Poznań Studies in Contemporary Linguistics 52(1), 2016, pp. 43–76

doi: 10.1515/psicl-2016-0006

VERBAL SILENCE AS FIGURE: ITS CONTRIBUTION TO LINGUISTIC THEORY*

MICHAL EPHRATT
University of Haifa
mephratt@research.haifa.ac.il

ABSTRACT

Speech is Homo sapiens' form of communication par excellence. It has attracted the interest of ancient as well as contemporary scholars investigating human lore (e.g. linguists, philosophers, scholars studying communication, culture or literature). The sparse studies on silence perceived silence as the antonym of all sounds (including speech: non-voluntary: stillness external to communication; symptoms such as muteness as breaks in communication; or silencing) or as background (voluntary paralinguistic pauses demarcating speech as figure).The current article is based on linguistic studies which, having differentiated between the above silences and verbal silence (VS) – unarticulated verbal signifiers chosen by the speaker to signify meaningful content alongside speech – incorporated VS in the linguistic inventory.

This article focuses on the contributions to linguistics made by the integration of VS in the linguistic inventory. Insights are offered by the identification, understanding and refinement of linguistic concepts in light of the analyses of VS examples (the zero-sign, ellipsis as signifiers, asyndeton, etc.) drawn from literature, advertisements and spoken language. The major contribution is that the particularity of VSs, as unarticulated verbal signifiers, calls for the re-examination of key linguistic issues, such as figure and ground organizations, universalism, and linearity of the verbal code.

KEYWORDS: Silence; verbal language; figure–ground; universalism; linearity in language.

1.0. Introduction

Verbal silences (VS, hereafter) are linguistic-grammatical signifiers, such as the zero-sign; "*than Hertz*" in the slogan: "*Avis. We try harder.*"; and the first (intui-

* I wish to thank the two *PSiCL* anonymous reviewers for their careful reading of the manuscript and valuable comments.

tive) thought in the expression "*on second thought*". A major factor hindering the linguistic study[1] of (verbal) silence as a verbal signifier is the treatment of all the different sorts of silences as one: the absence of sounds indicating a communication breakdown (e.g. Basso 1972; Bruneau 1973; Jaworski 1993; Sobkowiak 1997; Poyatos 2002). This seems to explain why – despite the ongoing interest in such silences within communication studies, pragmatics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and culture studies – there appears to be a paucity of studies dealing with silence as a lexical and structural verbal signifier.

In Ephratt (2011, 2014), I provided an elaborate review of the dealing with the various silences within linguistics (mostly as paralinguistic components), particularly focusing on the contributions made by more linguistic-oriented prominent scholars dealing with silence (e.g., Kurzon 1998; Saville-Troike 1985, see quote §2.0 below). Several of these scholars, in some but not all of their works, chose to focus on silence in socio-cultural settings, functioning as *ground* – rather than *figure* (see e.g. Saville-Troike 1994; Kurzon 2007, and see §2.1 below).

In an article devoted to the markedness of silence, Sobkowiak (1997) states:

> The central thesis of this paper is that communicative silence is a pragmatically marked member of the opposition silence-speech. Notice that the only level of linguistic structure on which this opposition can be meaningfully considered is the pragmatic level. It would be pointless to relate the discussion of the markedness of CS [communicative silence] to morphology or syntax.
>
> (Sobkowiak 1997: 45.)

Thus, Sobkowiak explicitly excludes the discussion of the markedness of the zero-sign – being the most typical and widespread verbal signifier (see below) – from his discussion.

Ephratt (2008) is devoted to the forms and functions of VS, as well as (Ephratt 2012) to the evaluation of VS in light of Grice's cooperation principle. Having looked at the relations between VS and other silences, on the one hand, and VS and speech, on the other (Ephratt 2011, 2014), the current paper focuses on the contributions made by the integration of VS in the linguistic inventory and its study within linguistics as a verbal signifier. We show the insights offered by the identification, understanding and refinement of linguistic concepts,

[1] On what held back the study of silence within communication, see Bruneau (1973: 18); Jensen (1973: 249); Dauenhauer (1980: vii); Saville-Troike (1985: 3–4; 1994: 3945) and Verschueren (1985: 74). See also §2.1 below.

and by the reconsideration of key grammar notions and phenomena, as the consequence of the integration of silence – an unarticulated verbal signifier – into the linguistic inventory.

To do this, we must first present a short overview of the different sorts of silences (all sharing the property of the absence of sounds), weeding out those that do not belong to VS (for a more detailed and critical discussion, see Ephratt 2011, 2014).

The noun "silence" is defined in the *Collins English Dictionary* as: (1) The state or quality of being silent; (2) The absence of sound or noise (stillness); (3) Refusal or failure to speak, communicate, etc. when expected; (4) A period of time without noise; (5) Oblivion or obscurity.

At first glance, the recurrence of negative qualifiers: *absence* (2), *refusal* and *failure* (3), *without* (4), *oblivion* and *obscurity* (5) is striking, but a closer look reveals that the referents of these qualifiers vary immensely. Compare, for example, the silence of a stone (2) with the silence of the spokesman (3). Some of the referents do not relate to communication or language, such as stillness; others belong in the paralinguistic plane, e.g., a recess from speaking as a break in communication, etc.[2]

Two criteria serve jointly to distinguish between the different notions and referents denoted using the word *silence*, and to single out VS. The first measure is the setting of silence within communication. The second is its function as a verbal signifier – belonging with speech – in the language inventory. Notions, such as stillness, pauses, the unsaid, empty speech and silencing, as well as verbal signifiers not articulated as a matter of performance (*parole* as opposed to *langue*) do not meet these terms.

Stillness is not the absence of speech (voices), but rather the absence of sounds; its antonym is not *speech*, but *noise* (Kurzon 1998: 15; Jaworski 1993: 26). Stillness includes numerous states external to the human body, such as the stillness of nature or the silence of the CD player following an electrical short circuit. Being external to communication, the question of selection and choice (as a signifier) is extraneous regarding stillness.

Physiological circumstances and psychological emotional states or cognitive processes can make the speaker refrain from speech altogether, or temporarily cease speech or communication ((Bruneau 1973 ("psycholinguistic silences"); Zeligs 1961) as in definition (3) above).

---

[2] For further details on the lexical polysemy of the (English) word "silence", see Verschueren 1985; Saville-Troike 1985: 9–10; Kurzon 1998: 1–19.

Permanent silences within inter-subjective settings are symptoms. Following Peirce (1965: II 277–286), a major class of indices are defined as symptoms. An index is a sign (here non-verbal silence) "which signifies its object solely by virtue of being really connected with it", such as cause and effect (Sebeok 1994: 48–50). A symptom whereby silence is the signifier is muteness, due to physiological pathologies or to psychological states and dispositions (e.g., detachment or depression) or communication-speech disorders, such as the extreme pole of autistic spectrum disorder (Amir 2014: 79).

Pauses, on the other hand, are not permanent and, regarding speech, belong on the paralinguistic plane. As a term, a "pause" is by no means unique to communication and speech; it rather denotes the suspension of an activity with the intention of resuming it (e.g., "coffee break", "spring recess"). One such pause is the suspension of speech within communication. Pauses in conversation vary in form and cause. Most apparent are the differences in form between unfilled and filled pauses, sounds such as *hmm*… (Adell et al. 2007).

When silent pauses are voluntary, they serve communication, but are not in themselves signifiers (see e.g., Bruneau's 1973 "interactive silences"; Crown and Feldstein 1991). Other pauses in conversation result from physiological needs, such as breathing, laughing, sneezing or other actions involving the speech organs, in some cases producing other noises (Scott 1958). Symptoms and many pauses, originating from or revealing emotional states, are unpleasant and the speaker prefers to conceal such states.[3] All such pauses take place within communication; yet, the speaker does not activate them as signifiers, as in definition (4) above (Bruneau 1973). This constitutes the crucial difference between silences as indices and VSs as verbal-linguistic signifiers.

Silence may also relate to phenomena in which there is speech within communication; yet, there is silence in regard to the expected-relevant content. The "unsaid" and "empty speech" are such cases in which the silence of the expected content is chosen to counter or resist expression and cooperation (Grice 1989; Ephratt 2012).

The unsaid is a case in which the speaker refrains from speaking about a particular topic (Jaworski 1993: 98–114; Rescher 1998: 93; Kurzon 2007: 1677, "thematic silence"). The iconic essence of the unsaid is exemplified in Theodore Reik's report on a Viennese actress, Josefine Gallmeyer who, in a psychoanalytic session with him, requested: "Let's be silent about something else!" (Reik 1926: 177). Zerubavel (2006) identified this unsaid with "the elephant in the

[3] This is similar to blushing – a symptom indicating embarrassment, in which the body reveals what the mind wishes to conceal.

room": All participants are definitely aware of this unsaid, it is impossible not to notice it; still, the speaker deliberately avoids it as if it is not there. Saville-Troike (1985) points out that the "unsaid" is a deliberate silence originating in the speaker, whereas presuppositions (i.e., implications) are not signs, but rather pragmatic-logical operations originating in the addressee and deduced by her/him (Jaworski 1993: 90; Ephratt 2012).[4]

Whereas speech is the typical verbal means of communication, empty speech is an atypical semiotic convergence. According to Jaworski (1993: 76), "speech represents here the lack of expected silence (about something)". Looked at now from the content plane, it is a signifier with no signified. This is Lacan's *parole vide*, as opposed to *parole pleine* (1956: 50). Saville-Troike (1985: 6, after Searle), explains it thus: "one can utter words without saying anything". Content-wise, the meaning conveyed by empty speech is not the words uttered, but its emptiness. Clear examples of inter-subjective empty speech are the exchanges between the characters in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (Hassan, 1967; Amir, 2014: 107–110) and, regarding public discourse, the ongoing televised reporting of 9/11 (Jaworski et al. 2005). Susan Sontag (1966: 12) comments: "[The art of] our time is noisy with appeals for silence [...] one recognizes the imperative of silence, but goes on speaking anyway. Discovering that one has nothing to say, one seeks a way to say *that*".

Silencing, such as the silencing of ethnic, social, and political minority groups or silencing as a means of controlling or forbidding individuals' speech (in general or specific contexts), also comes under the word *silence* (Gurevitch 2001: 92–94; Zerubavel 2006; Ben-Ze'ev et al. 2010). Silencing occurs within inter-subjective as well as public and cultural settings (see Bruneau 1973 "socio-cultural silences"; Basso 1972 (on the Western Apache culture); Saville-Troike 1985, 1994). Though typically silencing is imposed on the speaker, in some cases the speaker (or group) internalizes such repressions as if they are the outcome of free choice.

Silencing and VS are opposites concerning free will. Whereas VS is a choice the speaker makes towards expression, silencing counters the speaker's will (to communicate), and is thus excluded from our discussion.

Eliminating stillness, silence indices, pauses in speech, the unsaid, empty speech and silencing – all cases of extra-linguistic (though not extra-communicative) silences – we concentrate now on VS (together with speech as a verbal

[4] Like in speech, the addressee can interpret these silences in many different ways (see Goffman's (1959: 2) "given-off information" – non-intentionally communicated impressions).

means of expression) and the contribution to linguistics of its study as a linguistic-grammatical signifier.

2.0. VS within the linguistic plane

VS is **an unarticulated verbal signifier chosen by the speaker (holding the floor) to signify meaningful (non-null) content when speech is expected**. Being a verbal signifier, VS goes together with speech on the verbal-linguistic plane (compare Saville-Troike (1985: 5)). In addition, it is neither the silence of the listener, nor the omission of speech, due to language parsimony (see F3 §2.2 and §3.1 below).

This definition (of VS) comes under the second definition cited (above) from the *Collins English Dictionary*: the absence of sounds – specifically, the absence of phonation, but not the absence of (verbal) meaning. VS does not take up time. Thus, it is the speaker's responsibility to intentionally communicate the absence of the expected linguistic grammatical or lexical element(s). The speaker makes the coming VS apparent by the use of speech forerunners.

To give a sense of VS as a verbal signifier and its speech forerunners – differentiating it from the other silences outlined above – we start out by presenting cases of VS:

The first case is the zero-sign (ø). The zero-sign was identified by the 4th-century BCE Indian linguist, Panini, as a signifier designating the unmarked constituent of a paradigm. English examples are the oppositions *dogø* / *dogs*; *bakeø* / *baked*; and *bigø* / *bigger* / *biggest*. Jakobson (1937: 151), referring to de Saussure, states: "language can tolerate the opposition between something and nothing, and, it is precisely this 'nothing' opposed to 'something', or, in other words, the zero sign".

Saville-Troike says (1985: 4): "We can view silence as itself a valid object of investigation, bounded by stretches of verbal material which provide boundary marking for its identification". What Saville-Troike terms as "verbal material" bounding silence is speech serving as a forerunner marking VS. In the case of the zero-sign, the morphological paradigm serves as the forerunner: grammatical or lexical stumps signaling the location, content, and category of the VS – in the specific paradigm or context.[5]

[5] Kurzon (1998: 6) states that "Zero is taken as a 'forerunner' of silence" as a signified – such as with neutralization. We adopted Kurzon's terminology, but unlike his use (for the silence signifier or signified), we use it for the verbal-linguistic speech indicating the coming VS.

The second example is the advertising slogan: *Avis. We try harder.* This was a feature of a 1960 U.S. campaign to promote Avis (a car rental service) to the first-rank position by ousting its competitor Hertz. The copywriter doesn't say, *We try hard*; instead he chooses the prototypical comparison structure, but without articulating the noun being compared (such as: "We try harder *than X*"). The comparative morpheme *-er* is here the forerunner of the VS. Such silence is intentionally used as a signifier, and so belongs to Goffman's (1959: 2) "given-information" of the verbal code (see Footnote 4 above). The benefit in using VS, here, was that not articulating *Hertz* adds information not conveyed by its phonation. To state both *Avis* and *Hertz* would present them as equal contestants, whereas the non-realization of *Hertz* states that the contest is over – *Hertz* vanishes as a contestant once *Avis* has taken over (for a detailed description of this case, see Ephratt 2012: 68–69).

Whereas Avis' advertising slogan illustrates a forerunner constituting an incomplete truncated syntactic structure, our next case – *On second thought, I'll stick with my Diet Pepsi* – is an example of a lexical (rather than grammatical) forerunner. As seen here, the grammatical-syntactic structure is fully articulated. The expression *on second thought* placed at the opening indicates a series of which the second constituent is articulated, thus serving as a lexical forerunner of the first constituent – *a thought* – which, as a preliminary, is irrational and triggered by emotions. Clearly, this VS signifies – but does not articulate – *Coca Cola*. Here, similar to the Avis advertisement, an iconic quality of VS is exploited: an unarticulated signifier denoting the nullification of the signified. Although both VSs have no sounds, they are not identical signifiers: whereas the first stands for a comparison complement, the second stands for the initial element of a series.

An additional example is the asyndeton in Caesar's famous dictum *Veni vidi vici*.[6] As Müller (2000: 306) explains, the "[a]syndeton, i.e., the lack of linkage between the verb forms creates the impression that no time intervenes between the actions referred to" (for an overview, see Johansen 1996: 46–49 and §2.2.1 below).

Concerning all four cases of VS, we see that while the semiotic relations between the content (signified) of the articulated and the unarticulated signs are regular, the phonetic relations between the (expected) articulated signifier and the VS signifier deviate from the expected form (see below §3.2, regarding sup-

[6] This dictum is often cited involving commas or full stops as punctuation marks. A punctuation system was only rudimentary. Not only is punctuation counter-iconic to the dictum, but also no text – and so, no punctuation – was found.

pletion). It should be noted that verbal signifiers not being articulated because their references are unknown to the speaker, or because they are redundant, or recoverable within the context, are not instances of VS (see F3 §2.2 below and §3.1 below).

The particularity of VSs as unarticulated verbal signifiers calls for the re-examination of fundamental linguistic semiotic relationships, such as figure and ground (§2.1), universalism (§2.2), and linearity of linguistic signs (§2.2.1).

2.1. Figure and ground in light of VS

Dealing with figure and ground as an organizational perception originated with the Gestalt psychology principle, which proposes that "the whole is something else than the sum of its parts" (Koffka 1935: 155). Hence, isolating a single element of that whole distorts the essential nature of that whole.

The relations between figure and ground are semiotic and mental, as well as cognitive (Rubin 1921; Köhler 1947; Handel 2006; Schirillo 2009). The figure is discrete, thing-like, more salient, and consciousness dominated. Edgar Rubin's (1921: 225) well known Gestalt illustration – silhouettes alternating with a vase – demonstrates that switching one's attention between figure and ground causes contours to shift, resulting in different visual perceptions. Had the vase been presented on a white instead of a black background, the lack of distinction between the possible figure and ground would veil that image. According to Rubin, a crucial cognitive difference between figure and ground is that the ground is not perceived as having form. Figure is characterized as a thing, while the background is characterized as a substance (Rubin 1921: 225).

Based on the perception of opposites – attention-inattention, thing-like vs. substance, material-immaterial, as well as associated oppositions, such as close-distant, familiar-unfamiliar and significant-insignificant, the background is perceived merely as a means of presenting the figure. These Gestalt figure/ground principles apply equally to auditory organizations as well as to wholes composed of both auditory and visual elements (see Handel 2006; Köhler 1947: 224–227 concerning his *taekte maluma* construction; and Wallace 1982, concerning language). Bruneau (1973:18) maintains: "Silence lends clarity to speech by destroying continuity". The prevailing starting point adopted by scholars dealing with silence, was that speech is the figure (the thing) grounded by silence. Speakers initiate chronometrical, rhythmic, background-demarcating pauses to meet the (real or assumed) needs of their interlocutors (see e.g. Bruneau's 1973 "interactive silences"). This auditory figure/ground organization

parallels the visual relation between light and darkness; silence is to speech as the white page is to the black print marks (see Bruneau 1973: 23–28; Poyatos 2002: II 293–296).[7]

Bruneau (1973: 19) relates linguists' disregard for silence to their identification of speech as figure, and silence as ground:

> Much of the manner in which we have studied language function has denied the functioning of silences. We have attached our inquiry to the figures, comparing figure with figure, unit with unit, almost completely oblivious to the ground.

Although Bruneau criticizes linguists for ignoring background, he did not challenge the categorical classification of speech as figure and silence as ground. Poyatos (2002: II 299) points out: "Linguistics has wasted many research opportunities offered by silence […]. Rarely have linguists referred to silence as a component of interaction". Considering his examples, it appears that Poyatos – like Bruneau – refers to paralinguistic silences grounding communication and not to VSs as figures (see Ephratt 2011: 2291–2298).

The musician John Cage claimed: "There is no such thing as absolute silence. Something is always happening that makes a sound" (Cage 1961: 91). Cage's remark rules out the possibility of total silence, and its illustration in his notorious "4′33" piano piece is valid only if background sounds, such as fortuitous sounds produced by the audience in the concert hall, attract attention, moving them to the fore – thus making them figure. Concerning communication, Bruneau's (1973: 17) argument following Stein, that "[a]bsolute silence, then, is impossible: even when not speaking aloud, man carries on a continuous interior monologue", leads to a false assertion that as long as a person is awake, he is talking. If this were indeed the case, there would be no basis for Bruneau's (1973: 21) description of the various silences or for notions such as "breaking the silence". The reversal of the habitual (unmarked) figure-ground roles, concerning speech and pauses, or print (letters) and white paper, acts as a means of drawing attention and facilitating recollection; however, unlike VS, it is not a verbal signifier.

Bruneau and Poyatos, as well as many of the scholars who dealt with paralinguistic silences (for an overview, see Ephratt 2011: 2291–2293), stressed the status of pauses and other paralinguistic silences within language and communication as ground. Gerzi's (2007: 144, 148) description of silence, as both the lack of registration and the registration of absence, depicts the two orientations

[7] On the use of typographic spaces as verbal signifiers, see e.g. Wolf (2003), Stöckl (2005).

of the silence spectrum: silence as ground and silence as figure; silence as substance and silence as verbal signifier.

Once linguists realize that the figure-ground relations between speech and silence are flexible and not determined by the nature of the signifier (articulated or unarticulated), they can focus on silence as a verbal signifier. Such integration reveals that not only can VS occupy the figure, but also that speech (as its forerunners, from the phonetic level to the level of discourse) can act as its ground (see Saville-Troike's quote on p. 49 above). These relationships are possible and effective because figure and ground are not isolated inherent traits but, as shown (Rubin 1921; Wallace 1982; Handel 2006; and Qiu et al. 2007), are a function of expectations and perception.

To see how VS differs from silences grounding speech, how such silences being signifiers function as the figure of the verbal code, we look at such VS ranging over an entire chapter in the novel *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro, and at Wolf's (2003) analysis. The butler Stevens, the first-person narrator of the novel, keeps a diary of his six-day trip on his first motoring holiday. The diary tells of his deeds, as well as the autobiographical memories that invade him during those six days. Stevens makes regular entries each day, sometimes even several times a day – with one exception: Day Five – that is, after the chapter "Day Four – Afternoon" (ending on page 228) comes (on page 229) "Day Six". Says Wolf (2003: 124–125):

> Stevens, in his discourse, establishes a pattern of signifiers […] from which he deviates by almost an imperceptible omission. Curiously, Stevens does not explain this omission, […] this missing explanation is a further deviation from the established pattern, this time from a pattern of signifie*ds*, and together with the missing diary entry forms a classic *Leerstelle sensu* Iser (Isler's gap, 125).

On Day Six, Stevens relates that on Day Five he met up with a former friend, who then disclosed to him that she was unhappy in her married life and actually dreamt of a better life – as his wife. In the Day Six entry, Stevens also mentions recalling "her eyes had filled with tears," to which he responded with a smile. Wolf concludes:

> The fact that Stevens refrains from explaining why, or even mentioning that he has not made a diary entry on that important day, takes on an iconic value: it corresponds to the absence, or rather suppression, of emotional reactions, of feelings or regrets that would have required an immediate outlet. The *Leerstelle* of the unexplained missing of

> 'day five' thus mimes a negative content: the sadly missing feelings in Stevens.

As Wolf points out, this iconic semantic gap is brought to the fore by skipping an element in an ordered list (in the paradigm). It serves the emotive function as it iconically exhibits aloofness, illustrating Stevens' emotional blindness (in particular when his emotions conflict with his official stance). Here, the discursive silence is the figure – the verbal signifier that denotes the emotive meaning, and which together with the articulated chapters, constructs the narrative. The established diary pattern constituting consecutive chapters (from Day One to Day Six) grounds the figure: the absence of Chapter/Day Five.

As demonstrated in Kazuo's *The Remains of the Day*, and by the above cases (§2.0: the zero-sign, Avis, Pepsi and Caesar's asyndeton), the selection of VS as a means of expression presents VS as figure. More often than not, this intentional preference (of VS over speech) adds elements of content lost in speech, such as when the lack of an expected signifier embodies an absence in reality. Such a choice gains the manifestation of iconic qualities. The addressee's faculty to be attentive to these silences as figures; to identify them and decipher their meanings results from our language skill to dynamically alternate our vantage point – between speech as figure and VS as figure – depending on the grammar, language and text/discourse, and according to the demands of the specific context and communicative event.

The investigation of VSs as linguistic modes of expression, and their integration into the verbal plane shows that, unlike the traditional place allocated to silences as a paralinguistic element grounding speech (the latter being the figure, see §1.0 above), or harming it, the figure/ground organizations of speech and silence are not fixed. It is simply not true or accurate to say that all silences are ground and all speech occupies the figure. Articulated speech (phones, morphemes, words, sentences or texts and discourse chunks) is frequently and typically figure, in which case paralinguistic silences – such as pauses and spaces – ground it. However, speech can also function as ground. One such phenomenon is empty speech which, as substance, belongs in the ground, while the silenced message is its figure. The other case is its opposite: VS as a verbal signifier occupies the figure of the linguistic constituent. As mentioned, opposed to the regular (unfilled) pauses, VS does not consume time and space; therefore, its presence is not sensed in either an auditory or visual manner. This is where speech grounds silence, as a forerunner, marking the coming VS as figure.

This conversion of traditional roles, wherein VS functions as figure and speech as its forerunners (grounding it), is an enriching linguistic and communi-

cative observation, one that fits Rubin's (1921: 225) statement: "[a] field which had previously been experienced as ground can function in a surprising way when experienced as figure".

To conclude, VS is attested as being a verbal signifier in oral discourse as well as in written texts, in intersubjective communication as well as in public transactions. As seen from the examples in this paper, VS can range over a single morpheme, a word, a syntactic constituent or even an entire discourse. Bringing VS to the fore of linguistic investigation is not only descriptively justified, reflecting the verbal behavior of both speaker and addressee, it is also justified on theoretical linguistic grounds: treating the verbal utterance in its entirety. Isolating the articulated speech – ignoring VS – destroys the nature of that linguistic whole. Thus, not taking into account the essential role played by VS as figure results in a distorted picture of the organizational relations between speech and (verbal) silence. In turn, such a picture completely overlooks the role played by speech as forerunners grounding VS.

2.2. Language universals in light of VS

Linguistic universalism is in no way a universally-unanimously defined concept among linguists. Since antiquity (e.g. Plato's *Cratylus*), linguists have disputed the meaning of universalism. The questions of how and where linguists look for universalism are a direct outcome of their standpoint regarding the ontology of natural languages (NL, hereafter): are they abstract, self-contained systems or part of physiological, psychological and social human communicative behavior?

Two major streams of modern linguistics strongly identified with universalism are Greenberg's structural approach and Chomsky's generative school (and its modifications over a span of more than fifty years, Chomsky 1965, 1976, 1988).

Greenberg and colleagues (1963, 1978) represent the first standpoint concerning universalism.[8] They identified, and thus restricted, their interest and scope to grammars and language rules as being self-contained, and isolated from extra-grammatical factors (such as the speaker's or communicative circumstances). Their contribution centered on identifying common language phenomena in some 30 languages, rather than on looking for diversity. The concept of universalism within structural linguistics amounted to the summation of the documented and attested accumulated knowledge. They grouped these multilin-

[8] "Universal grammar" and "language universalism" are used here interchangeably.

gual generalizations in one of the following degrees of logical validity: absolute universals, such that a symbolic system which does not possess them would not be considered a language; universal implications, i.e., contingent statements which apply to particular languages or whose application is conditional upon other universals or characteristics; and thirdly, probabilistic arguments based on statistics. Not only structural linguists treated language as a logically determined abstract object. Postal, for example (1986: 2), argues that "[g]enuine linguistic variation consists of all properties P of objects satisfying the [universal] characterization [of NL] where, however, P are not entailed by the characterization but are nonetheless consistent with it".

Chomsky's generative theory is associated with the second standpoint, claiming that the human brain carries an innate language competence, which governs all NLs. Chomsky (1976: 29) defined universal grammar as "the system of principles, conditions, and rules that are elements, or properties of all human languages not merely by accident but by necessity – of course, I mean biological, not logical, necessity". Chomsky adds that universal grammar "can be taken as expressing 'the essence of human language' [it] will be invariant among humans". He therefore claimed that all languages "can be reduced to universal properties" (Chomsky 1965: 35), all bound by the possibilities and constraints set by physical limitations (Chomsky 1988: 2, and 1965: 4). The most obvious examples are the set of possible human phones constrained by the human speech organs, respiratory system, the acoustic organs, and the human brain, or the cognitive combinatorial limits on sentences' complexity (see e.g. Bar-Hillel et al. 1967).

In line with the disparate standpoints leading these streams, they differ accordingly regarding their method in justifying universalism. In the inductive approaches (such as in Greenberg's school) – treating language and grammars as abstract, isolated objects – universals are first identified according to the above validities ["multilingual generalizations"], and then justified and explained. In the deductive holistic methodologies (such as Chomsky's), justification and explanation precede the identification and formulation of universals.

We now focus on the universal status of VS as linguistic figure. Following the above overview (see §1.0) of the different sorts of silences, from stillness (external to language and its speakers) to VS (as a linguistic signifier alongside speech), the question of the universal status of VS seems most intriguing. Examined from a purely self-contained NL system point of view, VS seems anamata. VS violating the most basic expectation regarding language, i.e., the two-fold nature of a sign: content (sememes; words; ideas) expected to be matched by phonetic realizations constituting its verbal signifier. And still, as Greenberg's

(1963: 94) 35th universal states, the zero-sign is a widespread integral part of grammatical descriptions:

> There is no language in which the plural does not have some nonzero allomorphs, whereas there are languages in which the singular is expressed only by zero. The dual and the trial are almost never expressed only by zero.

As is apparent from the definition of VS (p. 49 above), not every instance of unarticulated (expected) speech is a case of VS. Well acknowledged, widespread in the languages of the world – and studied intensively – syntactic phenomena, such as ellipsis and passive, include, but do not overlap with VS (see F3 and F4 following, and §3.1 below). Keenan (1985: 247), after stating the universal status of passives:

> G-1 Some languages have no passive.
> G-2 If a language has any passives it has ones characterized as basic above; moreover, it may have only basic passives.

concludes that "Languages without passives have somewhat more grammaticalized means for expressing functional equivalents of basic passives. Perhaps the most common means is to use an active sentence with an 'impersonal' third plural subject". Accordingly, Postal (1986) shows that a critical investigation and reexamination of passives enables the integration of ["short"] passives in grammars (see also Weinreich 1963: 176; and see F4 following).

The observation that grammatical phenomena involving VS are most widespread, despite them seeming to counter NL signification principles, calls for an explanation. The most straightforward explanation lies in the need to link VS with silences outside language and grammars or, stated as a generalization concerning linguistics, to reject the artificial separation between languages (and grammars) as self-contained, symbolic abstract code and their settings (speakers, circumstances, etc.). This, no doubt, calls for examining the universal status of VS in light of a holistic linguistic context.

The following statements on universalism derive from the unique duality of silence which, despite the tremendous differences among the silences along the spectrum (from silence as a natural phenomenon belonging in the ground (G) to silence as an intentional verbal signifier functioning as figure (F), see §1.0 above), all silences are linked when looked at from a universal ontogenetic and phylogenetic evolutionary holistic perspective:

G1. a. The stillness of nature – apart from human beings – is universal.
b. All peoples – irrespective of cultural or language differences – encounter and thus notice stillness (to a greater or lesser degree).

G2. Indexical unintentional muteness, speech lapses – being physiological, cognitive or emotionally-driven symptoms – are universal.

G3. Silences as stillness (G1) and indexical silences in speech (G2) all share the property of absence of sounds (sounds of nature or speech voices).

G4. The ontogenetic experience of phatic silence in the prenatal and neonates' preverbal phase of attachment (bonding) relationships is common to all human beings (Amir 2014: 1–47; Rosen and Edelheit 1970; Olinick 1982; van Buren and Alhanati 2010; see also Baker 1955).[9]

G5. Due to factors related to economy of efforts: considering voice and speech as cognitive and physiological resources (of both production and decoding), wishing to communicate, a speaker cannot say everything explicitly, some content is always left out.[10]

F1. NLs cannot exceed physiological and mental limits (Chomsky 1988: 2). They do, however, follow preferences and make choices among the vast options available within these limits (e.g., glottal, nasal clicks as modes of phonetic articulation). Whatever typological options are favored by languages, the phoneme "silence", as well as its expansions (from the morphological level to the discourse level), is identical in all languages (sounding the same as stillness and symptomatic silences, see G3).

F2. All discourses conclude (as planned or abruptly) with silence: the absence of the voice of the last or the potentially next speaker.

a. Despite occasional overlap in speech turns (see Sacks et al. 1974: 706–707), speakers habitually insert pauses between turns. These

[9] Basso's (1972) anthropological study on Western Apache culture, as well as Saville-Troike's (1985: 10–13) dealing with the acquisition of cultural silences, as well as Malinowski (1952) who intorduced the term *phatic*, overlook intimate silences, some of which, like mother-infant bonding, are primary preceding socialization.

[10] This has to do with parsimony and not with the unsaid as a non-communicative strategy (see §1.0 above).

are intentional pauses acting as universal discourse markers (see §3.1 below). The length of the pauses might vary significantly among cultures and languages, but they all share the no sound maker.

b. The case of termination of speech, due to death, merges silence as stillness (G1) and silence as a discourse marker; as in Hamlet's conclusive statement *The rest is silence* in which the word "silence" functions as a lexical forerunner announcing Hamlet's coming death and marking still silence: "*The rest is silence*: silence" (all sounding the same – G1).

F3. Serving linguistic parsimony (G5), languages make use of redundancy and recoverability to reduce production efforts. Noonan (1985: 100), in relation to his dealings with degrees of reduction, says: "There is a general principle in complementation that information tends neither to be repeated nor lost. Exceptions to this are easy enough to find, but the principle holds true in great many majority of cases". This is illustrated in the most widespread phenomenon of ellipsis (*Marry plays the Piano and Anna __ the flute*, see Winkler 2006: 109); and in the basic passives, wherein the redundant or irrelevant agent is left out, resulting in the subject of that active verb being instantiated by an object other than that verb's agent (see e.g. Keenan 1985; Postal 1986). As explained, such omissions of speech coincide with VS, but are not identical with it, as they belong on the surface-parole performance level.

F4. The use of silence as a verbal signifier, such as the zero-sign in rich morphology (e.g. synthetic and agglutinative languages), designating the unmarked elements in paradigms (using oppositions, see Greenberg's 35th universal quote above) follows from G5 and F3. The zero, as a verbal signifier, is not restricted to inflection (the zero-sign). Cases other than inflection, are for example, the absence of specification of semantic or syntactic peculiarities – not because they are redundant or recoverable (F3), but as a verbal means communicating their non-existence in the real world (e.g. *They play the piano but Anna doesn't __*. Winkler 2006: 109; the *Avis*, *Pepsi* examples, p. 50 above; see Wilson's example, p. 64 below). Thus, having these widespread shortcut practices of ellipsis and basic passives (F3), languages and speakers chose to adopt these strategies as VSs.

F5. From stillness and symptoms as ground (G1 and G2), silence emerged in the figure as diagrams (Peirce 1965: II 277–286) i.e., eliciting intentional verbal signs characterized by similarity between a soundless signifier and absence as its signified. VS is the verbal signifier iconically reflecting by mimesis absence as its signified content; it is most appropriate and accurate for denoting absence because, as opposed to articulated verbal signifiers, VS leaves a trace of the absence. Moreover, being phonetically soundless VS is onomatopoeic with absence. As an unarticulated diagram, the quality that VS shares with other communication channels expands its universal trait to cover other codes (Ephratt 2011: 2287), such as a poker face in the visual channel (gaze); tastelessness in the chemical channel. Nevertheless, being verbal (though not vocally articulated), VS shares the vocal channel with speech – articulated words and phrases.

In light of these assertions and the well-attested inversion between the order of acquisition and that of pathological regression and loss (Jakobson 1956: 117, 126), it is predicted that the order of acquisition will be from undifferentiated silences to VS as a signifier; this is in line with the overall order of language acquisition (Amir 2014: 1–47). Accordingly, it is predicted that loss of language (such as in aphasic disorders) goes from loss of VS to the loss of silence as icon (this amounts to *aphasica universalis*).[11, 12] Contrary to the above, there seems to be much diversity between languages (and cultures) concerning phenomena, such as silence as consent and silence as politeness, which are pragmatically and culturally more diverse (Saville-Troike 1994; Basso 1972, and see Footnote 9 above). Restricted societies seem to prefer a closer iconic match between silence as absence and the code to articulated signifiers. The opposite seems to hold in explosive societies (Naveh 1993: 101–104).

---

[11] Many studies on agrammatism look at the loss of uttered linguistic materials (e.g. Grodzinsky 2000; Freidmann 2002). Investigating the loss of VS in agrammatism seems much trickier. However, such findings, when obtained, will be of significant value in clarifying the question of linearity (see Jakobson 1956, and see §2.2.1 below).

[12] A parallel process seems to take place in the psychic realm, the triad: somatization, acting-out, and verbalization (Foehrenbach and Lane 1991). As explained, somatization (symptomatic silences included) – being an undifferentiated and unmotivated index – is universal (G2). We can then predict that if the self is emotionally free to choose language (words as well as VS) for communicating one's inner world, then one also has acting-out at one's emotional disposal as a defense strategy. In turn, if that self does use acting-out as a defense strategy, symptomatic (psychosomatic) silences, being universal, are also available, but not the other way round.

In summation, silence, either as ground or figure, varies in its persistence over time, its maturation, and in its proportions among different cultures and traditions but is, nevertheless, universal. In line with universal inductive methodologies, admitted VS as a verbal signifier, adds more cases and categories to the language inventory. However, this is not merely a technical matter; it has prompted insights concerning formal grammatical issues, as well as semantic and pragmatic aspects relating to language universals.

Charlie Chaplin is quoted as saying that "silence is a universal gift that few appreciate".[13] In light of the above, we paraphrase concerning language and linguistics: "VS is a universal gift that all speakers appreciate and all languages contain and utilize, but few grammatical descriptions explicitly articulate bringing it to the fore".

2.2.1. Linearity in light of VS

Ferdinand de Saussure, the founder of modern linguistics, enunciates two primordial characteristics of the linguistic sign: one principle is the arbitrariness of the sign and the second is the linear nature of the signifier. Therefore, he says (1913: 69–70):

> The linguistic signal, being auditory in nature, has a temporal aspect, and hence certain temporal characteristics: (a) *it occupies a certain temporal space*, and (b) *this space is measured in just one dimension*; it is a line. [...] The whole mechanism of linguistic structure depends upon it. Unlike visual signals (e.g. ships' flags) which can exploit more than one dimension simultaneously, auditory signals have available to them only the linearity of time. The elements of such signals are presented one after the other: they form a chain. [emphasis in the original]

Roman Jakobson (1956: 241–242) enlists the conversation of Lewis Carroll's Alice, about the cat: "'Did you say *pig* or *fig*?' said the Cat. 'I said *pig*,' replied Alice" and argues against the above quote from de Saussure that "the c o n c u r r e n c e of simultaneous entities and the c o n c a t e n a t i o n of successive entities are the two ways in which the speakers combine linguistic constituents" (emphasis in the original). Two modes of organization feature in every linguistic

[13] Chaplin might have intended to form a pun, alluding to "Universal Pictures", with whom he had produced his last movie.

sign: combination and selection. According to Jakobson (1956: 243), de Saussure was familiar with these two modes:

> Of the two varieties of combination – concurrence and concatenation – it was only the latter, the temporal sequence, which was recognized by the Geneva linguist. Despite his own insight into the phoneme as a set of concurrent distinctive features (*éléments différentiels des phonèmes*), the scholar succumbed to the traditional belief in the linear character of language.

We now show what VS – belonging in the vocal track, but being unarticulated and thus not consuming (phonetic) time – contributes to the clarification of the debate regarding the linearity of the verbal code.

As stated (F5), the quality that VS shares with other communication channels expands its universal trait to include other codes and media, the main one being the visual channel, which includes sign languages and all media using graphics. Sign languages are living NLs that constitute the mother-tongue of many speakers. They differ from oral languages in their use of the visual-manual track – instead of the vocal one – as their primary phonological and structural medium. The inclusion of sign languages – not restricted to the single-dimension temporal linearity – as part of NLs (Sandler and Lilo-Martin 2006; Sandler 2010) endorsed the re-examination of universalism, in general, and arbitrariness and linearity of the linguistic sign, in particular. This was a momentous insight, to the extent of revolution. Having shown that VS is an integral part of the linguistic inventory, we have at hand another unique linguistic opportunity to reexamine the linear universal, evoked following the integration of sign languages as NLs.[14]

As we have seen, linguists, alluding to silence, typically placed silences, and especially pauses, on the paralinguistic plane. However, as some researchers have shown, these silences ground speech as boundaries, but do not co-occur with it: speech and silence are not simultaneous (Kurzon 1998: 18). As such, they interrupt speech; they combine with speech on the syntagmatic axis. From de Saussure's observation regarding the acoustic-auditory channel (in contrast with the visual channel, see above concerning sign languages, and see Sandler 2010: 2728), and following supportive findings from the temporal study of silence, one may expect silence to be clear-cut evidence confirming the principle

[14] It should be mentioned that sign languages and oral languages utilize different channels, but in both silences are breaks and spaces on the paralingual plane and signifiers on the verbal plane (see Saville-Troike 1985: 5 on eye movement).

of linearity. The theoretical investigation and discussion of VS, and its study concerning examples in language use, display a different picture. VS, as a linguistic signifier, is organized on the paradigmatic axis of selection as concurrently combining with speech (syntagmatic axis). Whereas the linear, temporal component is a prominent property of unfilled pauses on the paralinguistic plane, this is not the case concerning filled pauses, and certainly not the case concerning the content plane and VS on the language (verbal) plane (§1.0 above and Ephratt 2011: 2305, Fig. 2). As we have noted, the unsaid in no way uses up any time. Filled pauses are introduced to extend the exact length of time consumed to break away from communication, and this temporal speech stretch (or murmur) is apparent and measurable (see e.g. Adell et al. 2007). What is measured concerning empty speech is not the lack of speech as such, but the absence of the anticipated meaningful speech. Empty speech is thus the substitution (on the selection axis) of expected speech (full authentic speech) with another type of speech (empty, thus false, speech). This does not involve concatenating signifiers; it involves the concurrence of empty speech with the unarticulated signifiers of true speech. The magnitude of a filibuster (as an extreme case of prolonged empty speech) is inversely proportional to the import of the full speech it substitutes. Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, in general, and Lucky's delirium monologue (1953: 41), in particular, are classic literary-poetic illustrations of empty speech, camouflaging – and thus iconically figuring – insignificance and absurdity (Hassan 1967; Amir 2014: 107–110).

As VS is phonetically unlimited, it is a most flexible receptacle for all linguistic forms: it acts simultaneously as a verbal signifier adding its content (signified); however, not being realized as speech or pauses, it does not expand the syntagmatic chain of the verbal code.

VS involves the substitution of the (speech) signifier expected for communicating the specific content with an unarticulated signifier (absence). The anticipation that this substitute silence will last the time required for the vocal articulation of the signifier (or signifiers: morpheme, word, clause, etc.) is not justified. VS, as a signifier in its own right, a figure grounded by speech as a forerunner, has its own structure and conduct. VSs are not isomorphic with the signifier(s) they substitute – neither in temporal measures nor in content. They often carry more information than the (expected) articulated signifier. VSs do not halt the phonetic chain; they rather add an additional vocal, unarticulated, timeless dimension to linear, articulated speech. The two dimensions are concurrent, but not parallel (see Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 below), they intersect; thus, the linearity of the verbal sign is lost by condensation. In fact, any of the examples

of VS (see §1.0 above and §3.0 below) can serve to demonstrate this. We now return to Caesar's dictum and add further examples.

Müller's observation regarding preferences is very important. Müller (2000: 306) contends that the asyndeton surfaces and accommodates the conflict between diagrammatic principle and iconic silence:

> [t]he quotation, which compresses a lot of meaning into a few words, may seem to belie one of the principles of iconic coding posited by Givón […] 'A large chunk of information will be given a large chunk of code'. But it can also be said that Caesar's dictum obeys Givón's principle, because Caesar suggested – or even pretends – that his victory was a very swift and short action.

Müller's claim can be taken one step further, showing that even though conjuncts are functional syntactic elements (rather than content words, see also Dressler 1985) marking a connection between constituents, the very articulation of a conjunct results in distancing the constituents from each other. Here, the VS as a signifier conveys connection and swiftness, without causing distancing or taking up any time. The asyndeton, as a VS forerunner surmounting the limits of linearity, resolves these conflicting requisites.

We now look at Wilson's (2000: 212–213) analysis of the first two lines of the second stanza of Emily Dickinson's Poem 543 from *The Complete Poems*:

> But He who weigheth [ ] – While the Rest –
> Expand their furthest pound –

Wilson proposes two interpretations: In the first, the gap is strictly a contextual ellipsis, cataphorically resolved: [his furthest pound] (see Fig. 1a below). The second interpretation involves VS, not a syntactic default substitution of "his/their furthest pound" (see F3 §2.2 above), but in the context of this poem, a metaphor for verbal expenditure: [his words] (see Fig. 1b below).

Wilson neatly displays the procedure for revealing such VS, beginning with the identification of the syntactic forerunner[15] and finally reaching the supplementary meanings obtained by the nonlinear trait of VS as a signifier: (1) a syntactical close to a "technical" omission, easily recovered by context; (2) a semantic metaphorical layer (built alongside the preceding); (3) a proverbial level; (4) only the VS signifier (signaled by the ellipsis), not the words, produces this layer – the compression of two meanings. According to Wilson, "This not only

[15] It should be noted that Wilson does not use the terms "verbal silence" and "forerunners".

fits in with the metaphor, but allows the gap to imply the proverbial stricture to ‘weigh one’s words carefully speaking’. The ellipsis effectively compresses both meanings into one expression”.

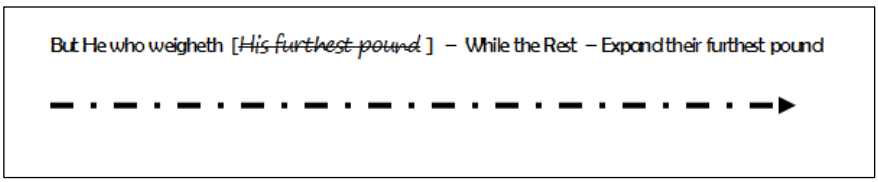

Fig. 1a. Linear contextual ellipsis.

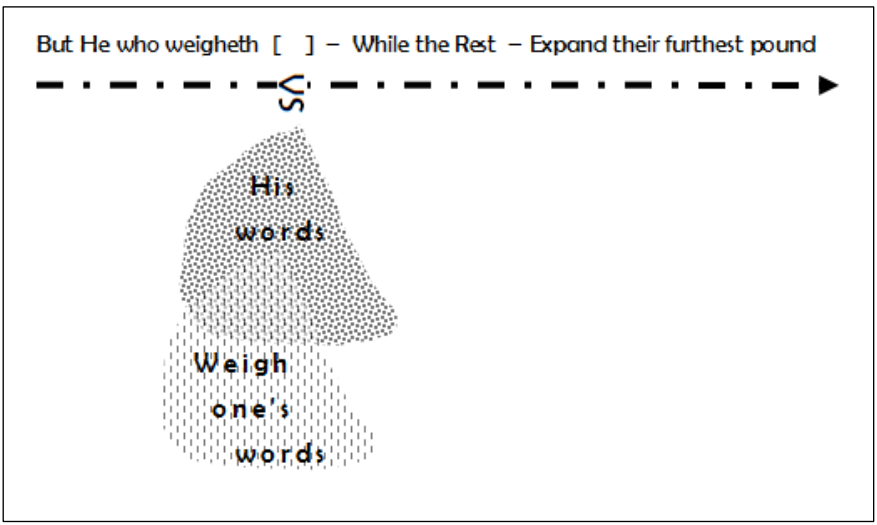

Fig. 1b. VS in ellipsis.

The uniqueness of VS, as a linguistic signifier on the verbal plane, is that the vocal (phonetic) signifier is not substituted with a phonetic signifier that temporally equates the original signifier (via concatenation), but is substituted by an articulated forerunner that simultaneously condenses both the background (signaling the coming VS) and the VSs’ form and meaning as figure. VSs are not monolithic; their form and content are disclosed through their specific forerun-

ners within the specific context. VS, standing for an expected phone, differs from that which stands for a grammatically expected object (see e.g., *Avis*, Dickinson), and they both differ from the silence standing for an expected discourse (see above, Day Five of *The Remains of the Day*). In special rhetorical situations, a speaker may pause to signal the coming VS (or a space may be inserted in writing),[16] but such a pause is not identical – via concatenation – with the length of the silenced signifier. Moreover, as seen from the above examples, the silenced signifier itself (phone, word, sentence or discourse) is only an allusion to a longer signifier.

A notable class of silences, as a means to circumvent linearity, is that of quotations, formulaic speech, intertextuality, as well as three dots (in writing, as a graphical punctuation mark). Not only do these silences bypass linearity, these forerunners placed in the background introduce – as figure – entire texts and contents which are themselves not simultaneous in time and space with this discourse. Through such condensation, the syntagmatic linear chain of signifiers is lost.

Kristeva's (1966: 36) definition of intertextuality – "Permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of the text, many utterances taken from other texts intersect with one another and neutralize each other" – lays bare the nonlinear (which intersect and neutralize each other) relations between silence as the signifier, and the intertextuality carried by the forerunner. VS reveals the multidimensionality – rather than single-dimensionality – in intertextuality. This necessitates moving away from sequential (linear) encoding. The many intertextual allusions to Caesar's *Veni vidi vici* in literature (Müller 2000), rhetoric, public speeches, propaganda, as well as commercial and other campaigns, exemplify the unique force and qualities of intertextuality as a nonlinear VS signifier.

To take just one example: the title *Veni vidi futui* of Stafford's (2007) book on "sexual imagery and social class in Roman art", does not substitute *vici* 'win' with *futui* 'to have intercourse with'. The space created by the expected – yet unarticulated *vici* – intersects eras and heroes: Caesar's triumphs and sexual conquests. As seen in Fig. 2 below and Müller's analysis – the VS condenses not only the unarticulated *vici*, but the entire intertexual context of the original dictum. A new message is created and communicated by this concurrence.

In summation, VSs invoke non-linear code. Opposed to phonetic distinctive features – not in themselves signifiers (see the quote from Jakobson on p. 61 above) – VSs, being verbal signifiers, add a non-linear dimension to the temporal dimension of speech.

[16] No graphic indication, such as an empty page, was employed for Chapter/Day Five in *The Remains of the Day*.

Fig. 2. Intertextual VS substitution and concurrency.

3.0. Discussion and conclusions

To sum up, we differentiated VS from background silences. We then presented VS as a verbal signifier (grounded by speech forerunners) in the vocal linguistic inventory, and examined the contribution made by these traits to the reexamination of three macro linguistic issues: figure-ground organization, language universalism, and the linearity of the vocal code. We show that the figure/ground organizations of speech and silence are not fixed. Although many typical sorts of silence belong in the ground and speech particles typically occupy the figure, VS is a case of silence being a verbal signifier grounded by speech (as its forerunners). It turns out that – ontogenetically and phylogenetically – tying stillness and indices (such as symptomatic silences) together with not mentioning unknown referents and with silencing redundant or recoverable verbal signifiers (as a parsimonious practice), paves the way for the use of VS. Despite VS breaking down the semiotic form content diagrammaticality, instances of VS – such as the zero-sign, VS ellipsis and passives – are tremendously widespread among the languages of the world. The uniqueness of VS as an unarticulated vocal (phonetic) signifier is that it condenses unarticulated signifiers, which add content (the signified). However, unlike speech or pauses, VS does not expand the verbal code; hence, the syntagmatic, linear verbal chain is lost. This trait is a momentous insight, because it challenges not only the linearity of languages (as did sign languages §2.2.1 above), but also the linearity of oral languages.

These findings concerning key linguistic topics advances and deepens the conceptualization of specific, yet central, linguistic issues.

As seen above, what seems at first glance to be void, amorphous, and indistinguishable from non-communicative silences (§1.0 above), emerges as distinct, meaningful verbal signifiers. Moreover, as explained, being phonetically unlimited, VS is a most flexible receptacle for all linguistic forms. This notion challenges two kinds of linguistic phenomena: phenomena known to involve unarticulated signifiers (but which are not recognized as VS) (§3.1), and phenomena for which linguists, while focusing on what is observable (articulated), concealed the involvement of VS (§3.2). These issues require a separate study, and are only briefly discussed below.

3.1. Phenomena known to involve no phonation in light of VS

Linguistic schools tolerate, to a greater or lesser extent, the non-realization of verbal signifiers. Key linguistic concepts are based on acknowledging the participation of an unarticulated constituent. The introduction of VS in the linguistic apparatus necessitates the differentiation between VS and unarticulated verbal signifiers, which are not in themselves a means of expression, but are the outcome of surface performances, such as grammatical redundancy rules and pragmatic irrelevance (see F3 §2.2 above).

The first linguistic concept known to involve silence is VS as a discourse marker. Harris (1951: 14) defined an utterance as "any stretch of talk, by one person before and after which there is silence on the part of the person". The role of silence in organizing turn-taking is well-known. Sacks et al. (1974) list linguistic signs for turn-taking (Sacks et al. 1974: 722), but silence is not one of these signs. Moreover, Schiffrin's (1987) work on the topic of *discourse markers* – "devices that work on a discourse level: they do not depend on the smaller units of talk" (Schiffrin 1987: 37), and "do not convey social and or expressive meanings" (Schiffrin 1987: 318) – dominates discourse and conversation analysis. However, nowhere in the subsequent literature on discourse or pragmatics has the connection of this VS with discourse markers been made.

Another concept is that of ellipsis. The following example, cited and analyzed by Adler (2007), comes from *La fée Carabine* by Daniel Pennac. It illustrates the employment of VS – deliberately violating grammar rules – as a means of achieving an iconic verbal expression.

> *Un type* se baladait avec un rasoir dans Belleville. Il coupait les vieilles dames en deux, sous le nez de l'inspecteur Van Thian, et l'inspecteur Van Thian n'arrivait pas à mettre la main *dessus*[17].

According to Adler, "Contemporary spoken French grammar demands the deletion of inanimate complements of simple and compound prepositions, resulting in a null pronoun". As Adler points out, the deletion here of the animate complement *sur lui* contravening the grammar rule is a forerunner signaling that a *criminal* is treated as inanimate, excluding him from the class of humans (animate, rational).

In Wilson's (2000) example (on p. 64 above), the cataphor *his furthest pound* is a case of redundancy recovered by copying. The second expressive interpretation (*his words*), introducing and creating new content, is a case of VS. The Avis advertisement mentioned above (§2.0) also makes use of VS marked by a syntactic ellipsis, but this is not signaled, as in Dickinson's poem, by parallel constructions, but rather by the grammatical morpheme *-er* acting as a forerunner for the content denoted by the VS. As stated in F3 (§2.2, and §2.2.1 above), it is only with the introduction of VS as a verbal signifier that two different kinds of ellipsis become apparent: ellipsis attributed to parole as a surface performance, on the one hand (see the quote from Noonan, on p. 59 above), and VS belonging in the langue as a verbal signifier.

The most interesting cases showing VS as figure are when the attempts to copy an adjacent constituent (anaphor or cataphor) fail, when no pragmatic or syntactic candidates are available or when the lexicon offers two verbs differing only in that one is transitive obligating a complement. Verbs such as *talk* and *say* exemplify this relationship. The choice of the biblical narrator to use the (Hebrew) verb *say* (*dibber*, demanding a proposition *to say* P), but not to realize its proposition, is a forerunner signaling VS: *And Cain said to Abel his brother, and when they were in the field Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him* (Genesis 4:8).[18] The early biblical commentators, as well as translators,

---

[17] Due to difference between the handling of pronouns in French and in English this VS is not preserved in the English translation: "Someone was going round Belleville with a razor. Someone was cutting up old ladies right under Inspector Van Thian's nose and Inspector Van Thian was incapable of nailing him".

[18] Unfortunately, none of the leading English translations preserved the Hebrew VS, compare, e.g., the King James version: *And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.* or The Standard version: *Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him*.

drawing on many interpretations, noticed this VS. Clearly, if the biblical narrator had not wished to present the silence as a means of expression, s/he could easily have used the alternative *talk* or *speak* (see Footnote 18 above).

As discussed in F3 (§2.2 above), a similar picture, worth perusing, emerges from the basic passive voice in relation to VS. Here, too, introducing VS as figure necessitates the discrimination between passive forms dictated by grammar rules or pragmatic matters (such as an unknown agent or concealing the agent's identity; the agent is irrelevant, or there is no agent – such as the middle voice) and VS (Keenan 1985: 247–258, and see F3 §2.2 above). Not verbalizing the agent role as a means of expression not only employs the passive forms as forerunners, but also exploits the range of conditions dictating the various kinds of passive mentioned above. One such example of VS concerns exploiting the passive as the middle voice, in which there is no responsible agent; such examples include *the smell disappeared; the wounds healed* (Keenan 1985: 254; see also Postal 1968). Much has been said regarding Hemingway's short story: *For sale: baby shoes, never worn.* As Gilead (2008) shows, in these six words Hemingway creates an entire universe, one both enigmatic and tragic. This six-word story is a book, a movie and a poem; it lacks nothing. There is no superfluous word or punctuation mark. The death and the loss are expressed, among other types of VS, by situating the baby as the middle voice – as if it did not live to become an agent. The choice of shoes here is not accidental; a baby habitually is dressed right after birth, but only when it stands on its feet – becomes physically stable and independent – does the baby receive its first pair of shoes. The deliberate use of the middle voice – when it is semantically and pragmatically obvious that there is an agent – functions as a forerunner depicting this loss.

Another example of VS exploiting the passive formation is Freud's (1919) use of *A child being is beaten*. Freud employed the various syntactic transformations (active/passive; the different persons occupying the agent/patient roles)[19] to describe the fantasy of beating reflecting the different stages in the awakening of the congenital libidinal factors and the origins of sexual perversions. Freud goes through the transformations beginning with *my father is beating a child*, and on to sadism and masochism. He says "[t]his being beaten is now a convergence of the sense of guilt and sexual love. *It is not only the punishment for the forbidden genital relation, but also the regressive substitute for that relation*" (1919: 189, emphasis in original). Basic passive formation is a

[19] It seems interesting to point out that Freud's (1919) use of the various passive transformations preceded Chomsky's (1957) transformational grammar.

forerunner of the VS omission of the agent, communicating a lack of responsibility and thus avoidance of blame and punishment.

3.2. Dyadic structures and suppletion in light of VS

As shown above, there are key linguistic concepts which are based on attentiveness to unarticulated verbal constituents. Other such concepts have been disregarded as figure, due to linguists' focus on the observable. We finally look at two such linguistic notions deserving scholarly attention as illustrations of VS: the dyadic structure and suppletion.

The logical nature of syntactic-logical dyadic structures is signaled by connectives linking constituents. By their very nature, connectives are function particles indicating logico-linguistic relationships between entities (e.g. conjunctions, disjunctions, entailments, equations). Despite the regular occurrences – in speech as well as in writing – of a hollow dyad, this phenomenon has not received linguistic attention. A major class within such dyads is the class of syntactic coordinating constructions (Haspelmath 2004: 33). The book of Exodus opens thus: *And these are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family*. In this example, *and* signals a symmetrical dyadic structure: X ^ Y. Commentators settle this apparent discrepancy by explaining that, in this case, *and* conjoins two books – Genesis and Exodus. A coordinating dyadic structure may join any constituent belonging to the same category (a phrase, a sentence, an entire discourse, etc.). However, we also find many cases with connectives such as *and* or *but* in initial positions of texts. What are their functions in such initial positions? Bolden (2010) describes the function of *and* appearing in an initial position as naming the unsaid; that which has not been said, but may have or should have been said. In comparing the functions of *and* and *but* in initiating turns in discourse, Schiffrin (1987: 152–177) stresses the discursive function of *but* as contrasting an upcoming unit with a prior one. Among these contrastive actions, Schiffrin also mentions *but* as marking a return to a previously raised issue. Robert Frost's (1971: 469) poem is an example of the role played by VS as the initial constituent in a dyadic structure:

> But outer Space,
> At least this far,
> For all the fuss
> Of the popul*ace*
> Stays more popu*lar*
> Than popu*lous*.

Frost's poem could not have begun with any other word. It serves as the forerunner of VS, followed by the text from *but* onwards, creating a universe. It is this specific *but* that marks the semantic, thematic contrast between inner space and outer space; between the close and the distant, between the reached (by populous) and the not-reached, the preserved and the lost.

Finally, we turn to suppletion. Melčuk (1976: 52) defines suppletion as "[t]he relationship between any two linguistic units A and B which meet the following condition: the semantic distinction between A and B is regular, while the formal distinction between them is not regular". Dressler (1985) differentiates between weak suppletion (e.g. *child*/*children*) and strong suppletion (e.g. *be*/*am*/*are*/*is*/*was*). Scholars also extend suppletion to irregular stems or affixes within word formation e.g. *dog/bitch*; *one/two/three*; *first/second/third* (Melčuk 1976: 83; Dressler 1985; Carstairs-McCarthy 1994). As discussed above (§2.0), the zero-sign (ø) is in many inflected languages the conventional signifier designating the unmarked constituent of a paradigm. Linking the zero-sign with VS clearly acknowledges the relationships between the zero-sign and the paradigm stems as suppletive; the unarticulated signifier differs phonologically from the articulated signifiers, yielding strong suppletion.

This leads to the next argument, which claims that the integration of VS as a signifier at all levels of language (from the phonetic level, through morphology and syntax and up to discourse), constitutes a suppletive option on the verbal plane. The various examples discussed above – from the inflectional zero-sign, to derivation, syntax, pragmatics and discourse – all exemplify the complementary – thus suppletive – relations between speech as the regular, expected verbal means of expression and VS as its suppletive counterpart.

Summing up, bringing VS to the fore of linguistic investigation is not only descriptively justified, reflecting the speaker and the addressee's verbal behavior, but it is also justified on theoretical linguistic grounds: treating the verbal utterance in its entirety. Kierkegaard, speaking as a philosopher, argues that the universality of silence is not in the code, but rather in its surmounting the limits of the code. According to Kierkegaard, the use of language to generalize prevents it from authentically expressing singularity and existence (see Kenaan 2001: 252). Pursuing Kenaan's analysis, for Kierkegaard, silence as a universal is the direct opposite of universalism as a theoretical construction. It is universal because its authenticity preceded theoretization; silence, as existence, preceded language. The various languages, including factual language, are founded on silence and emerge from it (Kenaan 2001).

It was shown here that not downgrading the prevailing status of articulated verbal signifiers (words, sentences, etc.) in human communication, unique important contributions to the study of language are founded on the incorporation of VS in the linguistic apparatus and emerge from its study as figure. This gives a theoretical twist to Rabindranath Tagore's dictum: "If you do not understand my silence, you will never understand my words".

REFERENCES

Adell, J., A. Bonafonte and D. Escudero. 2007. "Filled pauses in speech synthesis: Towards conversational speech". In: Matoušek, V. and P. Mautner (eds.), *Proceedings of the 10th International Conference on Text, Speech and Dialogue*, Plzen, Czech Republic. 358–365.

Adler, S. 2007. "Silence and the French connection". In: Ephratt, M. (ed.), *Silences – Silence in culture and in interpersonal relations*. Tel-Aviv: Resling. 177–190. (In Hebrew.)

Amir, D. 2014. *Cleft tongue: The language of psychic structures*. (Translated by M. Hadar.). London: Karnac Books.

Baker, S.J. 1955. "The theory of silences". *Journal of General Psychology* 53. 145–167.

Bar-Hillel, Y., A. Kasher and E. Shamir. 1967. "Measures of syntactic complexity". In: Booth, A.D. (ed.), *Machine translation*. Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company. 29–50.

Basso, K.H. 1972. "'To give up on words': Silence in Western Apache culture". In: Giglioli, P.P. (ed.), *Language and social context*. London: Penguin Books. 67–86.

Beckett, S. 1953. *Waiting for Godot*. London: Faber and Faber.

Ben-Ze'ev, E., R. Ginio and J. Winter (eds.). 2010. *Shadows of war: A social history of silence in the twentieth century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bolden, G.B. 2010. "'Articulating the unsaid' via *and*-prefaced formulations of others' talk". *Discourse Studies* 12(1). 5–32.

Bruneau, T.J. 1973. "Communicative silences: forms and functions". *Journal of Communication* 23. 17–46.

Buren, J. van and S. Alhanati (eds.). 2010. *Primitive mental states: A psychoanalytic exploration of the origins of meaning*. New York and London: Routledge.

Cage, J. 1961. *Silence: Lectures and writings*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Carstairs-McCarthy, A. 1994. "Suppletion". In: Asher, R.E. and J.M.Y. Simpson (eds.), *The encyclopedia of language and linguistics*. Oxford: Pergamon Press. 4410–4411.

Chomsky, N. 1957. *Syntactic structures*. The Hague: Mouton.

Chomsky, N. 1965. *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge Mass: MIT Press.

Chomsky, N. 1976. *Reflections on language*. Isle of Man: Fontana.

Chomsky, N. 1988. *Language and the problems of knowledge: The Managua lectures*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Collins English Dictionary – Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition. (Entry SILENCE.) Harper Collins Publishers. Last accessed 10 Oct 2012. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/silence>

Crown, C.L. and S. Feldstein. 1991. "The perception of speech rate from the sound-silence patters of monologues". *Journal of Psycholinguistics Research* 20(1). 47–63.

Dauenhauer, B.P. 1980. *Silence – The phenomenon and its ontological significance*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Dressler, W.U. 1985. "Suppletion in word-formation". In: Fisiak, J. (ed.), *Historical semantics: Historical word formation*. Berlin – Amsterdam – New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 98–112.

Ephratt, M. 2008. "The functions of silence". *Journal of Pragmatics* 40(11). 1909–1938.

Ephratt, M. 2011. "Linguistic, paralinguistic and extralinguistic speech and silence". *Journal of Pragmatics* 43. 2286–2307.

Ephratt, M. 2012. "'We try harder' – Silence and Grice's cooperative principle, maxims and implicatures". *Language and Communication* 32. 62–79.

Ephratt, M. 2014. "Silence". In: Schneider, K.P. and A. Barron (eds.), *Pragmatics of discourse*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 407–439.

Foehrenbach, L.M. and R.C. Lane. 1991. "Acting out in the treatment situation". *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy* 21(3). 185–196.

Freidmann, N. 2002. "The fragile nature of the left periphery: CP deficits in agrammatic aphasia". In: Falk, Y.N. (ed.), *Proceedings of the 18th IATL Conference. The Israeli Association for Theoretical Linguistics. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University*. Available at <http://linguistics.huji.ac.il/IATL/18/Friedmann.pdf>.

Freud, S. 1919. "A child is being beaten". *SE* 17. London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis. 177–204.

Frost, R. 1971. *The poetry of Robert Frost*. (Edited by E.C. Lathem.) Barre, MA: Imprint Society.

Gerzi, S. 2007. "What do silences express in the psychoanalytic process?". In: Ephratt, M. (ed.), *Silences – Silence in culture and in interpersonal relations*. Tel-Aviv: Resling. 137–160. (In Hebrew.)

Gilead, A. 2008. "How few words can the shortest story have?". *Philosophy and Literature* 32. 119–129.

Goffman, E. 1959. *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Anchor Books.

Greenberg, J.H. 1963. "Some universals of grammar with particular reference to the order of meaningful elements". In: Greenberg, J.H. (ed.), *Universals of language*. Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press. 73–113.

Greenberg, J.H. 1978. "Typology and cross-linguistic generalization". In: Greenberg, J. H. (ed.), *Universals of human languages*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. 33–60.

Grice, P.H. 1989. *Studies in the ways of words*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press.

Grodzinsky, Y. 2000. "The neurology of syntax: Language use without Broca's area". *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 23. 1–71.

Gurevitch, Z. 2001. "Dialectical dialogue: The struggle for speech, repressive silence, and the shift to multiplicity". *British Journal of Sociology* 52(1). 87–104.

Handel, S. 2006. *Perceptual coherence: Hearing and seeing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Harris, Z. 1951. *Structural linguistics*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press.
Haspelmath, M. 2004. "Coordinating constructions: An overview". In: Haspelmath, M. (ed.), *Coordinating constructions*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 3–40.
Hassan, I. 1967. *The literature of silence: Henry Miller and Samuel Beckett*. New York: Alfred A Knopf.
Ishiguro, K. 1989. *The Remains of the Day*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
Jakobson, R. 1937. "Zero sign". In: Waugh, L.R. and M. Halle (eds.), *Russian and Slavic grammar* (1984). Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 151–160.
Jakobson, R. 1956. "Two aspects of language and two types of aphasic disturbances". In: Jakobson, R. 1971. *Selected writings* (vol. II). The Hague: Mouton. 239–259.
Jakobson, R. 1960. "Concluding statement: Linguistics and poetics". In: Sebeok, T.A. (ed.), *Style in language*. New York: Wiley. 350-370.
Jaworski, A. 1993. *The power of silence: Social and pragmatic perspectives*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
Jaworski, A. 2000. "Silence and small talk". In: Couplnad, J. (ed.), *Small talk*. Harlow: Longman. 110–132.
Jaworski, A., R. Fitzgerald and O. Constantinou. 2005. "Busy saying nothing new: Live silence in TV reporting of 9/11". *Multilingua* 24. 121–144.
Jensen, V.J. 1973. "Communicative functions of silence". *ETC A Review of General Semantics* 30. 249–257.
Johansen, J. 1996. "Iconicity in literature". *Semiotica* 110. 37–55.
Keenan, E. 1985. "Passive in the world's languages". In: Shopen, T. (ed.), *Language typology and syntactic description* (vol. I). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 243–281.
Kenaan, H. 2001. "Kierkegaard and the language of silence". In: Jäkel, S. and A. Timonen (eds.), *The language of silence*. Turku: Turun Yliopisto. 249–258.
Koffka K. 1935. *Principles of gestalt psychology*. London: Routledge.
Köhler, W. 1947. *Gestalt psychology: An introduction to new concepts in modern psychology*. New York: Liveright Pub.
Kristeva, J. 1966 [1980]. "The bounded text". In: Roudiez, L.S. (ed.), *Desire in language*. (Translated by T. Gora, A. Jardine and L.S. Roudiez.) New York: Columbia University Press. 36–63.
Kurzon, D. 1998. *Discourse of silence*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
Kurzon, D. 2007. "Towards a typology of silence". *Journal of Pragmatics* 39. 1673–1688.
Lacan, J.J. 1956. "The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis". In: Lacan, J.J., *Écrits* (1966). London and New York: Routledge. 33–125.
Malinowski, B. 1952. "The problem of meaning in primitive languages". In: Ogden, C. K. and I.A. Richards (eds.), *The meaning of meaning* (Supplement I). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 296–336.
Melčuk, I. 1976. "On suppletion". *Linguistics* 170. 45–90.

Müller, W. G. 2000. "Iconicity and rhetoric: A note on iconic force of rhetorical figures in Shakespeare". In: Fischer, O. and M. Nänny (eds.), *The motivated sign*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 305–322.
Naveh, H. 1993. *Captives of mourning: Perspective of mourning in Hebrew literature*. Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad. (In Hebrew.)
Noonan, M. 1985. "Complementation". In: Shopen, T. (ed.), *Language typology and syntactic description* (vol. II). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 42–140.
Olinick, S.L. 1982. "Meanings beyond words: psychoanalytic perception of silence and communication, happiness, sexual love and death". *International Review Psycho-Analysis* 9. 461–472.
Pennac, D. 1987. *La fée carabine*. Paris: Gallimard.
Pennac, D. 1987. *Fairy Gunmother*. (Translated by I. Monk.) London: Harvill (1997).
Peirce, C.S. 1965. *Collected papers of C.S. Peirce*. (Edited by C. Hartshorne and P. Weiss.) Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Plato. "Cratylus". In: *The dialogues of Plato* (vol. 1). (Translated by B. Jowett.) New York: Random House. 173–229.
Postal, P.M. 1986. *Studies of passive clauses*. New York: State University of New York Press.
Poyatos, F. 2002. *Nonverbal communication across disciplines*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
Qiu, F., T. Sugihara Tadashi and R. von der Heydt. 2007. "Figure-ground mechanisms provide structure for selective attention". *Nature Neuroscience* 10. 1492–1499.
Reik, T. 1926. "The psychological meaning of silence". *Psychoanalytic Review* (1968). 55. 172–186.
Rescher, N. 1998. "The significance of silence". *European Review* 6(1). 91–95.
Rosen, V.H. and H. Edelheit. 1970. "Panel on 'Language and Psychoanalysis'". *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 51. 237–243.
Rubin, E. 1921. "Figure and ground". In: Yantis, S. (ed.), 2001. *Visual Perception*. Philadelphia: Psychology Press. 225–229.
Sacks, H., E.A. Schegloff and G. Jefferson. 1974. "A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation". *Language* 50. 696–735.
Sandler, W. 2010. "The uniformity and diversity of language: Evidence from sign language". *Lingua* 120(12). 2727–2732.
Sandler, W. and D. Lillo-Martin. 2006. *Sign languages and linguistic universals*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Saussure, F. de. 1913. *Course in general linguistics*. (Translated and annotated by R. Harris, 1983.) London: Duckworth.
Saville-Troike, M. 1985. "The place of silence in an integrated theory of communication". In: Tannen, D. and M. Saville-Troike (eds.), *Perspectives on silence*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex. 3–18.
Saville-Troike, M. 1994. "Silence". In: Asher, R.E. and J.M.Y. Simpson (eds.), *The encyclopedia of language and linguistics*. Oxford: Pergamon Press. 3945–3947.
Schirillo, J.A. 2009. "Gestalt approach". In: Goldstein, B. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of perception* 1. 469–472.
Scott, C.W.M. 1958. "Noise, speech and technique". *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 39(2–4). 108–111.

Schiffrin, D. 1987. *Discourse markers*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
Sebeok, T.A. 1994. *An introduction to semiotics*. London: Pinter.
Sobkowiak, W. 1997. "Silence and markedness theory". In: Jaworski, A. (ed.), *Silence: Interdisciplinary perspectives*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter. 39–61.
Sontag, S. 1966. "The aesthetics of silence". In: Sontag, S., *Styles of radical will*. London: Secker and Warburg. 3–34.
Stafford, L.E. 2007. *Veni, vidi, futui: Sexual imagery and social class in Roman art*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Stöckl, H. 2005. "Typography: Body and dress of a text – A signing model between language and image". *Visual Communication* 4(2). 204–214.
Verschueren, J. 1985. *What people say they do with words*. Northwood, NJ: Ablex.
Wallace, S. 1982. "Figure and ground: The interrelationships of linguistic categories". In: Hopper, P.J. (ed.), *Tense-aspect: Between semantics and pragmatics*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 201–223.
Weinreich, U. 1963. "On the semantic structure of language". In: Greenberg, J.H. (ed.), *Universals of language*. Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press. 142–216.
Wilson, P. 2000. *Mind the gap*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
Winkler, S. 2006. "Ellipsis". In: Brown, K. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of language and linguistics*, Amsterdam: Elsevier. 109–113.
Wolf, W. 2003. "Non-supplemented blanks". In: Meader, C. and O. Fischer (eds.), *Outside-in – in-side-out*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 113–132.
Zeligs, M.A. 1961. "The psychology of silence". *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 9. 7–43.
Zerubavel, E. 2006. *The elephant in the room – Silence and denial in everyday life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Address correspondence to:
Michal Ephratt
Hebrew Linguistics
University of Haifa
199 Abba Hushi Bl.
Mount Carmel
Haifa, 3498838
Israel
mephratt@research.haifa.ac.il