Pause as a Linguistic Element in Ernest Hemingway’s
Old Man at the Bridge, The Three Day Blow and The Revolutionist*

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Abstract

This study explores the significance of silence in Ernest Hemingway’s selected short stories. The study attempts to reveal the web of relationships between silence (as represented through linguistic elements) and certain themes and examines the interactive arrangement pertaining to these issues. Using the terminology of discourse analysis, this study deals with the functions and implications of silence, which, manifesting itself as “pause” in discourse, has a value of signification. The impetus behind this study is therefore to investigate which linguistic elements produce the patterns of silence that indicate declaration of nothingness, psychological resistance and ideological stance. In the first part of the discussion section, the thesis argues that, first; silence is used as a thematic marker, implying nothingness. Second, psychological resistance is of the fictional characters is depicted through silence. Lastly, silence contributes to the representation of ideological stance.

Key Words: Hemingway, Iceberg principle, silence, pause, turn/turn-taking

1. Introduction

Using the terminology of discourse analysis, this study deals with the functions and implications of silence, which hold a value of signification and indicates critical suggestions. Considering silence as a motif that manifests itself through pauses and turns in a conversational discourse, the study tries to investigate how linguistic elements produce the patterns of silence and contributes to its intended effect indicating resistance, nothingness and ideology. The study argues that by employing silence and presenting pauses in a certain array of their own, Hemingway’s texts build up a certain relationship between silence and the effect indicating psychological resistance, nothingness and lastly, ideological stance. It is clear that Hemingway’s Iceberg principle provides a basis for the pattern of silence, which nurtures the themes of inner psychological conflicts as a sign of resistance, nothingness as a sign of emotive response and ideological stance as a sign of the intellectual background of the characters.

As a linguistic element, pauses often create silent moments and Ernest Hemingway’s short stories can be analysed through following up these pauses (as a linguistic element and discursive device). Pause as a strategy is deliberately employed by Hemingway in order to underline major themes. Greaney (2005) discusses the minimalist style used in Ernest Hemingway’s his fiction, which is based on practical
features of conversational adult talk in everyday life. Erman (2001) states that “Adult talk [...] is frequently interrupted by pauses and points to long pauses of “considerable lengths to find the right word or phrase” (p. 1354). Fairclough (1992) states that “a fairly minimal type of transcription, which is adequate for many purposes, shows overlaps between speakers, pauses, and silences” (p. 229).

Ernest Hemingway’s the theory of omission, also known as iceberg principle, foregrounds the premise that a writer can reinforce the effect of a story by omitting or disregarding some units. This approach provides an important ground for Hemingway’s aforementioned minimalist style. It is noticeable that from this minimalist perspective, silence clearly deserves further analysis. Silence as a motif that recurrently appears in Hemingway’s short stories emphasizes his major themes. It can be observed that Hemingway’s main themes such as alienation, isolation and psychological resistance are depicted and strengthened by silence. Moreover, Hemingway remains silent in some scenes of the short stories in order to emphasize his ideological stance. John Updike (2003) commends Hemingway’s economic and plain narrative style: “it was he who showed us all how much tension and complexity unalloyed dialogue can convey, and how much poetry lurks in the simplest nouns and predicates” (p. X).

Ernest Hemingway’s Old Man At The Bridge (1938), The Three Day Blow (1925), The Revolutionist (1925) have been analysed. The reason why these stories have been selected lies in the fact that all of them include clear examples of pause as a discursive element. In this sense, the impetus behind this study is to offer a discourse analysis of Ernest Hemingway’s selected short stories in order to underline Hemingway’s unique language and discursive choices. Additionally, with the new perspectives that this study provides, it is hoped that researchers will be inspired to undertake further research.

2. Literature

The aim of this brief literature review section is to focus on Ernest Hemingway’s short stories with relevant references to his life that includes his political stance and the motif of silence and to provide theoretical information about discourse, discourse analysis, and its function in literary criticism. As well as dealing with pause and turn-taking mechanism the section tries to examine linguistic and discursive elements and their contribution to the language of literature.

Hemingway’s texts usually refrain from conveying the meaning explicitly. His characters are portrayed as having a certain degree of the power of silence wrought by his writing style with authentic and plain flavour and special features. Similar to other modernists, he underlines that language and style may transcend reality. Moreover, “These philosophical traits are evident in Hemingway’s formal and personal writing, as well as evident to those who encountered him on a personal basis” (Van Wyck Bienduga, 1999, p. 13). Therefore, Hemingway’s language and style include pauses and indicate thematic suggestions in terms of discourse which can be defined as a social mechanism. Johnstone (2002) regarded it as “actual instances of communicative action in the medium of language” (p. 2) and Foucault (1977) stresses the social function of discourse by describing it as “a socially constructed knowledge of some social practice” (as cited in Leeuwen, 2008: 6). As Barker and Galasinski (2001) mentions, “there is an interactive or dialectal relationship between discursive practices and the contexts in which they occur” and the discourse used in Hemingway’s stories overcomes sole representation combining it with a certain degree of evaluation and assimilating it with a serious sense of justification.

As Wodak and Meyer (2001) state that the history of systematic discourse studies started, “by chance and through the support of the University of Amsterdam, Teun van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, Gunther Kress, Theo van Leeuwen and Ruth Wodak spent two days together, and had the wonderful opportunity to discuss theories and methods of discourse analysis” (p. 4). Holtgraves (2002) underlines the fact that “the primary aim of discourse analysis is to bring to light the structural properties of talk” (p. 92). Barker and Galasinski (2001) points out the implementation process of discourse analysis. According to Van Dijk (1997), discourse analysis tends to examine written or verbal text. Local, global, cultural and social contexts should be evaluated as a constitutive part of discourse. Additionally, it
should be considered that language users are not only individuals, they also belong to a social circle. The flow of discourse is linear and sequential, that is, the units of discourse have definite functions with respect to previous ones.

The main aim of discourse analysis is to examine any written or spoken language notion, such as a conversation or a novel. Discourse analysis has diverse dimensions. For instance, Van Dijk (1985) states that discourse analysis aims at “the revelation of underlying personal or social patterns as they are expressed or indicated by text and talk, as in the ideological analysis of discourse, the methods of psychology, or the simulation programs of artificial intelligence” (p. 11). According to McCarthy (1991) “discourse analysis is concerned with the study of the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used” (p. 5). These contexts are responsible for creating different kinds of discourse analysis such as critical discourse analysis, textually oriented discourse analysis or social linguistic analysis. Fairclough (2003) compares textually oriented discourse analysis, named by himself, with classical discourse analysis, and he states that his theory is more socially and textually oriented than classical discourse analysis. Furthermore, scholars and writers studying critical discourse analysis emphasize their interest on hidden ideological framework in text or conversation.

This study aims to explore what lies behind the characters’ search for self-identity and to what extent their silence serves to underline the intended message. Furthermore, the technical background and the method of analysis offered by discourse analysis will be used in this study. In other words, discourse analysis whose concentration is mainly on certain linguistic verbal expressions and discursive patterns in a text can provide a useful methodology.

3. Methodology

This study aims to analyse how turn-taking processes in conversations take place and to what extent pause and turn-taking lead to silence in Hemingway’s short stories. Therefore, it discusses silence which is created by pause and turn-taking mechanism with regard to relationships between discursive elements and the attempted effect of Hemingway's short stories. In this sense, pauses “signal uncertainty, lack of confidence, or may be used by a speaker to create suspense, or to highlight something about to be said” (Herman, 1995, p. 96). Leech and Short (1981) clarifies the fact that “the voiced fullers er and erm, for example, are useful delaying devices, so that we are able to continue holding the floor while we think of what next to say” (p. 162). Pause in conversation, in general, occurs when a character chooses to remain silent and this “can signify hesitation, or be used as a ploy for emphasis” (Herman, 1998, p. 20). According to Brown and Yule (1983), “one obvious advantage of working with pauses is that they are readily identifiable and, apart from the very briefest “planning” pauses, judges have no difficulty in agreeing on their location. They are, furthermore, “amenable to instrumental investigation, hence, measurable” (p.161). This study proposes that pause and turn-taking, as linguistic elements, and silence whose literary effects can be observed in most of Hemingway stories have a linguistic bound. Hence, turn-taking mechanism and pause are investigated in selected short stories by Hemingway in order to disclose the hidden side of Hemingway’s iceberg. Wider description identifying the bound among silence, discourse analysis, turn-taking and pause will be provided in the section of data analysis instruments.

Research Questions

This study has two groups of research questions. The first, main question will examine the role of silence as a pattern in constructing the following themes: Declaration of nothingness, psychological resistance, and ideological stance. The second group of questions are the cooperative questions, which will be asked to address the main question.

1. How can “silence”, as a pattern and discursive motif observed in Ernest Hemingway’s short stories, be examined with the help of certain linguistic and discursive elements regarding the representation of self-exploration in the texts and dealing with the related themes of psychological resistance, declaration of nothingness and ideological stance?
2. What is the relationship between Hemingway’s characters and silence as a pattern?
3. What are the roles of the characters in constructing silence?
4. What is the function of silence in the construction of meaning in Hemingway’s selected short stories?

Data Analysis

According to the cooperative research questions, this study also aimed to explore the function of discursive elements and how they contribute to the discourse flow of Hemingway’s characters whose dialogues and manners are crucial for Hemingway’s narrative arrangement and characterization.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Declaration of Nothingness in Old Man at the Bridge

The story depicted the true destruction cause by war. What is outstanding about the story is that it uses an old man and some animals to make us realize where the true destruction of war lies. This story revolves around an old man who was forced to leave his hometown due to war. He does not have anyone to consider as family in the form of humans, but a few pets he regarded as his family. He is so attached to them where he gives individual attention to each one of them. In simple terms, he lives because of those animals. When the war breaks out, he is asked to leave his hometown because of heavy artillery. The most difficult thing for him is leaving his animals. He is constantly worried about the animals that cannot survive without him.

Turn Allocation and Turn Order

As he is forced to leave and the other people are evacuating the city, he has to leave the city, too. He walks twelve kilometres and stops just before the bridge which carries them to the other side of the river, regarded as the safe area. The old man refuses to cross the bridge claiming to be tired. He acts as if he tried to express something deepening in his heart:

(1) “He looked at me very blankly and tiredly, and then said, having to share his worry with someone, "The cat will be all right, I am sure. There is no need to be unquiet about the cat. But the others. Now what do you think about the others?"
(2) “Why they'll probably come through it all right.”
(3) “You think so?”
(4) “Why not,” I said, watching the far bank where now there were no carts.
(5) “But what will they do under the artillery when I was told to leave because of the artillery?”
(6) “Did you leave the dove cage unlocked?” I asked.
(7) “Yes.”
(8) “Then they'll fly.”
(9) “Yes, certainly they'll fly. But the others. It's better not to think about the others,” he said.
(10) “If you are rested I would go," I urged. "Get up and try to walk now."
(11) “Thank you,” he said and got to his feet, swayed from side to side and then sat down backwards in the dust.
(12) “I was taking care of animals,” he said dully, but no longer to me. “I was only taking care of animals.”

There was nothing to do about him. It was Easter Sunday and the Fascists were advancing toward the Ebro. It was a gray overcast day with a low ceiling so their planes were not up. That and the fact that cats know how to look after themselves was all the good luck that old man would ever have" (Hemingway, 1944, pp. 85-86).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn Numbers of the Characters in Old Man at the Bridge</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The old man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The narrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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</table>
As Table 1 suggests, the characters create 31 turns in total. 17 turns belong to the old man. And 14 turns belong to the narrator. The old man has seven and the narrator has five of the twelve turns in the extract. Therefore, same equality can be observed in it. Although this allocation may determine the old man as the dominant figure of the extract, it is a clear fact that the narrator is the dominant character due to his superiority on character selection. In turns 1, 3 and 5; the old man selects the narrator. On the other hand, the narrator selects the old man in turn 2, 6, 8 and 10. The narrator’s turn allocation strategy is persuasive. He insists on persuading the old man to leave for the town. On the contrary, the old man allocates his turns erratically. His turns do not respond the narrator’s insistence.

In the story, there is actually one character whose name is the old man. The narrator is involved in the dialogues while presenting the story. Figure 3 shows that 54.84% of turns belong to the old man, and 45.16% of turns are used by the narrator. In this context, turn order and percentage show that there is almost an equal allocation between the turns.

Analysis of Turn Texture and Size and Critical Remarks

Turn texture and size is standard. Characters produce short and evasive, one clause answers. The text does not exaggerate any meaning. Sentences constituting the turns are planned to just convey the message. The turns do not include any hidden meaning. Turn lengths of both characters serve to clear the atmosphere that brings the conversation to a silent moment.

Crossing the bridge promises a physically unharmed life, but, it fails to give psychological happiness to the old man. Those who are with their families have crossed because they hope to keep their families safe and to live with them. But the old man is deprived of any hope. After turn 12, both of the characters pause and Hemingway clarifies the silence by saying “There was nothing to do about him”. Using the word, “nothing” is a conscious choice for Hemingway because he wants to underline the sense of nothingness that covers the old man’s future. As a Hemingway theme, nothingness is manifested at this moment.

The old man loses his hope at the very moment he leaves his animals. Therefore, it can be said that he psychologically and symbolically dies at the moment he leaves his animals. That is because he loses his hope and his whole reason for existence. The old man constantly mentions nothingness when he says that he’s tired. By using silence, Hemingway subtly mentions the deracination of war, which occurs when people lose their hope as in the situation with the old man.

4.2. Psychological Resistance in The Three Day Blow

The Three Day Blow mainly revolves around happenings at a day when Bill and Nick Adams become stuck in a cottage due to a storm. The cottage belongs to Bill’s father. While talking about daily happenings and drinking Bill’s father’s whiskey, Bill and Nick become drunk. A couple days ago, Nick broke off an emotional friendship with Marjorie with whom Nick was going to marry. Suddenly, they start to talk about this. Despite Nick’s opposition, Bill insists on speaking about this issue. During the first storms of autumn, the most important storm simultaneously occurs inside the mind of Nick Adams.

Turn Allocation and Turn Order

As Bill and Nick sit in front of the fireplace inside the cottage, they drink and talk about fishing, baseball and relationships. Then, suddenly, Bill tells Nick that he is glad that Marjorie is gone and he doesn’t want to see Nick married:

“They drank. Bill filled up the glasses. They sat down in the big chairs in front of the fire.
(1) ‘You were very wise, Wemedge,’ Bill said.
(2) ‘What do you mean?’ asked Nick.
(3) ’To bust off that Marge business,’ Bill said.
(4) I guess so,’ said Nick.
‘It was the only thing to do. If you hadn't, by now you'd be back home working trying to get enough money to get married.’

Nick said nothing.

‘Once a man’s married he’s absolutely bitched,’ Bill went on. ‘He hasn’t got anything more. Nothing. Not a damn thing. He’s done for. You’ve seen the guys that get married.’

Nick said nothing.

‘You can tell them,’ Bill said. ‘They get this sort of fat married look. They’re done for.’

‘Sure,’ said Nick.

‘It was probably bad busting it off,’ Bill said. ‘But you always fall for somebody else and then it’s all right. Fall for them but don’t let them ruin you.’

‘Yes,’ said Nick.

‘If you’d have married her you would have had to marry the whole family. Remember her mother and that guy she married, Nick nodded’ (Hemingway, 1944, p. 117).

There are 12 turns in this extract and all of them belong to the two speakers. Turns are equally allocated between the speakers in the whole story. However, in the extract above, 8 out of 12 turns belong to Bill. This refers to a dominancy performed by Bill in this scene. Furthermore, Bill chooses Nick in turn 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 12. The flow of the conversation is directed by Bill’s sentences. This refers to a dominancy that stems from Bill’s selecting Nick as a speaker.

Table 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Number of Turns</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>92 turns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>96 turns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>188 turns</td>
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In the story, there are two characters whose names are Nick and Bill. As Table 2 presents, this story consists of 188 turns in total. While Nick uses 92 turns, Bill creates 96 turns in total. The conversation between Nick and Bill depends on direct mutual speech. This indicates a different kind of dominance belonging to Bill. In spite of Bill’s dominancy, Nick prefers remaining silent. After turn 5 and 6, Bill declares that Nick gives the correct decision by breaking off his romantic relationship with Marjorie; Nick pauses, and says “nothing”. Nick remains silent though Bill tries to convince him to declare his opinion.

Analysis of Turn Texture and Size and Critical Remarks

Both turn texture and size are unsteady. Bill creates turns that are generally longer. His turns include two or more sentences. He prefers longer turns including two or more sentences in order to convince Nick to open his heart. Nick, on the other hand, creates short, one clause turns, including evasive answers eventuating with a pause. Bill’s excessive and persuasive discourse and Nick’s silent manner are part of their friendship, which construct a bridge between speech and silence.

To the end of the story, Bill continues to insist on convincing Nick to declare that he is right for breaking off his emotional bound with Marjorie. As it can be seen in turn 5 and 6, Bill intentionally criticizes the idea of marriage. He clearly states that a married man is “done for” (Hemingway, 1944, p. 117). Nick does not say anything. He pauses. Nick actively gives no answer when addressed by Bill. Contrary to Bill’s provocation, Nick understands that he is still in love with Marjorie. For this reason, he intentionally ignores Bill’s words and performs a psychological resistance, even if he doesn’t take his turn. In fact, he performs obvious turn lapses, revealing Nick’s inner feeling of regret, to Bill’s turn 5 and 6. Nick’s silent moments are the turning points when he realizes that all is not over with Marjorie.
Consequently, Nick experiences a psychological challenge in his inner mind, but he has succeeded in overcoming it.

### 4.3. Ideological Stance in The Revolutionist

*The Revolutionist* takes place in 1919 on the railroads in Italy; a man is traveling with a written recommendation from party headquarters that states he is a loyal comrade who was tortured by “Horthy's men” in Hungary for his political beliefs. The central character in Ernest Hemingway's short story *The Revolutionist* is an idealistic young comrade traveling alone in Italy. The traveler is described as a young boy: “a very nice boy and very shy” (Hemingway, 1944, p. 119). Hemingway portrays him as a revolutionist retaining an unshakeable faith in the communist revolution. The young comrade is happy to be in Italy and despite the fact that the narrator, who meets up with him in Bologna, a Fascist stronghold, tells him that the movement in Italy is going very badly, he believes that things will get better.

#### Turn Allocation and Turn Order

In the story, the young communist traveling by train through Italy states that he loves paintings and visiting art galleries. He admires Giotto, Masaccio, and Pierodella Francesca, but not Mantegna. The second character, acting as the story's narrator, changes the subject. They start to talk about the political situation in the Europe, especially Italy:

“It was early September and the country was pleasant. He was a Magyar, a very nice boy and very shy. Horthy’s men had done some bad things to him. He talked about it a little. In spite of Hungary, he believed altogether in the world revolution. (1) “But how is the movement going in Italy” he asked.

(2) “very badly,” I said

(3) “But it will go better.” he said. “You have everything here. It is the one country that every one is sure of. It will be the starting point of everything. I didn’t say anything” (Hemingway, 1944, p. 71).

Table 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Number of Turns</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The young communist</td>
<td>3 turns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The narrator</td>
<td>1 turn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>4 turns</strong></td>
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</table>

As the Table 3 reveals, there are four turns in this story in total. Three of them are performed by the young communist and one of them belongs to the narrator. Despite the fact that the story has only four turns, turn order occurs in an unequal way. The young communist allocates his turns in a natural way. He does not have any specific intentions. He allocates turns only to pass his turn to another. There are just three turns in the extract above. Two turns belong to the young communist while only one is performed by the narrator. All selections are made by the young communist.

#### Analysis of Turn Texture and Size and Critical Remarks

Both turn texture and size are various, since participants’ choices determine the size and texture of the extract. The young communist creates long and multi-clause turns. The young communist is hopeful that a Communist revolution will occur and his optimism is reflected in his sentences. He uses
long and explanatory sentences. He speaks a manner which suggests that he wants to talk about life and future. On the contrary, the narrator generates short and sharp turns. Although the revolutionist believes that things will get better, the narrator doesn’t agree with him and his negative thoughts on Italy’s future are reflected in his answer. The narrator is characterized as thoughtful, pessimistic and silent by Hemingway. In addition to Hemingway’s depictions, this characterization can also be observed in his single answer.

Brustein and Bernston (1999) state that “the national legislative elections of 1919 clearly demonstrated the Left's growing popular support in Italy” (p. 161). Therefore, the revolutionist considers Italy to be “the one country that every one is sure of” (Hemingway, 1944, p. 71) and underlines in turn 3 that everything about revolution will start from here. After these words, the narrator pauses and does not say anything. Despite being aware of the current leftward swing of American writers, Hemingway doesn't get involved in the borders of any ideology, but, it is a widely known fact that Ernest Hemingway supports freedom against totalitarian regimes. It is clear that the narrator represents Hemingway himself; he is staring mournfully at the revolutionist while he is dreaming of a better world led by the Communist movement. As the narrator, Hemingway remains mournfully silent, for it is the Fascists who are taking over, not leftists.

Hemingway was knowledgeable about Italian politics and deeply pessimistic about the country's future. Morgan (2004) expresses the situation in which Italy faced: “The period from October 1922 to January 1925 marked the transition from the liberal parliamentary system to the Fascist state. Like many political transitions it was an untidy and complicated process, a hybrid of elements of the old and new political order as one overlapped with and superseded the other” (p. 76). Hemingway was right to be anxious about Italy's future as Italy was experiencing dark days. In this context, it can be suggested that Hemingway imposes a pause into his story, The Revolutionist, to strengthen a meaningful silence; the ultimate aim of this was to convey Hemingway's political thoughts to the reader.

5. Conclusion

This study has carried out a discourse analysis examining turn-taking processes in conversations and investigated to what extent pause, as a linguistic element, leads to silence in Hemingway’s selected short stories, producing certain thematic implications. The study has revealed that silent moments are significantly observed in conversations and become apparent in particular pauses. A dominant or shy character, which can be indicated by the total number of turns, can be portrayed through silence determined pauses and turns. The dominant characters who often direct the conversation, also controls the flow of speech. Shy or hesitant characters exposed to pressure by the dominant characters, are the ones who recurrently pause and produce or exploit silence.

The study has also examined the function of silence in the construction of meaning. Regarding Hemingway’s Iceberg Principle, also known as the theory of omission, it is seen that the author used “omission” as a strategy. Incomplete statements or suspended questions during silent moments invite the reader to imagine. The interventions and interruptions are as well full of implications supported by the demonstrated numerical data in the tables. The study has revealed that there is a reliable consistency between these figures and themes explored in the stories.

The study has shown that silence as a pattern, undertakes a significant function in exploring different concerns with regard to the central theme of identity. Study of silence within the framework of psychological resistance, declaration of nothingness and ideological stance shed light on the issue of search for self-identity. Since silence, in linguistic terms, manifests itself as pause in discourse, this study has been devoted to investigation of pause (and related conversational devices or acts of speech). It is seen that the role of pauses and turn-takings in the conversational acts of the characters in Hemingway’s stories conforms to the recurrent motif of silence, which is also supported by the quantitative data provided by this research. Hemingway’s insistence on the use of pause is therefore highly suggestive for those who are interested in the recurrent motif of silence in the short stories. His
persistent use of this kind of linguistic element in his flowery economic language, which frequently employs pauses and turn-takings, can amount to suggestions as to how the reader gains insights into the self-exploration of the characters and, when investigated by using discourse analysis, brings about linguistic evidence for discursive implications in terms of meaning and further interpretation. This type of analysis, derived from assessment of the linguistic elements of natural talk, results in further implications and functions of conversational interaction.

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* This paper is based on the research carried out as part of the following MA study: Gültekin, Hakan. Pause as a Linguistic and Discursive Element: Silence in Earnest Hemingway's Short Stories, MA Thesis, Supervised by M. Z. Çıraklı, Karadeniz Technical University, Trabzon, Turkey, 2014. The author is a PhD candidate at the Department of English Language and Literature, İstanbul Aydın University, Turkey.