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All correspondence to be addressed in the name of the
Editor-in-Chief

College of Arts – University of Mosul – Republic of Iraq

E-mail: adabarafidayn@gmail.com

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*Silence in Harold Pinter's Plays**Asst. Lect. Wafa Salim Mahmood (*)*

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Introduction

Silence is, in its literal meaning, an act that is expected by the listener to listen to a speech or from people in reading something in any place, but silence is sometimes accidental when no one perceives it as silence. It is inevitably act in some occasions.

Linguistically speaking, silence and speech live symbiosis. One depends on another. Thus, it can be said that silence becomes the reverse as well as the integral part of speech. We can also say that no silence without speech and vice versa, i.e. silence or human silence expresses different emotions in human beings for an instance, embarrassment, joy, grief, emotion defense, envy, love, hate, disgust, withdrawal or sulking and for this respect silence carries meaning.

Pinter's View of Silence

Coming to the literary meaning of silence in modern drama, Harold Pinter directly comes to our consideration as one of the pioneers of modern theatre and the postwar theatre goers who give us a way of absorb and understanding the new drama.

Pinter is one of the most influential writers of 20th Century who wrote many plays that are certainly well-known for using silence as a type of absurd theatre. He is also famous of writing a new kind of drama which is called a "**Comedy of Menace**" using common characters and simple and common setting. His plays deal with violence, fear, horror, mystery and tension. But this tension emerges from the long silence is used within the dialogue and the crucial speech of characters in Pinter's plays that is why his style is distinguished by an adjective called "**Pinteresque**" which is a term used to indicates dramatic scenarios happened in a fixed setting and few characters whose mortifications are obscure. The action is

* Dept. of Translation/ College of Arts/ University of Mosul.

overlapped with violence of the characters and controlled by that atmosphere of unease psychology.¹ His plays seek the struggle for power and concern with ambiguous issues and reasons for both defeat and victory that are undefined.² The use of silence was balanced in the importance of characters and dialogue. Ludwig Wittgenstein says about silence, "**what we cannot speak about we must pass over silence.**"³ Thus, silence response of the characters in modern theatre has a specific meaning and an effective purpose in the centre of the text. For modern playwrights including Pinter, silence employed as integral element in the dramatic spectacle. Hollis says:

*Pinter's gift has been to create dramatic representations of silence as a presence... While there is much in Pinter which is of significance to the discerning observer of contemporary artistic expression, perhaps nothing is more important than Pinter's endeavor to forge a poetic out of the silence which surrounds us.*⁴

Basically, in modern theatre silence is not the absent from the text, neutral within the text, nor more profound than the text. In other words, silence is the moment of language. Kane describes it as follows:

*The active listener, like the active speaker, participates in the international language game by forcing the speaker to redefine and focus his speech*⁵

According to Pinter, it is in the quiet places that characters are hidden and simultaneously exposed. Aston in Pinter's play *The Caretaker* (1960) symbolizes withdrawal from temporal, spatial or social reality. Thus to understand their withdrawal and passivity, we must understand the role of silence in language game.⁶

Aston: I... I didn't have a very good night again.
Davies: I slept terrible.

Pause

Aston: You were making...

Davies: Terrible. Had a bit of rain in the night, didn't it?

Aston: Just a bit

(*The Caretaker*, Act II, 50)

Pinter uses language in his plays to show the failure of his characters to communicate. His characters are very poor in communication and in employing their language in a coherent and a cohesion way. He thinks the conversation between characters is so crucial and people live in the space of words, he says:

*I don't know, I think possibly it's because
people fall back on anything they can say
their hands on verbally to keep away from
the danger of knowing, and of being known.*⁷

In this respect, the most important thing for Pinter is unsaid in language but in silence which is a better way for his characters to say what cannot say. In silence, Pinter's characters speak more eloquently about their conditions and they can express what they could possibly express. For Pinter, many occasions can be communicated in silence.

Keven Nance says that Pinter's characters are most articulate when they say nothing at all. From the very first play, *The Room* (1957) Pinter insisted on the meaning among the pauses that precede and followed the lines of conversation. From the dead spots in the conversation, the pauses are like "**followers in which seeds of thoughts were planted, germinated and produced a bumper crop of dramatic fruit.**"⁸ These pauses are almost seen to be ascribed to the plays and specifically to the silenced which come to be labeled in "**Pinteresque**" that Pinter is preoccupied with the tensions between reality and the world of imagination. He has, actually and accurately, used theatre as a 'critical act' to denote the abstracted realities, and he has applied his language to embody the view of his world and his concerns in the modern world.

Two Silences in Pinter's Drama

Generally speaking, silence is very important besides, it takes up an impressive form of the modern plays. It is necessary in cutting the span of time and in producing pauses throughout the play. Silence can sometimes be considered as a type of a conversation

deals with not only what is said but what is also unsaid. So, it is both the complete refusal of speak and an act within the text considered meaningful. One can imagine the importance of silence if the character takes up so much in the play. Pinter's fondness of silence is quite simply assigned where he uses it excessively and magnificently to affect the rhythm and flow of the play.

Silence, in Pinter's drama, has multiple sources and various effects. Though he is influenced by Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) in using silence, he has his own way and forges a new fashion of silence. Beckett uses silence in a scattering way throughout the play saying; **"I use the words you taught me. If they don't mean anything anymore, teach me others. Or let me be silent."**⁹

In this sense, we find Beckett's plays silence has taken the place of language. It is employed as a relief from the silly language. The aggressive argumentation between the characters in the words of Beckett is explicitly a game to establish a conversation between them.

Estragon: In the meantime let's try and converse calmly,
since we're incapable of keeping silent.

Vladimir: You're right, we're inexhaustible.

Estragon: It's so we won't think.

Vladimir: We have that excuse.

Estragon: It's so we won't hear.

Vladimir: We have our reasons.

Estragon: All the dead voices.

Vladimir: They make a noise like wings.

Estragon: Like leaves.

Vladimir: Like sand.

Estragon: Like leaves.

Silence.

Vladimir: They all speak together.

Estragon: Each one to itself.

Silence.

Vladimir: Rather they whisper.

Estragon: They rustle.

Vladimir: They murmur.

Estragon: They rustle.

Silence.

Vladimir: What do they say?

Estragon: They talk about their lives.

Vladimir: To have lived is not enough for them.

Estragon: They have to talk about it.

Vladimir: To be dead is not enough for them.

Estragon: It is not sufficient.

Silence.

Vladimir: They make a noise like feathers.

Estragon: Like leaves.

Vladimir: Like ashes.

Estragon: Like leaves.

Long silence.

Vladimir: Say something!

Estragon: I'm trying.

Long silence.

Vladimir: (in anguish). Say something at all!

Estragon: What do we do now?

Vladimir: Wait for Godot?

Estragon: Ah!

Silence

(Waiting For Godot, Act.II, 58-59)

In the previous lines, we see that silence is not only a part of their dialogue, but also the result of their poor communication. Vladimir and Estragon's silences represent their inability to make a meaningful communication.

Unlike Beckett's silences which are mimetic and Chekhov who employs silence for the purpose of irony, Pinter uses silence for certain purposes. The most effective one is to be as a "menacing gesture". Beckett uses silence as a means of creating the poetry of theatre. Martin Esslin agrees with this point and in the right of Pinter, he says that these silences and pauses are deployed by Pinter to increase the tone and musicality of the play to make the dialogue rhythmic. He adds that Pinter is a 'poet- of –the- theatre' and the function of silence is like caesura in the poem or a pause in music. Pinter's silence and pause differ in duration within a play and from piece to another. The characters struggle in silence to face the

challenge of the need to speak. He uses silence for the purpose of menace.¹⁰

In his Plays, Pinter actually presents us two silences to be used within the speech of the characters. First, when no word is spoken and secondly, when there is a torrent of language is being employed. Pinter depicts the difference of the two kinds of silence as follows:

*One when no word is spoken. The other when perhaps a torrent of language is employed. This speech is the locked beneath it. That is a continual reference. The speech we hear is an indication of we don't hear. It is a necessary avoidance, a violent, sly, anguished or mocking smoke screen which keeps the other in its place. When true silence falls, we are still left with an echo but are near nakedness.*¹¹

Thus, silence, for Pinter, does not mean the absence of speech but the true intense scenes that leave an impression on the audience.

Another purpose is focused of using silence in Pinter's play is to show the emptiness of language. Though, Pinter's characters abused language to show their exhaustion of their abilities to confirm their existence in the world they live, they use silence as a best way when they have nothing to say:

*This silence is the result of a character's **anagnorisis** or insight into the nature of some supra-personal reality. It is comparable to the central ineffability of the mystical experience in which the character attain the consciousness of unity with the Other. It is the outward manifestation of the inner **kenosis**, the emptying of the self into the larger non-self. This emptying is not the occasion of emptiness but the experience of fullness.*¹²

In a word, it can be said that silence is the best resort for Pinter's characters to feel their identity. It their infinite space to be free from the huge finite world they live in.

Functions of Silence in Pinter's Plays

It is different when the writer writes "silence" and when he writes "after a silence" or "a short of silence" and or "after a pause" in his plays. Silence in Pinter is regarded as an unspoken dialogue represents deep thinking and imagination as well as deep attention, but what happened and will happen in this sense is silence has become equal to speech or words in a dialogue because it carries unseen meaning, unseen struggle and deep situation.

As mentioned, in silence, most events are united or decreased in a moment crisis to make an interaction between the character and the consciousness which make the silence is inevitable hidden language to be entered urgently within the whole dialogue of the plays in Pinter. For this respect the function of silence is to make the audience think deeply or a certain event or it may embarrass the audience to ask about the real meaning of a given situation.

There are two essential ways in which Pinter uses to make the silence articulated; **pauses and silence**. The most common one is '**the pause**'. It occurs when a character has said what he has to say and waiting for a response from the people or it may occurs when the characters cannot find the words to say what they want to say.¹³

There is a difference between a silence and a pause in Pinter's plays. Each has its function and effect within the lines of the dialogue. Pinter himself said in one interview about the difference between the two as follows:

Oh. No! These pauses and silences! I've been appalled. Occasionally when I've run into groups of actors, normally abroad, they say a silence is obviously longer than a pause. Right, O.K., so it is. They'll say, this a pause, so we'll stop. And after the pause we'll start again. I'm sure this happens All over the place and thank goodness I don't know

*anything about it. From my point of view, these are not in any sense a formal kind of arrangement. The pause is a pause because of what has just happened in the minds and guts of the characters. They spring out of the text. They're not formal conveniences or stresses but part of the body of the action. I'm simply suggesting that if they play it properly they will find that a pause- or whatever the hell it is – is inevitable. And a silence equally means that something has happened to create the impossibility of anyone speaking for certain amount of time- until they recover from whatever happened before the silence.*¹⁵

According to Austin, a 'pause' is like a bridge to transform from one side into another. When the character speaks, the audience thinks of him /her in one side and when he stops short and speaks again, the audience will feel him/ her on the other side. He adds it is also like a gap in which the character may change his / her intention to introduce a surprise or alarm in the part of the reader or the audience.¹⁴

While Martin Esslin suggests about the difference between a pause and a silence in Pinter's drama as to be:

*When Pinter asks for a pause....he indicates that intense that unspoken tensions are mounting, whereas silences are notations for the end of a movement, the beginning of another, s between the movements of symphony.*¹⁵

Consequently, the function of 'pauses' which are used in a multitude of ways in Pinter' plays is first; to denote the full range of human expression. The 'pause' is sometimes there to give a character a moment to mull over what has just been said either by himself or someone else and secondly, to express the fact of cognition with the 'pause' puzzling through what is said and what is to be said next and how. It is right to say that Pinter's characters

choose their words carefully and pay full claim to the time and space in which to do it.¹⁶

Goldberg and McCann in *The Birthday Party* (1957), for instance often take this point:

Goldberg: Sit down.

Stanley: No.

Goldberg sighs, and sits at the table right.

Goldberg: McCann.

McCann: Nat?

Goldberg: Ask him to sit down.

McCann: Yes, Nat. (McCann moves to Stanley)

Do you mind sitting down?

Stanley: Yes, I do mind.

McCann: Yes now, but — it'd be better if you did.

Stanley: Why don't you sit down?

McCann: No, not me — you.

Stanley. No thanks.

Pause.

McCann. Nat.

Goldberg: What?

McCann: He won't sit down.

Goldberg: Well, ask him.

McCann. I've asked him.

Goldberg: Ask him again.

McCann (to Stanley): Sit down.

Stanley: Why?

McCann: You'd be more comfortable.

Stanley. So would you.

Pause.

McCann: All right. If you will I will.

Stanley: You first.

(The Birthday Party, Act. II, p.46)

This provides a challenge about how long to pause for and if it has the desired effect. Pinter designed these pauses to move the story along and to establish a relationship between the characters. He also uses pauses when the lack of speech becomes a form or a threat and a moment of tension. In this way, Harold Pinter's pauses express the characters' struggles to obtain or to hold on to power. In *The*

Homecoming (1964), all male family group throughout Act I in verbal struggles for dominance, Max has defeated both his brother, Sam and his youngest son, Joey. Then Max himself, in turn, faces defeat by his older son, Lenny. At this point the oldest son, Teddy, arrives with his seemingly demure wife, Ruth, and leaves her alone to encounter the sinister Lenny in the dimly lit living room. After having seen Lenny thoroughly defeat Max, the audience expects to see Ruth intimidated by Lenny. On the contrary, Lenny is surprised with the response of Ruth. She challenges him in the ambiguous “glass of water” scene:

Lenny: Just give me the glass.

Ruth: No

(Pause)

Lenny: I'll take it, then.

Ruth: If you take the glass . . . I'll take you.

(Pause)

Lenny: How about me taking the glass without you taking me?

Ruth: Why don't I just take you?

(Pause)

Lenny: You're joking.

(The *Homecoming*, Act. I, p.34)

The audience will perceive Ruth's triumph even though none of this information has been communicated directly through language. Pinter's drama makes us feel a sense of recognition. As the audience and Lenny himself realize that Ruth cannot be feared, we laugh as the unspoken tension builds during these pauses. We don't laugh at anything we would normally view as a joke, however, despite of Lenny's accusation, Ruth clearly is not joking. Ruth takes quite seriously her refusal to be cowed by Lenny, and nothing about this scene resembles any kind of traditional joke.¹⁷

A 'pause' is not only used to determine the situation towards others but it also helps to define the personality of the characters and their disability to give their opinion frankly and publically as well as the difficulty they face between each other to follow a clear thinking.

Due to Hall, the characters change their intention, direction or it may a reversal of meaning during the pause thus he regarded a 'pause' is a space or gap used by Pinter for this purpose of interrupting the flow and tempo of the dialogue.¹⁸

'Pauses' in Pinter are used in two forms: brief and long pauses. In "*The Birthday Party*," there is a brief pause when Stanley opens his gift and sees that it is a toy drum.

Meg: It's your present.

Stanley: This isn't my birthday, Meg.

Meg: Of Course, it is. Open your present.

He stars at the parcel, slowly, stands and opens it. He takes out a boy's drum.

Stanley: (*flatly*) It's a drum. A boy's drum.

Meg: (*tender*) It's because you haven't got a piano.

He stars at her, then turns and walks towards the door, left.

Meg: Aren't you give me a kiss?

He turns sharply, and stops. He walks back towards her slowly. He stops at her chair, looking down upon her.

Pause

His shoulders sag, he bends and kisses her on the check

Meg: There are some strikes in there

Stanley looks into the parcel. He takes out two drumsticks. He taps them together. He looks at her.

Stanley: Shall I put it round my neck?

(*The Birthday Party*, Act. I, p.36)

The brief pause in the previous lines denotes Stanley's turmoil about how to respond with his mother regarding the gift she has given to him. She regarded him as child to bring him a drum toy. In "*The Room*," there is a brief pause when Bert enters the room and finds his wife being physically intimate with Riley. This brief pause is assigned by Bert's behaviour in the stage direction. He simply looked at them and went to the window to draw the curtains as the room was dark then he regarded his wife and said; "**I got back all**

right" (*The Room*, 115). This brief pause gives Bert enough time to prove himself that he is still there. In fact, these brief pauses during these scenes create the intensity in the play and help to highlight the significant scenes that would affect the ending of the story later on. The length of pauses that characters take is marked by silence. As previously discussed, the pauses help create intense scenes and, therefore, the lengthy pauses create the mood shift.

Through brief or lengthy pauses, Pinter creates the mood and the character in each scene. When the characters become the opposite of their silence in the action, it helps the audience understand themselves as the characters. Furthermore, the pauses help more in creating intensity in the scenes. When something insulting, embarrassing or dangerous happens, the characters in the play take brief or lengthy pauses. Through the pauses, the audience feels thrilled or excited in anticipation of what comes next. In addition, the brief or lengthy pauses highlight the importance of the scene and its role in the upcoming scenes and the conclusion. In *The Caretaker*, Davis the tramp has asked for the pair of shoes, while Aston searches under the bed for the shoes he immediately offered to Davis:

Aston: You've got to have a good pair of shoes.

Davis: shoes? It's life and death to me.

I had to go all the way to Luton in these.

Aston: What happened when you got there, then?

Pause

Davis: I used to know a bootmaker in Aston.

He was a good mate to me.

Pause

Davis: You know what that bastard monk said to me?

Pause

How many more Blacks you got around here then?

(*The Caretaker*, Act. I, 11-12)

Though Aston never gets an answer to his simple question, we as audience get the answer that Davis is not the real name of this tramp. In this respect, pauses and silence are regarded as makers of

interpersonal and social relations to be fallen between the characters.¹⁹

Furthermore, this silence helps in creating intensity and drama in the scenes. When something insulting, embarrassing or dangerous happens, the characters in the play take brief or lengthy pauses. Through the pauses, the audience feels thrilled or excited in anticipation of what comes next. In addition, the brief or lengthy pauses highlight the importance of the scene and its role in the upcoming scenes and the conclusion

A '**silence**' is the longest one in the plays and it is defined as a relief when the confrontation of violence becomes extreme i.e. when the action gets its climax and there is nothing to be said until everything or the violent emotions put down or got over.²⁰

In this sense, silence is done when a character attempt to fill the gap between him and those around him. He is caught up in short and reached to a state of limiting his language or speech in order to wait in silence for something to happen.²¹

Silence is essential and integral part in the play. Most his plays begin with a long silence such as when Mick is alone in the beginning of *The Caretaker* sitting in the room and staring around it though there are "**muffed voices**" (Act I, 5) of Aston and Davies. Three silences are set the beginning of this play to arouse the condition Mick in the audience's eyes to show the fear which overwhelmed this character from surrounding. There is another long silence used for the same purpose when Davies enters the dark room and tries to light a match while Mick is already there "**spring cleaning**" (Act II, 43) the room. The audience will feel the same state of fear he feel it in Mick at the beginning as in Davies.

There is another important sort of silence used in Pinter's plays as a dramatic effect is '**three dots**'. For Austin, the **three dots** are the "tiny hesitation", yet it is there. The **three dots** are different from other punctuation marks such as, comma, full stop or semi colon. A comma is something that we catch up on and go through it. A full stop is just a stop while semi colon is never used by Pinter in his plays though indicates a simple gap. The three dots is there whenever break is used in Pinter, they have no relation or at least little relation to what precedes or to what follows.²²

The '**three dots**' are the shortest sort of silence used by Pinter but they are to equal to a pressure point and a way of searching for a right word to say. It is a moment of incoherence in the characters and thus during the use of three dots, they are able to search for a better word to say.²³

Ruth's pauses in *The Homecoming* are indicated by the three dots which are very important as they occupy gestures that are highly sexualized in the play. The three dots are regarded as rehearsals which the characters or even the actors find very helpful as they are very dramatic to merge the comic sense out of the context.²⁴

Thus a pause is longer than the three dots and it is an interruption of the action duration which is the lack of speech and presence of non-verbal tension which becomes like speech itself. A silence is the longest. It may be a crisis point arose from which the character emerge completely changed. Pinter says about these dramatic devices as:

Language, under these conditions, is a highly ambiguous business. So often, below the word spoken, is the thing known and unspoken. My characters tell me so much and no more, with reference to their experience, their aspirations, their motives, their history. Between my lack of biographical data about them and the ambiguity of what they say lies a territory which is not only worthy of exploration but which it is compulsory to explore. You and I, the characters which grow on a page, most of the time we're inexpressive, giving little away, unreliable, elusive, evasive, obstructive, unwilling. But it's out of these

attributes

that a language arises. A language, I repeat, where under what is said, another thing is being said.²⁵

These silences, pauses and three dots are all to do with what's going on in the action of the play and Pinter uses them systematically in his plays and definitely, if they don't make any sense, Pinter might possibly cut them. Thus, using silences, pauses and three dots can suggest not only physical actions in theatre but abstract, dramatic qualities or creates irony by confirming or countering the words which surround them.

Many of Pinter's critics explore the role of 'silence' in the menacing tone of his plays, but suggest that Pinter's silences signal not so much a failure of language as a refusal to use language to communicate. Ruth and Lenny, like all of the characters in *The Homecoming*, do indeed evade direct communication. Furthermore, in this play, Pinter defies all attempts to explicate it by theorizing about the family history. If we examine the number of pauses and silences in this play, we will find in the course of the acts (100) marked pauses and (12) silences. Thirteen pauses within the speech of the characters. Thirteen are used to space the dialogue between the characters, In Act I, we have (53) pauses, (36) in the second act and (12) in the third one. In a word, the silences in *The Homecoming* relate to the self-conscious construction of character. In this play, the function of pauses used is make the reader cut himself from the narrative structure of classical drama. It provides a good example of using huge pauses to lead the audience familiarize terror and rigor in Pinter's plays.²⁶

As said before that one of the two silences "when no word is spoken". The best example of this point is Pinter's play "*The Room*"(1957), which is regarded the foundation of all Pinter's plays. In this play which consists of one act, we see a couple live a small room which is surrounded by all what Pinter feels in our world of hate and disgust. The plays open with Rose whose age is sixty serving her husband Bert breakfast. Bert is sitting at the table with his cap on reading newspapers and magazines. He eats drinks and reads silently without uttering a word, while Rose prattles on about the food she is preparing to him. All the time, Bert is silent reading without showing any interaction with Rose's speech. Rose in her part never gives Bert time to respond with her even if he wants to. In this play the two silences of Pinter are set from the very beginning. The first one lies in Bert when he doesn't speak or

respond to Rose's chattering. Thus the function of this long silence is to show Bert's opinion though unspoken that whatever he speaks or responds to his wife, it will be without benefit because his speech will have a little consequence from Rose. For this reason, he doesn't speak because he doesn't want to fail in any conversation with Rose. The other point is that it is possible to say Pinter wants to shock the reader with Bert's silence which leads the audience or the reader to ask why Bert does not respond to his wife's speech. Thus, Pinter wants to create such period of silence to make his audience indulged with the reality of his world to show the absurdity of the world, one keeps silence better than speaks nonsense.

The other silence is when perhaps "a torrent of language is being employed". This point is also exemplified in the opening of *The Room* in the speech of Rose. In her speech which continues to (5) pages. She utters (87) lines monologue. Bert does not utter any word. Her lines are undercut with 37 breaks and (11) specific pauses. The function of these pauses is to put down the menace and the tension which may arouse in the part of Rose when she finds her husband neither utter a word nor turn the pages of the magazine propped in front of him. Bert her passively exaggerates the silence and prolonged the pauses to serve the theme as well as to slow down the tempo of the play and to make the time seems longer.²⁷

In this respect we can also say that the silence and the pauses used here are set to make us interact with both the man who does not respond and the woman who never gains a respond from her husband.

On the other hand, Bert's silence also helped create his character. In the end, Bert commits a murder because of his anger. His violent nature and silence both created the character, of who Bert is. He is mostly silent or quiet, but when he is angry, he becomes a character of violence.

There also what is called 'verbal pause' which is usually represented by the words, 'eh', 'ah' and 'oh'. A distinction has been drawn between '**silent pauses**' and '**verbal pauses**' (e.g. *ah*, *eh*) whose functions serve for breathing, to mark grammatical boundaries, and to provide time for the planning of new material.

Pauses have a structural function are distinguished from those involved in hesitation (hesitation pauses).²⁸

Mr. Kidd: I knocked.

Rose: I heard you.

Mr. Kidd: Eh?

Rose : we heard you.

Mr. Kidd: Hallo, Mr. Hudd, how are you, all right? I've been looking at the pipes.

Rose: Are they all right?

Mr. Kidd: Eh?

Rose: Sit down Mr. Kidd

Mr. Kidd: No, that's all right. I just popped in, like, to see how things were going.

Well, it's cosy in here, isn't it?

Rose: Oh, thank you, Mr. Kidd.

(*The Room*, 95-96)

In the previous speech above, the first verbal pause 'eh' of Mr. Kidd expresses his surprise of Rose's phrase "I heard you", while the second one expresses Mr. Kidd's failure to answer Mr. Hudd's question.

In *The Caretaker*, while Aston speaks very little and in short sentences, Davies shows more interruption in his attempting to speak about his ideas:

Aston: What did you say your name was?

Davies: Bernard Jenkins is my assumed one.

Aston: No, your other one?

Davies: Davies, Mac Davies.

Aston: Welsh, are you?

Davies: Eh?

Aston: You Welsh?

Pause.

Davies: Well, I been around, you know...
what I mean...I been about...

Aston: Where were you born then?

Davies :(*darkly*) What do you mean?

Aston: Where were you born?

Davies: I was...uh...oh, it's a bit hard, like, to set
 your mind back...see what I
 mean...going
 back... a good way...lose a bit of track,
 like...you know
 (*The Caretaker*, Act I. 23)

The constant interruptions used in the above lines by Davies in the interaction with Aston show that the tramp is intimidated. We see in these lines several sorts of silence such as three dots and a pause in addition to the verbal pauses to indicate and intensify the fearing emotion of the characters.

Besides, the previous function of silence which are mentioned, Pinter permits silence to work upon the consciousness of the audience by using silence as theatrical devices as well the technique of repetitive activities of his character. In the very beginning of *The Birthday Party* the following seemingly insignificant a repetitive conversation between Meg and Petey is equal to silence in its lack of significant:

Meg: Are they very nice?

Petey: Very nice.

Meg: I thought they'd be nice. (*she sits at the table*) You've
 got

your paper ?

Petey: Yes.

Meg: It is good?

Petey: Not bad.

Meg: What does it say?

Petey: Not very much.

Meg: You read me out some nice bit yesterday.

Petey: Yes, well, I haven't finished this one yet.

Meg: Will you tell me when you come to something good?

Petey: Yes.

Pause

Meg: Have you been working hard this morning?

Petey: No, just stocked a few of old chairs. Cleaned up a
 bit.

Meg: Is it nice out?

Petey: Very nice.

Meg: Is Stanly up yet?

Petey: I don't know. Is he?

Meg: I don't know. I haven't seen him down yet

Petey: Well, then he can't be up.

Meg: Haven't you seen him down?

Petey: I've just come in.

Meg: He must be asleep.

(The Birthday Party, Act. I, p.9)

In another occasion, silence is used in Pinter's drama as a dramatic effect when silence itself is hard to bear because there are so much noise and sounds being made at the same time.

This is the silence which lies behind language and which always threatens to break into our conversations in embarrassing ways. This is the silence which is most evident when the world at its noisiest. This is the silence which emerges when the most important things are left unsaid. Pinter has observed of our condition.²⁹

A very significant aspect is that Pinter's characters manifested by their exhaustion of their capacities to melt themselves with the forms by which they live. Though they fill the air with words, their silence is the result that they have nothing to say and when they speak their speech is that of emptiness of their lives, their words reveal no more than their poverty of communication. Thus when the crisis becomes extreme, silence is the solution. Then characters emerge from a silence completely changed. This change is often unexpected but highly dramatic.³⁰ In the Homecoming, Lenny is telling Ruth his stories about prostitutes at their first meeting, and the following he makes Ruth an erotic proposal where he put her in the same position.

Ruth: How did you know she was diseased?

Lenny: How did I know?

Pause

I decided she was

Silence

You and my brothers are newlyweds, are you?
 (*The Homecoming*, Act. I, p.31)

Silence as a dramatic effect should submit to certain criteria such as position, its effect, its period, its power and its reason. It can also say that silence works just like the consciousness to give the character a period to think, to decide or to reflect. In *The Caretaker*, the silence gives the audience a satisfaction of what real life cannot give:

Davis: Nothing but wind then.

Pause

Aston: Yes, when the wind gets up it....

Pause

Davis: Yes....

Aston: Mmmn....

Pause

Davis: Gets very draughty

Aston: Ah.

Davis: I am very sensitive to it.

Aston: Are you?

Davis: Always have been.

Pause

(*The Caretaker*, Act. I, 9)

From these pauses, we see how Pinter is interested in silence and its position. Here in lines above, Pinter uses four dots instead of three ones but they are different from the three dots. The four dots show that the period is longer than using the three dots. Moreover; these four dots which are a kind of short pauses are very important because they ensure the reason of this interruption of continuing the dialogue. They indicate that both characters Aston and Davis are confused to one another. It can also be said that this silence used in these lines shows the strangeness of these two characters who appear very odd in their behaviour.

Thus silence is not only a cut of speech but it also an allusion of personal behaviour. This tossing of pause by Pinter through the lines

here reflects the characters disabilities to give their true opinions to one another.

Pinter's long silences are always considered as the climaxes of the action. The end of *The Caretaker* is a good example of this climatic point. Long silences in Pinter's plays are identified by Esslin as the end or death of hope.³¹ As for the old man, Aston who refused to forgive his mate. His expulsion sprang from the warmth of home and death. Davis is begging for Aston's permission to let him stay in his room but he gets no answer. Pinter ends the scene with a desperate situation of Davis with a long silence.

Aston: You make too much noise.

Davis: But ...but...look...listen...listen here...

I mean...

Aston turns back to the window

What am I going to do?

Pause

What shall I do?

Pause

Where am I going to go?

Pause

If you want me to go... I'll go. You just say the

word.

Pause

I'll tell you what though....them shoes...them

shoes

you give me...they're working out all

right....they're

all right. May be I could...get down...

Aston remains still, his back to him, at the

window

Listen...if I...got down...If I was to ...get

my papers...would you...would you

let...would

you...if I got down...and got my...

Long silence

Curtains.

(The Caretaker, Act III, 75-76)

In *Betrayal* (1978), the silences are as important as the words. Critic Enoch Barter suggests that in the play, "**time is allowed to speak for itself between the scenes and through the costumes . . . and actors communicate to us in gestures, silence, and pause, all those characteristic Pinter 'words' they never get to recite onstage.**"³² Each moment of the play is so carefully tuned that any slight alteration in the landscape throws the whole off balance. *Betrayal* is about a love triangle among Jerry, Emma and Robert. The lovers are Emma and Jerry who is a literary agent and the best friend of Emma's husband, Robert. The most interesting and remarkable aspect in this play is that the action of the play moves backward rather than forwards. It is a kind of flashback. The play consists of (9) scenes and the first scene depicts an action supposed to be in the last one while the last scene depicts the earliest action which is the beginning of the love affair.

The another important and magnificent point set by Pinter is that most of the betrayals done in the story and characters' revelations take place without uttering the voices and without any verbal expressions of emotions. All tension and acute emotions are translated in the face of emotionally explosive information and through pauses and silences. If we examine the silences and pauses used in this play, we will find during the span of the nine scenes there are (135) pauses and (17) silences but the centre of the play is scene five which is most dramatic and numerical one. There are six long silences and twenty-two pauses used in this scene. It is important in which the love affair of Emma and Jerry is discovered by Robert. But what is surprised here is that this discovery does not lead to immediate break down of the marriage. Though Robert read Jerry's letter to Emma, he does not respond to this betrayal and it is the function of silence to prevent this revelation from breaking down.³³

Silence

Robert

By the way, I went into American Expres yesterday.

She looks up.

Emma

Oh?

Robert

Yes, I went to cash some travellers cheques. You get
A much better rate there, you see, than you do in an
hotel.

Emma

Oh, do you?

Robert

Oh yes. Anyway, there was a letter there for you. They
asked me if you were any relation and said yes. So
they asked me if I wanted to take it. I mean, they
gave it to me. But I said no, I would leave it. Did
you get it?

Emma

Yes.

Robert

I supposed you propped in when you were out
shopping yesterday evening?

Emma

That's right.

Robert

Oh well, I'm glad you got it.

Pause

To be honest, I was amazed that they suggested I
take it. It could never happen in England. But these
Italians ... so free and easy. I mean. just because my
name is Downs and your name is Downs doesn't
mean that we're the Mr and Mrs Downs that they,
in their laughing Mediterranean way, assume we are.
We could be, and in fact are vastly more likely to be,
total strangers. So let's say I. whom they laughingly
assume to be your husband. Had taken the letter.
having declared myself to be your husband but in truth
being a total stranger. and opened it. and read it. out of
nothing more than idle curiosity. and then thrown it in
a canal. you would never have received it and would

have

been deprived of your legal right to open your own
 mail, and
 all this because of Venetian je m'en foutisme. I've a
 good
 mind to write to the Doge of Venice about it.

Pause

That's what stopped me taking it, by the way, and
 bringing it to you. the thought that I could very
 easily be a total stranger.

Pause

What they of course did not know, and had no way
 Of knowing. Was that I am your husband.

(*Betrayal*, Scene 5, p.64-65)

These lines shows how silence plays a role in the action. The long silence comes after a sort of discussion between Robert and Emma about the topic of the novel she reads. The topic was about betrayal and the silence in this scene gives Robert time to choose his words perfectly and to tell her that he has already knows about her betrayal through the letter that comes within other letter while he was in American Epress. Robert already knew what was written in the letter for Emma by Jerry, however he postponed to talk about it till they have their vacation. Thus the silence and the pauses here decreased the tension could be done by such situation. It can be said tht the silence and the pauses manage the conflict of both characters in this scene. Furthermore, the first silence takes place when there is no word to say and after that Robert burst into a torrent of speech including several pauses to manage the conflict could be happened as a result of the effect of the emotions. The tension increased in the part of the audience who will expect Robert will rage but he coolly receive Emma's dramatic revelation about her lover after a long silene. ³⁴

Robert

Pause

He wasn't the best man at our wedding, was he?

Emma

You know he was.

Robert

Ah yes. Well, that's probably when I introduced him to you.

Pause

Was there any message for me, in his letter?

Pause

I mean in the line of business, to do with the world of publishing. Has he discovered any new and original talent? He's quite talented at uncovering talent, old Jerry.

Emma

No message.

Robert

No message. Not even his love?

Silence

Emma

We're lovers.

(Betrayal, Scene 5, 69)

We can here recognize that a pause for Pinter is a reaction towards what is said if the feeling of something more than a word to be said. A silence stands for the climax of emotions in the interaction of the characters. It is the point of cutting the information within the dialogue whether directly or indirectly. In *Betrayal*, the pause and the silence is a way of cutting the conflict from exploding and destroying the possibility of continuing the relationship and it is the silence of Emma and Robert for not tell Jerry that Robert has already known about the affair made the relationship between the two friends continue.³⁵

Thus, through pauses and silences, Pinter creates the mood and the character in each scene. The actions or behaviour that the characters in the scenes portray, become the opposite of their silence, which then helps the audience understand who they are as characters.

Conclusion

In Pinter's plays, silence and pauses or even the three dots are dramatic elements which undermine the emotions to which the characters claim and which prevent them from occupying any decisive area of commitment. Silence breaks the continuity of word and conveys meaning in its totality. The silence in Pinter's drama effectively performs the function of integrating dialogue which it becomes in this response either an explicit or implicit.

Pinter has done this for the purpose of leading the audience to expect what is going on in the action and what is the implicit meaning and feeling the characters want to convey. Pinter uses systematic dramatic pauses and silences in many different ways:

1. It occurs when the characters say what has to be said and waiting for an answer from another character.
2. It may happen when a character cannot find words to say what he wants to say.
3. Silence is an unspoken action which gives the reader or audience a clear indication.
4. Silence is the best way to reveal the real relationship between the characters and their actions.
5. Silence is the best way to reveal the gaps within the human beings.
6. Silence is the clear way to show the contrast in the behaviour of the characters and the hidden intention which can only be drawn of the face i.e. when something hidden behind the language must be conveyed.
7. Silence is a way when the characters reach to the limit of the language and wait in silence for something to occur.
8. Pinter's pause is a new way to look at theatre and how it is presented by the actors onstage.
9. The pauses and silences must be exact and precise to make them work properly as well as be properly executed by the actors, if not it could make or break the play.
10. Pinter uses pauses and silence to make an impact, and change the way we look at the modern theatre forever.
11. Silence emerges when we have most important things are left unsaid.

12. Most of the conversation in Pinter's plays comparing to silence is an attempt to mask feeling or motive, to avoid communication or connection. The characters are often themselves blind to the impulses that move them.

Notes

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3. Leslie Kane, *Silence: On the Unspoken and the Unspeakable in Modern Drama* (Canada: Associated University Press, 1984) p.17.
4. Matuz, p. 440.
5. Kane, p.18.
6. Ibid, p.19.
7. James R. Hollis, *Harold Pinter: The Poetics of Silence* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois UP, 1970), p13.
8. Kevin Nance, *The Eloquent Silence of Harold Pinter*: Obit Magazine, March, 2008.
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12. Hollis, p.16.
13. Martin S. Roger, *Harold Pinter: A Question of Timing* (London: Macmillan Press, 1995), p.12.
14. Deborah Tanner, Silence as Conflict Management in Fiction and Drama: Pinter's *Betrayal* and a short story, "Great Wits" ed. Allen Grimshaw, *Conflict Talk: Sociolinguistic of Arguments in Conversations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.262.
15. Ibid, p. 262.

16. Roger, p.12.
Kane <<http://www.obit-mag.com/articles/the-eloquent-silence-of-harold-pinter>>
17. Benston, p. 119.
18. Hollis, p.16-17.
19. Benston, p. 119.
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22. Yüsek Lisans, *The Stylistic Analysis of Harold Pinter's Plays*. (Turkey: Sileçuk University, 2007), p.20.
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25. Roger, p.13.
26. Benston, p. 119.
27. Hollis, p.16-18.
28. David Crystal Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics, 6th ed. Blackwell, 2008.
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30. Hollis, p.16-17.
31. Lisans, p.21.
32. Charney, p.446.
33. Tanner, p.264.
34. Ibid, p. 266.
35. Ibid, p.267.

Text Notes

1. Samuel Beckett, *Waiting For Godot*, (York: York Press, 2002).
2. Harold Pinter, *The Caretaker and The Dumb Waiter: Two Plays*, (New York: Grove Press, 1988).
3. ———— *The Homecoming*, (New York: Grove Press, 1965)

4. ———— *The Birthday Party and The Room: Two Plays*, New York: Grove Press, 1960).
5. ———— *Plays Four- Betrayal*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1998).

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الصمت في مسرحيات هارولد بنتر

م.م. وفاء سالم محمود

المستخلص

يعدّ هارولد بنتر من أهم الكتاب المعاصرين الذين اعتبروا الصمت تقنية أساسية تتداخل مع النص المسرحي في كتابات المسرح العبثي الحديث. فمن هذا المنطلق، يعتقد بنتر أن لا يكوّر الصمت ضمن معناه القاموسي المجرد ألا وهو الغياب عن الحديث أو التخاطب بل اعتبره كمصطلح أو عنصر مهم له وظيفة درامية تتعلق بموضوع المسرحية نفسه، وبذلك أصبح للصمت أهمية حيوية شأنه شأن الكلام في النص المسرحي ليضيف اغراضا درامية للنص من أجل تجهيز المشاهد أو القارئ مفتاحا مؤثرا لاعطاء معنى أو تفسيراً أو شرحاً أو تحليلاً واضحاً لما يشاهده أو يقرأه.