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The Functions of Silence in Confrontational Discourse

Abstract

The present research attempts to highlight the functions of silence in confrontational discourse in television interviews within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Conversation Analysis (CA). The research starts with the hypothesis that silence can be used for expressing power in discourse. Since silence represents an element of discontinuity in speech, it occurs relatively rarely in confrontational discourse, which is characterized by continuous flow of speech and a quick turn-taking system. However, when it does occur, it is particularly obvious and can represent either an expression of power or absence of power. The research focuses on pauses and gaps, analyzes their functions of power, and is conducted as a contrastive analysis between English and Serbian. The results obtained show that both in the English and Serbian corpora, silence in confrontational discourse can indeed be a means for expressing power, but also a sign that the speaker is in an unfavourable position.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Conversation Analysis, silence, pause, gap, power relations, English, Serbian

1. Introduction

While watching BBC's Hardtalk interviews and the program's counterparts in different languages, we are aware of the continuous speech flow characteristics of these kinds of confrontational interviews, which include fast turn-taking, speakers repeatedly interrupting one another, and frequent overlaps which can go on for quite a long time. This means that no speaker gives up the floor easily. There is an element of confrontation during the whole interview which is often on the

verge of conflict. In this setting, silence is something no one expects. However, instances of silence do occur even in these fast-paced conversations. The idea that led to this research was that silence might have an important role in confrontational discourse. This research is based on the hypothesis that silence has a function of power in interviews of the Hardtalk type, either of power control or lack of control.

2. Theoretical Background and Methodology

This kind of research requires a combination of two seemingly opposing linguistic disciplines: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to cover the study of the functions of power silence might have in discourse and Conversation Analysis (CA) to deal with the conversational aspect of the discourse of news interviews. The literature on the relationship between CDA and CA only offers an insight into their differences and some criticism on the part of CA directed towards CDA (Schegloff, Wooffitt, Breeze, among others). There is very little to be found about the possible combinations of the two disciplines (Fairclough, Discourse and Social Change; Wetherell).

Although both CDA and CA are concerned with analyzing naturally-occurring talk and interaction, they use different approaches. CA follows a bottom-up method, while CDA opts for a top-down approach. Namely, CA assumes meticulous analysis of data gathered by recording conversations. The recordings are turned into detailed transcripts where conversationalists take down not only what speakers say, but also vocal stress, silences, overlapping talk, interruptions, intonation, and the rate of speech. In this way, CA rejects any pre-established theory in the interpretation of data. On the other hand, CDA looks at the linguistic data from the perspective of a pre-established social framework, or a particular theory of social relations. This results in studying particular aspects or elements of language that correspond to a particular theoretical view.

When CDA first appeared on the linguistic scene, the conversationalists were among its most eager critics. The first CDA research papers were received with scepticism and criticism. Along with Widdowson (Discourse analysis, Reply to Fairclough) and Stubbs, who criticized CDA from their respective points of view, Schegloff, one of the co-founders of CA, engaged in finding fault with the work of critical discourse analysts from the conversationalists' perspective. In his paper

Whose text, whose context? he argues that CDA often lacks a detailed and systematic analysis of speech and text. The following excerpt illustrates his main points of criticism:

I understand that critical discourse analysts have a different project, and are addressed to different issues, and not to the local co-construction of interaction. If, however, they mean the issues of power, domination, and the like to connect up with discursive material, it should be a serious rendering of that material. . . . Otherwise the critical analysis will not 'bind' to the data, and risks ending up merely ideological. (183)

In her reply to Schegloff, Margaret Wetherell agrees that conversationalists analyze talk-in-interaction in an excellent way, but they avoid any further social analysis or critique:

If the problem with post-structuralist analysts is that they rarely focus on actual social interaction, then the problem with conversational analysts is that they rarely raise their eyes from the next turn in the conversation, and, further, this is not an entire conversation or sizeable slice of social life but usually a tiny fragment. (402)

She also argues that although CDA and CA may not share the same research fields or goals, they are not necessarily conflicting. She suggests a more synthetic approach and thinks that these two disciplines should be complementary instead of opposing. This is also the starting point of this research which focuses on the functions of power that silence can have in the confrontational discourse of television interviews. The study of power in discourse falls into the domain of CDA. As Weiss and Wodak put it, "CDA takes a particular interest in the relationship between language and power [...]. This research specifically considers more or less overt relations of struggle and conflict" (12).

Silence, however, is studied from the CA perspective (Sacks et al.; Levinson, Jaworski, Hutchby; Wooffitt; Nakane; among many others). Therefore, it seems that the analysis of silence within a CDA research is not feasible without the methods of CA. The possibility and even the necessity of combining different theories and methods in doing CDA research is further stressed in the work of many CDA proponents (Fairclough, Discourse and Social Change; Chouliaraki and Fairclough; Weiss and Wodak). Weiss and Wodak add that CDA is essentially multidisciplinary:

CDA has never been and has never attempted to be or to provide one single or specific theory, and one specific methodology is not characteristic of research in CDA. On the contrary, studies in CDA are multifarious, derived from quite different theoretical backgrounds and oriented towards very different data and methodologies. (12).

The methodology, therefore, combines CDA and CA, as well as contrastive analysis of English and Serbian corpora. The corpus used in the present study includes BBC Hardtalk news interviews and its Serbian counterpart B92 Poligraf. The English corpus comprises 27 interviews. The average length of each interview is approximately 23 minutes. The Serbian corpus consists of 22 interviews. They are slightly longer than their English counterparts and last for about 28 minutes. Each corpus consists of approximately 10 hours of conversation.

3. The Institutional Setting of Confrontational Discourse

The news interview is a specific form of conversation characterized by "a unique constellation of participants, subject matter, and interactional form" (Heritage and Clayman 215). In the first place, it is a type of institutional discourse where the power relations are asymmetrical. Television interviews are normally controlled by the interviewers, starting with the choice of guests and topics to be covered. It is the interviewer (IR) who asks questions, changes the topic(s) during the interview and is essentially the time manager. "The reporter is projected as a figure of authority, someone who knows (has 'the facts'), and someone who has the right to tell." (Fairclough, Media Discourse 4) However, the journalists must follow some rules as well. Hutchby and Wooffitt compare the roles of the questioner in the courtroom (attorney) and in the broadcast news interview (journalist). In both cases, the questioners are to restrain from stating their opinions openly because of the audience: "For different reasons, the audience in each case is supposed to draw inferences and make judgements about the one being questioned without undue influence from the questioner" (151). Clayman and Heritage note that IRs should also distance themselves during the interaction and act as if they were not the "primary recipients of interviewee responses and thereby 'deflect' them towards the news audience" (98).

On the other hand, the interviewees (IE) should restrict themselves to answering questions, and therefore they can do little regarding discourse control. Since the institutionality itself provides the IR with power, one would expect to find both linguistic (such as specific vocabulary or syntactic structures), and metalinguistic (silence, interruptions and overlaps) means in the IR's speech.[1] However, this is not always the case. Sometimes, the IE takes control by way of using either linguistic or metalinguistic elements in their discourse. This control may be short-lived, but it brings some balance into the conversation of unequal participants.

To make things more dynamic and interesting for the audience, and to put the interviewees under greater pressure to reveal the required information, a new type of news interview was brought to life in 1997 – the BBC Hardtalk interview. Its description can be found on the BBC internet site: "In-depth interviews with hard-hitting questions and sensitive topics being covered as famous personalities from all walks of life talk about the highs and lows in their lives" (BBC.com). Its Serbian counterpart – the B92 Poligraf – is described as a confrontational interview (B92.net). These interviews differ from the common news interviews because there is an element of confrontation constantly present during the dialogue. The confrontation arises from the fact that the participants attempt to achieve different objectives. The IRs' goal is to obtain as much information as possible about a topic, while the IEs' aim to reveal only the information they deem appropriate (Nikolić). Moreover, IRs do not simply ask questions; they insist on answers, and the questions are more provocative and delicate than in regular news interviews. The pace is fast, interruptions and overlaps abound to the extent that it is sometimes difficult to make out what is actually said.

In this setting, silence occurs on rare occasions, but when it does it cannot go unnoticed. This research attempts to uncover its functions of power.

4. Silence

Silence is an integral part of any conversation. Speakers make pauses from time to time for various reasons which can make these silences either insignificant or highly functional. If we pay particular attention to silences in a conversation, we will notice that they usually occur within one

speaker's turn or at a transition relevance place (the completion of a turn constructional unit, i.e., when another speaker takes a turn).

Conversationalists recognize that turn-taking runs smoothly, with almost "miraculous" spontaneity and precision. Levinson notices that "gaps between one person speaking and another starting are measurable in just a few micro-seconds" (296-97). Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, the main proponents of CA, state that "Transitions (from one turn to a next) with no gap and no overlap are common. Together with transitions characterized by a slight gap or slight overlap, they make up the vast majority of transitions" (700-01). Conversationalists take for granted that speakers are capable of reacting within split-second precision timing – a fact which is supported by numerous studies (Sacks et al.; Jefferson, "A case of precision timing"). However, they do not claim that silence is not a constituent part of a conversation; indeed, they cannot since it is obvious from transcripts that it occurs frequently. Instead, conversationalists maintain that when silence occurs, it is not random, accidental or meaningless.

CA distinguishes between (1) intra-turn silences and (2) inter-turn silences. Intra-turn silences are called pauses and they occur within the turn of one speaker. Inter-turn silences are further divided into gaps and lapses and occur at a transition relevance place. CA does not explicitly state the difference between gaps and lapses. The only difference mentioned is that lapses are extended gaps (Sacks et al. 715). We therefore analyze inter-turn silences as gaps. Moreover, conversationalists measure precisely the length of each pause, gap and lapse. For the purpose of this analysis, the length of the silence is not particularly relevant, so gaps and lapses are treated as the same inter-turn silences.

Other scholars have also analyzed silence and its communicative functions (Brown and Levinson; Jaworski; Watts; and many others) but not explicitly from the CDA perspective. A comprehensive study of silence in intercultural communication was undertaken by Nakane, who identifies the following forms of silence: (1) intra-turn pauses, (2) inter-turn (switching) pauses / gaps, (3) turn-constituting silences with illocutionary force, (4) temporary silence of individuals who do not hold the floor in interaction, (5) an individual's total withdrawal of speech in a speech event, (6) silence of a group of participants as a constituent of social / religious events, (7) discourse suppressed by a dominant force at various levels of social organization. Nakane stresses the complexity and

ambiguousness of the use of silence and points out that not all these forms are significant or noticeable in everyday speech. This is especially true for confrontational interviews. Only the first two forms, which correspond to the types described by CA, were identified in the corpus.

All the above-mentioned lead to the conclusion that silence is relatively rare and has no significant functions in speech. This is particularly true in confrontational discourse which is faster and time-limited and on the verge of conflict; therefore, the participants in this type of conversation do not have time for being silent. Silence can also mean that a speaker is giving up the floor, which seldom happens in confrontations. Therefore, when a silence occurs it is very obvious and noticeable.

5. Results and Discussion

The results of the research showed three types of silence identified in the present corpus: (1) pause, (2) gap, and (3) pause/gap. Slight gaps that are a normal part of any conversation were not taken into account, nor were the pauses that are a feature of a speaker's individual manner of speaking, since they do not have any functions of power in discourse. The following examples illustrate the results of the analysis. All types of silence are noted as (. . .).

5.1. Pause

Pauses can be found within the turns of both IRs and IEs. As expected, they do not occur often. The first example shows a pause made by the IR (English corpus):

(1)

IR:Before we end erm I wanna ask you something a little bit more personal. It's something it's always intrigued me about you. Your your parents, I think, your father was originally Ukrainian, from Ukraine; your mom was from what's now known as Belarus. Both both were Jews, both arrived in the United States and it's perhaps fair to say that had they not made it to the United States [they'd have

IE: [They would have been killed.

IR:been killed

IE:Sure.

IR: faced terrible turmoil . . .

IE: Like the rest of the family who didn't come, yes.

IR:(. . .) Your work for more than forty years has focused on what you called the terrorism, the criminal acts of the United States. (. . .) And yet your parents knew America was a safe haven, as a place of opportunity, of security (. . .) How, how do those two elements of your life fit together?

(IR: Stephen Sackur; IE: Noam Chomsky)

This example is taken from an interview with Noam Chomsky. The whole interview focuses on Chomsky's criticism of the USA. Towards the end of the interview, and after a carefully worded introduction, the IR asks a very provocative question after making three pauses during his turn: (1) before the statement that the IE has long been criticizing the US; (2) before mentioning that the object of his criticism was chosen as a new home by his parents; (3) before the question itself. The IR here does not express uncertainty but power. The function of each pause is complete control achieved by contrasting two facts and pauses. The IR draws our attention to the question with which he intends to end his turn, thus making us assume that it is going to be of the utmost importance for the interview.

The next example illustrates the same technique used by the IR from the Serbian corpus.

(2)

IR:Kažete bavićete se, odnosno zbrinućete samo one ljude koji imaju prebivalište u Beogradu i prebacili ste lopticu na ministra Ljajića kad su u pitanju ostali. Ali, (...) sva je prilika da će ostali ipak nekako ostati u Beogradu. Šta ćete sa njima?

(IR:You say you will deal with, that is to say you will provide for the people who reside in Belgrade and you pass the buck on to Minister Ljajić when others are concerned. However, (. . .) it seems evident that somehow the others are still going to remain in Belgrade. What are you going to do with them?)

(IR: Antonela Riha; IE: Milan Krkobabić, Deputy Mayor of Belgrade)

The topic is the relocation of Roma families from an illegal shanty settlement located under one of the central bridges in Belgrade that has been a problem for a long time. The Deputy Mayor does not provide sufficient answers to the IR's questions about what is being done to relocate the people who are not from Belgrade, so the IR insists on a direct answer. As in the example from the English corpus, the pause occurs before the contrasting sentence. The IR draws the attention of the IE as well as of the audience to the words that they are about to hear. This can also be a signal the IE must be very careful how he answers the question. The discourse marker however is used before the pause to further emphasize the provocation.

The two following examples illustrate pauses made by the IEs. Only a few such instances were found in each corpus, which clearly shows that pauses are predominantly a feature of the IR's speech. Example 3 is taken from the same interview as example 1. The topic is still Noam Chomsky's criticism of US foreign policy.

(3)

IR:Back in '69 when your main focus was activism against the Vietnam War, you wrote: "What is needed in the US is a kind of denazification."

IE:That's a very common quote from the right wing. Do you know the context? (. . .) Well, look at the context. It was in 1967. The Chicago Museum of Science, a very well known institution, had an exhibit which was a diorama of a Vietnamese village and which children could stand on the outside and shoot guns into the Vietnamese village. OK. A group of mothers protested and the New York Times had an editorial denouncing the mothers because they were taking they were taking away the fun from the kiddies who were having a great time shooting guns into a Vietnamese village. (. . .) That's the context.

(IR: Stephen Sackur; IE: Noam Chomsky)

Here the IE uses the pause in the same way to draw the attention of the audience to the issue he intends to clarify. He starts and ends the story with repeating the word context and two pauses, both of them dramatic pauses, thus rounding up his account and at the same time emphasizing his words.

In the Serbian example, the IE uses a succession of pauses to emphasize what he says. The question is whether an MP should lose his mandate in Parliament if he switches parties. The IE strongly disagrees and expresses his attitude with a combination of rhetorical questions and pauses:

(4)

IE:Ali govori se o mom mandatu. (. . .) Ustav kaže: poslanik svoj mandat, svoj mandat, ali to je apsolutno moj mandat. (. . .) A čiji je? (. . .) Ko je osvojio taj mandat? Tomislav Nikolić.

(IE:But it is about my mandate. (. . .) The Constitution says: an MP's mandate, MP's mandate, so it's absolutely my mandate. (. . .) Whose is it? (. . .) Who won that mandate? Tomislav Nikolić.

(IR: Antonela Riha; IE: Tomislav Nikolić, Leader of the Serbian Progressive Party)

Pause is obviously a premeditated silence, made intentionally by a speaker in order to prepare the other speaker, and even more importantly the audience, to what that speaker is about to say. We can even call it a dramatic pause since it signals almost theatrically that something important is to be said. The longer the pause, the more noticeable it is, and the more significance in power control it bears. It is more often used by IRs for the obvious reason that, unlike the IEs, they can prepare their questions ahead of the interview very carefully and even plan how to formulate them and when to use pauses. It is needless to say that pause alone is not always sufficient for taking over or retaining control in discourse. It usually combines with other linguistic and metalinguistic elements, for example, careful wording and formulation of turns.

5.2. Gap

It has already been mentioned that this type of interview abounds in sensitive, hard-hitting and provocative questions. Although both the IRs and the IEs are experienced people in handling such conversations, it is not surprising that occasionally some of them are left speechless. The examples in this section illustrate gaps which occur at transition relevance places. Like pauses, gaps rarely occur in confrontational discourse. Example 5 is from an interview with Oliver Stone (English corpus), where the film director makes a gap after a very provocative and delicate question:

(5)

IR:I'm interested that you mentioned your father. He he came from a finance background. I'm just wondering whether the sort of psychological sort of analysis you've put into some of your movies, I'm thinking about your presidential movies, your portrait of Nixon, or of JFK or indeed of W. George W. Bush, where you play around with the backgrounds, their relationships with their families and in particular their fathers. If people did the same thing to you, to Oliver Stone, would your films generally reflect something important about your background and in particular your relationship with your family and your father?

IE:(. . .) Well, Stephen, that's a tough question you blew. You're asking me to self-psychoanalyze [myself.

IR: [But you do it, you know, you do it to other people. I'm now asking you to do it to yourself.

IE: Yeah but you know I don't think that's fair. I mean, I'm not here for a confessional.

(IR: Stephen Sackur; IE: Oliver Stone, film director)

The IR makes an unusually long introduction to his question which takes the IE completely by surprise and he does not know how to answer it. He actually admits that after the gap he creates. Since he regards this as too intimate a question, he, therefore, covertly avoids answering, and after the IR insists, overtly.

For the sake of comparison between two different reactions after gaps, another example is shown from the English corpus. Unlike Oliver Stone, Jon Smith reacts in a completely different way after being forced to create a gap. The topic of this interview is the football business.

(6)

IR:How clean is the business that you're in?

IE:(. . .) Good question. I would say as we sit here today in 2010 it's sizeably a clean industry. There are dark corners still.

(IR: Stephen Sackur; IE: Jon Smith, football agent)

This is again a very tough question, because it is well known what the turnover in the football business is like. No agent likes to talk about that openly in public, so the IE is in a delicate situation, much like Oliver Stone in the previous example. However, he decides upon a different approach to the question. He chooses to give a partial and ambiguous answer, but not before a significantly long gap which he obviously uses to think of a way out.

The Serbian corpus offers similar examples. In an interview with Milan Obradović, Head of the Administration for the Execution of Penitentiary Sanctions, the IR asks a question about a possible connection between a vehicle allegedly parked in front of the Military Medical Academy (MMA) and an escape plan for the prisoner Milorad Ulemek Legija.

(7)

IR:Znam da ne možete, da da postoje stvari koje ne možete da kažete, ali moram da Vas pitam jer se i to pojavilo u medijima, da li je tačno da policija i BIA vode istragu o izvesnom belom kombiju koji je, navodno, bio parkiran te noći ispred Vojno medicinske akademije. Da li postoji istraga, šta je tačno u ovoj informaciji koja je objavljena, šta možete ustvari da mi potvrdite?

IE:(. . .) Ja lično nemam saznanja da je kombi postojao ispred VMA, nisam bio ispred VMA, nije bilo u planu da se bilo ko od lica vozi na VMA pa ni Milorad Ulemek, tako da zaista ne znam . . .

(IR:I know you cannot, that that there are things you cannot say, but I have to ask you because it appeared in the media, is it true that the police and BIA are conducting an investigation of a certain white van that was allegedly parked that night in front of the Military Medical Academy? Is there an investigation? What is true in this information that has been published? What can you actually confirm?

IE:(. . .) Personally, I don’t have any information about a van in front of the MMA, I wasn’t in front of the MMA, it hadn’t been planned to drive anyone to the MMA including Milorad Ulemek, therefore, I really don’t know . . .

(IR: Jugoslav Ćosić; IE: Milan Obradović, Head of the Administration for the Execution of Penitentiary Sanctions)

The IR uses a succession of questions which the IE cannot or is not allowed to answer because of the confidential nature of the information. After a gap which signals his indecisiveness, the IE clearly evades the answer, stating that he knows nothing about the incident.

It is common for IRs to ask sensitive or provocative questions after which the IEs are left speechless. But IRs can prepare their questions beforehand. This is one of the key features of the institutionality of interviews. However, gaps in such interviews are much more noticeable when they occur in the IR's speech. The two following examples are among the very rare ones found in the corpus analysed in both languages. Gaps made by the IRs require very eloquent and resourceful IEs. Noam Chomsky is definitely one of them. After the IR tries to justify the US bombing of Afghanistan, this is what Noam Chomsky says:

(8)

IE:If you think you know suppose the British discovered – as they have, in fact – that that some of the people involved in IRA bombing are in the United States and they've called for extradition of those people, the US has refused. Do they then have the right to bomb the United States?

IR:(. . .) You think they're. . . No, of course not.

IE:Well, fine. Then you don't think that the United States has the right to bomb Afghanistan. 'Cause it's the same thing.

(IR: Tim Sebastian; IE: Noam Chomsky)

He almost uses the discourse strategies lawyers use in courts to interrogate witnesses. By means of a hypothetical comparative situation combined with a rhetorical question, he challenges the IR to give an answer that is obvious to everyone. The gap that follows gives the IE the opportunity to hold the control in discourse for a while longer, which he seizes and continues by making a concluding remark about the topic in question. After the last statement in the above example, the IR changes the topic, thus confirming that there was role-switching in the previous exchange of turns and that the IE was the more powerful participant.

A slightly different situation leads to a similar reaction from an IR in the next example from the Serbian corpus.

(9)

IR:I sad nešto sasvim sasvim drugačije. Danas u jednim novinama se pojavila vest, a Vi i najavljujete već neko vreme da ćete ojačati stranku, da će akademik Mihajlo Marković preći u Vašu stranku, pa čak i braća Petrović, Mirko i Draško. Da li je to tačno?

IE:Ja to nisam rekao, niti je mislim da to nije rekao niko iz stranke.

IR:(. . .) Ja [nisam rekla da ste Vi rekli, nego prosto to...

IE: [Mogu da vam govorim o ljudima koji su već potpisali pristupnice...

(IR:And now something completely completely different. Today, in a newspaper a news item appeared, and you have been announcing for a while that you are going to strengthen your party, that the academic Mihajlo Marković is about to join your party, and even brothers Petrović, Mirko and Draško. Is this true?

IE:I didn't say that, nor did. . . I think no one from my party said that.

IR:(. . .) I [didn't say that YOU said, it's just that. . .

IE: [I can talk about people who have already signed their membership forms. . .)

(IR: Antonela Riha; IE: Tomislav Nikolić, Leader of the Serbian Progressive Party)

After a question about possible new members of the IE's political party, the IE does not provide an answer; instead he denies that anyone from his party, himself included, said anything about the news. Unprepared for such a reaction on the part of the IE, the IR is at a loss for words and creates a gap, thereby temporarily losing control over the discourse. The IE takes control and continues speaking.

The last two excerpts are examples of breaking the norms of interview behaviour, which also accounts for the power-shifting on those occasions. We can see in example 8 that the IE manages to take control of the discourse simply by taking over the role of the IR and asking a question. Such occasions are rare but can occur when an IE decides or manages to break the normative conventions of the institutional discourse. Two things happen in examples 8 and 9: (1) the participants switch their predetermined roles, whereby the powerful role is assumed by the powerless participant which leads to power switching, and (2) the IE then asks a rhetorical

question which does not require an answer. Consequently, the IR creates a gap which signals that he has lost the floor and control.

The normative behaviour in news interviews does not allow simple short answers, be they short answers grammatically speaking or short in the sense that the IE simply confirms or denies the previous statement or question. In the case of a yes/no question, after answering it, the IE normally provides an explanation. When such an explanation is not given, IRs in confrontational interviews usually insist on obtaining an answer. Since they are usually experienced journalists, they are normally prepared for such situations. However, as we can see from example 9, they may occasionally be taken by surprise. As in example 8, the IR's gap is a signal of power-switching.

Although there are examples of intentional gaps in everyday conversations, this corpus does not offer a single one. Gaps found in the research were all made unintentionally and were provoked by the previous speaker. This might be so because of the nature of the confrontational interview. As was mentioned previously, the quick pace and fast turn-taking of the confrontational interview do not actually allow the speakers to create gaps intentionally because they might easily lose the floor which also means they lose control over the discourse.

5.3. Pause or gap

Sometimes, we cannot be sure whether a silence at the transition relevance place is a gap or a pause. This is the case in both the following examples. It is interesting to note that only these two examples were found in the whole corpus, one in each language.

(10)

IR:So, I just want to summarize this with you that decline in prosperity in the West is not inevitable if the West does (. . .)?

IE:(. . .) If it remains open to trade and capital flows with the rest of the world.

(IR: Zeinab Badawi; IE: Stephen King, Chief Economist in HSBC)

The IR stops talking in the middle of her sentence which starts as a summary of the previous talk. There is a silence which is obviously a pause because she makes it within her turn. But she does

not continue her turn and there is silence until the IE realizes that he is expected to finish the sentence. So, the silence that begins as a pause becomes a gap.

The same is true for example 11 from the Serbian corpus.

(11)

IR:Dobro, ali Vi ne možete to da dokažete, Vi samo to (…)

IE:(. . .) Ja sam vam rekao. (. . .) Ja sam vam rekao. Ni jedan uslov, zvanični, o kojima pričaju i Slavica Đukić Dejanović i Dragan Todorović i Nada Kolundžija, ni jedan od tih uslova nije ispunjen, a odustalo se od rasprave o budžetu.

(IR:OK, but you cannot prove that, you just (. . .)

IE:(. . .) I told you. (. . .) I told you. Not one single condition, official, that Slavica Đukić Dejanović and Dragan Todorović and Nada Kolundžija are talking about, was met; none of these conditions was met, yet the discussion on the budget has been cancelled.

(IR: Antonela Riha; IE: Tomislav Nikolić, Leader of the Serbian Progressive Party)

While the previous types of silence (pauses and gaps) are found in the speech of both the IRs and the IEs, this pause or gap strategy is found only in the speech of the IRs.

6. Conclusion

Based on all these examples, we can conclude that silence in confrontational discourse can be a means for expressing power, but also a sign that the speaker is in an unfavourable position. In this research, we identified the following types of silence and their respective functions:

Pause or intra-turn silence is made consciously and with a purpose. This silence has the function of emphasizing a statement. If a speaker creates a pause in a confrontational discourse, he/she does it to draw the attention of both his/her co-speaker and the audience to his/her words, and particularly to what is about to be said. We can call this dramatic pause. It is used by both the IR and the IE. It has the function of power control in discourse.

Gap or inter-turn silence is not made on purpose. A gap means that the speaker is speechless, that is, that he/she is at a loss for words either because of (1) the question which he/she cannot or does not want to answer, or (2) the previous speaker's turn. The previous speaker is usually the IR. On rare occasions, when the guest is an uncommonly eloquent and resourceful conversationalist, the IR can find him/herself in such a position. Therefore, a gap signals a powerless participant in confrontational discourse.

Pause/gap is an inter-turn silence and occurs as a consequence of a deliberate interruption of the speaker's own turn. The speaker creates a pause, but does not go on speaking. A gap follows because the other speaker does not realize that he/she is supposed to take the floor. Thus, a gap is inevitable. This technique is used only by the IR and has the function of power because the pause the IR makes puts the IE into a position in which he/she must not only continue speaking, but must also finish the IR's sentence.

The results of the contrastive analysis show, as is obvious from the examples, that there are no differences between the English and Serbian corpora. This by no means proves that research into the functions of silence in other langauges would give the same results. We know that in Japanese, for example, silence and its uses in conversation have rather different functions and meaning (Paltridge, Nakane). Therefore, contrastive analysis of different languages might be useful for further insights into silence in confrontational discourse from the CDA perspective.

Corpora

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[1] The term ‘metalinguistic‘ was used by Leech (139) who considers “conversational behavior such as speaking at the wrong time (interrupting) or being silent at the wrong time” as impolite behavior. He calls them metalinguistic aspects of politeness.



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