

Nonverbal Signs in Italian Literary Texts (Based On A.Baricco's Novels)

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Annotation: The article examines such nonverbal signs as gesture, pause and facial expressions as communicatively significant components of dialogic fragments. Interpreting them, it is possible to get important additional information about the characters, reveal their emotional and psychological state. The research material is A.Baricco's novel "Ocean Sea".

Keywords: literary text, nonverbal signs, interpretation, pause, gesture, intonation, dialogue.

It is known that analyzing a literary text, nonverbal signs are of particular importance, because they convey a large amount of information. Nonverbal signs can include descriptions of gestures, facial expressions, and poses of characters, their tone of voice, intonation, as well as spatial relationships between them.

For a long time, scientists have been paying more attention to verbal communication, considering it to be the main element of communication available to humans. Nonverbal aspects of communication have been seriously studied since the early 60s of the XX century.

Allan Pease, an Australian writer and body language expert who became famous after the publication of his book "Body Language", noted: "Although communication through body language has been carried out for more than a million years, the scientific study of this phenomenon began only in the last twenty years, and it gained particular popularity in the seventies. By the end of the 20th century, people all over the world learned about this phenomenon and, I foresee that body language and its importance for human communication will be specially taught in educational institutions" (Пиз 2007: 148). In 1970, Julius Fast, in his book "Body Language", collected and summarized research data from the new science of kinesics, which studies the behavioral manifestations of wordless communication between people. Professor Ray Birdwhistell, one of the founders of kinesics, found that verbal communication in conversation takes up less than 35%, and more than 65% of information is transmitted using nonverbal means of communication (Пиз 2007: 148).

So, noting the importance of nonverbal communication, it is necessary to analyze this technique in a literary text.

We agree with G. N. Akimova, who notes: "Nonverbal components perform a number of functions in the text: the addition of speech, the substitution of speech, the identification of emotional states of partners in the communicative process, the creation of the effect of sensory authenticity of being" (АКИМОВА 1988: 17).

Nonverbal signs can enhance verbal communication, enrich the transmission of information, help to express emotions, relationships between people, clarify the meaning of a statement, establish contact with the interlocutor and convey nonverbal aspects of the message.

Among the types of nonverbal expression, gesture, pause, intonation are particularly distinguished in the novels of Italian writer Alessandro Baricco. In this article, we're going to analyze the role of nonverbal signs in the novel "Ocean Sea".

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The pause is used as an original artistic device to indicate zones of meaningful silence. The presence or absence of a pause in the dialogues equally carries a semantic load, forms the subtext of the novel and defines the character system, typologizing it. The main role of the pause is to reveal the inner intentions of the communicants, to expose the authenticity or imaginary nature of their interest in the dialogue and the interlocutor. The pause is also the nonverbal equivalent of the hidden emotional impulses and experiences of the characters.

Gestural behavior also carries important information. According to Allan Reese, “most gestures of nonverbal behavior are acquired, and the meaning of many movements and gestures is culturally determined” (Пиз 2007: 4). Indeed, many gestures in different cultures have similar meanings. Gestures can give important additional information about the characters, reveal their emotional and psychological state.

Intonation is also very important in communication. It can give information beyond just the basic meaning of the words and express the speaker’s attitude or feeling about something.

In most cases, in the novel “Ocean Sea”, nonverbal signs are used together. For example, let's consider and interpret the first situation. There is a dialogue between Baron Kerwol and Padre Plush. The author does not need to describe the characters involved in the dialogue, since this situation is created from the background.

Padre Plush's reaction to the baron's words is monosyllabic words or silence. This is due to the fact that the baron uses rhetorical phrases, truths that are repeated day by day, which the padre, who has been raising the baron's daughter Elisevin for 15 years, knows perfectly well.

There is also a slight pause after the baron's words. It is possible to understand that the baron wants to talk to the padre about something important, but he needs to gather his thoughts, decide where to start a dialogue:

- *Padre Pluche...*
- *Sì, Barone.*
- *Mia figlia compirà domani quindici anni.*
- ...
- *È da otto anni che l'ho affidata alle vostre cure.*
- ...
- *Non l'avete guarita.*
- *No* (Baricco 1994: 23).

It is interesting to follow the development of the dialogue further. Padre Plush's reaction to the baron's words is only silence. He does not respond to the baron's remarks, because, having a low social status, he does not dare to object to him. The rhetorical phrases continue in the baron's remarks:

- *Dovrà prendere marito.*
- ...
- *Dovrà uscire da questo castello, e vedere il mondo.*
- ... (Baricco 1994: 23).

For the second time during the dialogue, the baron pauses. In this situation, we can notice an emotional uplift:

- *Dovrà avere dei bambini e...*
- ...
- *Insomma, dovrà pur iniziare a vivere, una buona volta* (Baricco 1994:23).



Next, the author uses a pause technique, both characters are silent, the emotional uplift increases:

- ...
- ...
- ...

A pause is necessary so that the baron finally says the words that are most important to him:

- *Padre Pluche, mia figlia deve guarire.*
- *Sì.*
- *Trovate qualcuno che sappia guarirla. E portatelo qui* (Baricco 1994:23).

The second situation occurs at an appointment with doctor Atterdel. There is a dialogue between the doctor and Baron Kerwall. The doctor performs his duties and gives instructions for the treatment of the girl:

- *La porterete a Daschenbach, è una spiaggia ideale per i bagni d'onda. Tre giorni. Un'immersione al mattino e una nel pomeriggio. Chiedete del dottor Taverner, vi procurerà tutto il necessario. Questa è una lettera di presentazione per lui. Tenete* (Baricco 1994: 26).

The baron's reaction is interesting, his gesture is: “The Baron took the letter without even looking at it.” This gesture makes it clear that the baron does not care about the contents of the letter; he is against such treatment of his daughter:

- *Ne morirà, —disse* (Baricco 1994: 26).
- The doctor's next remark is his linguistic self-characterization: it differs from Padre Plush's remarks. The doctor can answer and even object to the baron, since his social status, his position is very high, he is confident in himself:
- *É possibile. Ma molto improbabile* (Baricco 1994: 26).

Next, the author uses a pause technique: the baron does not respond to the doctor's words, as he needs time to think.

This is also evidenced by the author's speech: “Only great healers are so cynically accurate. Atterdel was the greatest.” The baron does not trust the doctor to treat his daughter in this way, but he is the best doctor of all.

After a short pause, doctor Atterdel continues the dialogue. His intonation is resolute:

- *Mettiamola così, Barone: voi potete tenere quella ragazzina qui dentro per anni, a passeggiare su tappeti bianchi e dormire in mezzo a uomini che volano. Ma un giorno un'emozione che non riuscirete a prevedere se la porterà via. Amen. Oppure accettate il rischio, seguite le mie prescrizioni e sperate in Dio. Il mare vi restituirà vostra figlia. Morta, forse. Ma, se viva, viva davvero* (Baricco 1994: 26).

The baron's reaction to the word “dead” is a gesture: “The Baron froze with a letter in his hand, halfway between himself and the black doctor.” With the help of a pause, the author makes it clear the psychological state of the baron: confusion, anxiety, grief, despair. His response to the doctor emphasizes his state of mind: a father who has been raising his daughter for 15 years is not ready to lose her, unlike the doctor:

- *Voi non avete figli.*
- *Questo è un fatto di nessuna importanza.*
- *Comunque non ne avete* (Baricco 1994: 26).

With the help of a gesture “he looked at the letter and put it on the table”, it is possible to understand the baron's decision regarding his daughter, he does not agree to put her in danger:



➤ *Elisewin rimarrà qui* (Baricco 1994: 26).

Further, A. Baricco uses the technique of a pause that does not last long: "For a moment it became quiet, only for a moment."

The next line belongs to Padre Plush. His intonation is resolute, energetic:

➤ *Neanche per sogno* (Baricco 1994: 26).

The author's speech helps to understand the psychological state of Padre Plush, who "for the first time in sixteen years Padre Plush dared to object to the Baron regarding the life of Elisewin. He felt a heady elation, as if he had just thrown himself out of a window. He always had a kind of practical streak, and once in the air, he decided to learn how to fly."

Then the dialogue turns into a monologue, since all subsequent remarks belong only to the padre. There are no pauses in them. The absence of a pause also helps to comprehend the inner state of mind of the character. The author makes us understand with what intonation Padre Plush speaks: decisive, convincing, and energetic:

➤ *Elisewin andrà fino al mare. Ce la porterò io. E se ci sarà bisogno ci rimarremo mesi, anni, fino a che non troverà la forza per affrontare l'acqua e tutto il resto. E alla fine tornerà: viva. Qualsiasi altra decisione sarebbe un'idiozia, peggio, una viltà. E se Elisewin ha paura, non dobbiamo averla noi, e non ce l'avrò io.* (Baricco 1994: 27).

Padre Plush's determination is also evidenced by his gesture following the monologue: "He took a letter of recommendation from the table and put it in his pocket."

The purpose of Padre Plush's monologue was achieved: the baron agreed to send his daughter for treatment.

So, comparing the two situations, it can be seen that A. Baricco masterfully creates the prospect of their development through the use of such nonverbal signs as pause, gesture, intonation. The baron's gestures indicate his intention not to send his daughter to the sea. In the first situation A. Baricco creates the image of Plush as a modest man who does not dare to contradict the baron, whose remarks contain many pauses, but in the second situation his emotional state changes: his speech does not contain pauses, intonation becomes decisive.

Thus, nonverbal signs are communicatively significant when interpreting a literary text. Their main role in A. Baricco's novel "Ocean Sea" is to give an additional characteristic to the portrait of the character, to reveal his psychological and emotional state, deep emotional experiences, as well as to determine the relationship between the characters.

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