what happened on this minute and this day".

Analyzing this speech by the President of U.S.A. shows the following:

1. By refraining from naming names, the speaker is able to create victim equality through the power of silence. A person's race, religion, political affiliation, etc., may be at the heart of a name's mention. In addition, the speaker's expressions of sadness and attempts to avoid mentioning a specific family member are evident. As a result, the sorrow felt by that family might intensify.
2. The speaker purposefully kept quiet at some points so that it would seem as though something had happened that had upset them. To demonstrate that the victims' memories would not be erased, he spoke two words associated with sadness. Nothing would ever be forgotten about this atrocity or those victims.

Last but not least, by being silent, the speaker reveals the depth of his pain, as is typical of individuals when they are "hurt".

3. *Conclusion:*

I think it's safe to say that politicians may effectively convey their views to their audiences just by being silent. One of the several reasons people choose to remain silent is to protect their self-esteem, which may be a useful strategy for overcoming shyness or embarrassing situations. Additionally, it might sway their opinions. In order to keep their ties and connections with others intact, politicians often choose to

stay mute when asked to assess the thoughts of others. Silence can be demonstrative, effective, or emulative, according to the results of this study. Every kind serves a certain purpose. Distinct from being alone, silence implies presence just by being.

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