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Trabajo Fin de Grado

**Paralinguistics and
its use in
Samuel Beckett's
*Footfalls***

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1. ABSTRACT AND *RESUMEN*

Abstract: Non-verbal communication plays a very important role in human interaction. Hence, the purpose of the present work is to know what paralinguistics is and its relationship with non-verbal communication. Following this, the different elements and aspects of paralinguistics are dealt with. As an example of all this, attention is focused on the analysis of the play by Samuel Beckett, *Footfalls*. In addition, a historical contextualization of the play will be briefly presented, going through, therefore, the features of the theatre of the absurd. Finally, those non-verbal elements which provide information in the aforementioned work are analysed, apart from verbal language.

Key words: Paralanguage, Non-verbal communication, drama, absurd, Samuel Beckett's *Footfalls*

Resumen: La comunicación no verbal tiene un papel muy importante en la interacción humana. Por lo tanto, el objetivo de este trabajo es conocer qué es la paralingüística y su relación con la comunicación no verbal. A continuación, se tratan los diferentes elementos de la paralingüística. Como ejemplo de todo ello, se centrará la atención en la lectura de la obra de teatro de Samuel Beckett, *Footfalls*. Además, se ofrecerá una breve contextualización histórica de la obra, en relación, por lo tanto, a las características del teatro del absurdo. Por último, se analizarán qué elementos no verbales aportan información en dicha obra, aparte del lenguaje verbal.

Palabras clave: Paralenguaje, comunicación no verbal, drama, absurdo, *Footfalls* de Samuel Beckett

2. INTRODUCTION

It is not what is said, but how it is said. This sentence concerns the importance of how a message is said rather than the message itself. This is related with paralinguistics and non-verbal communication. Paralinguistics is a relevant phenomenon which, generally, all human beings use inadvertently in everyday language. Therefore, it would be impossible to talk about communication without having into account paralinguistic aspects.

Hence, the purpose of this work is to study in depth what the main concerns of paralinguistics are and the elements which it is focused on: from vocal to non-vocal elements. Then, the fact that non-verbal communication occurs in everyday life questions if paralinguistic elements can be found in other forms of interaction. Therefore, another objective of this work is to analyse a literary work of Samuel Beckett, *Footfalls*, as a fictional work where non-verbal elements can also be found.

To carry out this project, it is divided into two main parts: firstly, a theoretical framework focused on paralinguistics and on the elements which it includes can be found, from vocal elements (having in mind prosodic elements and other vocal components) to non-vocal elements. In this broad are we will take into account kinesic communication and, at the same time, we will divide them into movements and postures. The second part of the project will search for a relation between paralinguistics and drama in order to answer the following question: are paralinguistic elements used in drama? *Footfalls*, one of the plays of Samuel Beckett, will be analysed in order to find non-verbal elements which add information to the message. Apart from this, the play will be contextualized within the Theatre of the Absurd, explaining briefly its characteristics.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: PARALINGUISTICS

This section will focus on what paralinguistics is and what relation it has with Non-verbal Communication. In addition, the elements that can be found in non-verbal communication (vocal and non-vocal elements), and the importance they have during the

speech act will also be studied. All these elements will be illustrated with relevant examples for a clearer understanding of the theoretical framework.

3.1. WHAT IS PARALINGUISTICS?

We will start with a definition of paralinguistics. This term derives from the term “paralanguage”. Thus, what is Paralanguage? The literal meaning that the online *Cambridge Dictionary* provides is the following: “the ways in which people show what they mean other than by the words they use” (*Cambridge Dictionary*, n.d.). So, in other words, Paralanguage gives more importance to how something is said rather than to what is said. Therefore, as we can appreciate, it would be directly associated with non-verbal communication (NVC henceforth), but not just with it. This is because, sometimes, this term may vary according to what it includes and what it excludes. Generally, it is supposed to recognize not only NVC, but also communication in the spoken medium, which involves the utterances that make up the language we use (Wales, 2011: 300).

Now, regarding Non-verbal communication, it would be interesting to mention that, according to Knapp, Hall and Horgan’s assertion, “in everyday life, you are an expert in non-verbal communication” (2014: 3). They affirm that everyone already knows what NVC is, and this is directly connected with the actions carried out by the human body unconsciously. In addition, “some of the relevance and excitement over nonverbal communication comes from the resurgence of interest in nonconscious processes” (Hall and Knapp, 2013: 4). Besides, following Knapp and Hall (2010), Nowicki and Duke (2013) suggest that “nonverbal social behavior refers to all those human responses which are not described as overtly manifested in words (either spoken or written) and that convey meaning” (446-447).

Then, according to the division that Wales establishes concerning non-verbal communication, it can be further divided into vocal and non-vocal elements (2011: 291-292):

Non-verbal communication can be subdivided into vocal and non-vocal: i.e. those means of communication which depend on the voice for utterance (...); and those which depend on other parts of the body (facial expressions, gestures, KINETIC movements, etc.). “Non-verbal” is very frequently used in the sense of “non-vocal”.

As we can see, there is a difference between elements according to how they are produced: vocal elements correspond to those which are produced by the human vocal tract, whereas non-vocal elements would be those which are associated with body language. But, although there is a clear division between them, this does not mean that they perform separately, they actually complement each other, i.e. those non-verbal elements are combined with the vocal elements in order to give more sense to verbal statements.

Going back to the division into vocal and non-vocal elements, it is important to mention them in order to better understand what Paralinguistics focuses on. They will be classified, according to what Wales suggests, into vocal and non-vocal elements.

By establishing this classification, John Lyons suggests that

We are deliberately taking the view that the so-called speech-organs enjoy a position of pre-eminence among the signal-transmitting systems employed by human beings. It is because the vocal-auditory channel serves for the transmission of language and because, by common consent, languages are the most important and most highly developed signalling systems employed by human beings, that we start by distinguishing vocal from non-vocal signals. (1977: 58)

3.2. VOCAL ELEMENTS

According to John Lyons again, “[not] all vocal signals are linguistic”. According to him (1977: 58), we must exclude what Crystal (1969: 99, 131) calls vocal reflexes: sneezing, yawning, coughing, snoring, etc. And this is because

Usually they are physiologically determined; and, although they are signals, in the sense that they are transmitted (for the most part involuntarily) and can be interpreted by the receiver, no-one would wish to regard them as being other than external to language. (Lyons, 1977: 58)

In other words, those elements are simply insignificant and involuntary noises, and when “they are deliberately produced ‘abnormally’ for the purpose of communication (...) they operate outside and independently of language” (Lyons, 1977: 58).

Vocal elements, also known as vocalizations, are certain patterns in the brainstem which are considered more fundamental than speech, as they provide extra meaning to Verbal Communication (Warlaumont, 2013). Besides, as was said before, it “is recognized that communication in the spoken MEDIUM involves not only the UTTERANCES that realize language (VERBAL), but also other systems of SIGN also, that are NON-VERBAL” (Wales, 2011: 300). So, “[in] that respect paralinguistic is often regarded as a non-verbal, but vocal system, along with PROSODIC FEATURES (...) such as pitch and loudness” (Wales, 2011: 300). Therefore, as we can see, those vocalizations are directly associated with elements as those which are in relation with ‘Prosody’. Thus, this term is also highly relevant at this point: “For modern linguists and phoneticians prosody is a level or contour of sound features over and above the level of the VERBAL component of language” (Wales, 2011: 346), although it is a fact that vocal elements are not only made up of prosodic components. We will deal with the rest of them later on in this project.

Therefore, regarding prosodic elements, as has been said before, Wales draws attention to Pitch and Loudness:

- i. Pitch: according to George L. Trager (1958), pitch would belong to the group of vocal qualifiers (as quoted in Elam, 1980): “The pitch of a sound is how high or low it is” (*Collins Dictionary*, n.d.). So, pitch is used to intensify or diminish the sounds which are being produced in order to put emphasis or place less importance on them.

For instance, when the speaker is performing an act of reproaching, the pitch would be deeper: “‘No, Helen,’ said she, with reproachful gravity (A. Brontë, [*The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*], XV)” (as quoted by Poyatos, 2002b: 11).

- ii. Loudness: this is also associated with sound level. When we talk about an intentional loudness, this is because it has a purpose for the speaker. For instance,

It is possible that the sender will modulate the loudness of her voice intentionally, to alter the receiver's reaction. Here the receiver cannot be sure whether the loudness of the voice was a display of the “true feelings” of the sender or whether the sender was “putting on” the voice loudness intentionally (Buck and Powers, 2013: 405).

Now, once prosodic elements have been covered, it is important to mention the rest of the vocal components.

1. Timbre: “One powerful use of measurements at the motor level is the assessment of voice quality¹ or voice timbre” (Pattel and Scherer, 2013: 173). Timbre would be another voice qualifier, and it is also considered as “the organically-determined permanent voice register or pitch” (Poyatos, 2002b: 4). Besides, according to Poyatos, this component can have some negative connotations in society:

Social perception of timbre (...) can assign negative connotations to a permanent register that contradicts our expectations when it may be due to abnormal social development, although in other cases it has no abnormal correlates, but can become a true stigma nevertheless (2002b: 4).

But it can also be “[accompanied] by positive qualities (e.g. soft loudness and a balanced pitch variation), it can be perceived as definitely pleasant” (Poyatos, 2002b: 4).

2. Rate: this component is also known as “tempo”, and it is considered as “the relative speed or slowness in the sequential delivery of words, sentences and the whole of a person's speech, including, of course, paralinguistic alternants as pauses and silent breaks, all part of our individual basic style and voice set” (Poyatos, 2002b: 8). Besides, also according to Poyatos, if the rate is slow,

[it] can denote, for instance: the emphasis we put on certain words of sentences to make them stand out, hesitation, uncertainty, warning about something, threatening (typically with almost unblinking fixed gaze and slow movements, if any), self-

¹ Voice quality has been described as “an important marker of idiosyncratic speaker information and the expression of emotions and attitudes. Since differences in quality are mainly produced by variations in laryngeal, pharyngeal and articulatory settings, measurements at the motor level are a direct way to identify changes in quality” (Pattel and Scherer, 2013: 173).

assurance, dominance, higher status (the latter three typically with overclear articulation) (Poyatos, 2002b: 8).

On the contrary,

Fast tempo [or rate] can indicate: willingness, a care-free attitude, gaiety, mastering of the situation, warning about something about to happen (e.g., '¡Watch out, you gonna fall!'), anger, annoyance, impatience, haste, urgency, dismissal of something said as unimportant, unpleasant, etc. ('No, he doesn't (*sic*) want to help us, come on, let's do it'), etc. (Poyatos, 2002b: 8).

3. Amplitude: this is directly connected with volume. When a speaker rises the volume of his or her voice, the amplitude is bigger, and when the volume is slower, then the amplitude is smaller (Lumen Candela, n.d.). The speaker can modulate the volume in order to get the amplitude that he or she wishes. Thus, if the speaker does it intentionally, that is because it has a purpose. We can see this in Figure 1.

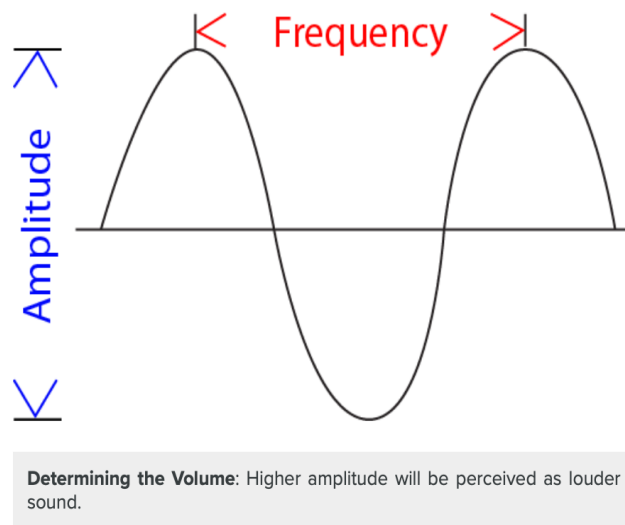


Figure 1. Amplitude regarding volume (Lumen Candela, n.d.)

As we can appreciate in the image above, the horizontal line in the middle of the figure would be a neutral volume. Hence, when the volume of sounds is higher or lower, the amplitude

is, consequently, bigger or smaller. Then frequency would be the space of time between each volume change or each sound.

4. Breath: it is important to say that in this case we are referring to breath in relation with intentionality, that is gaspings and sighings. These gaspings and sighings are “caused by the altered [not intentional] breathing” (Poyatos, 2002b: 106). Also, according to Poyatos, although they must be studied together, as they share a communicative function, they should be defined separately, identifying their characteristics (2002b):

- 4.1. Sighing: when it is produced voluntarily, it is “a paralinguistic expression, as are many of the sighs described in literature, whether sincere and deliberate or intentionally deceitful” (Poyatos, 2002b: 106), for instance in “Dolly made no answer and only sighed. Anna noticed the sigh, which expressed dissent (Tolstoy, [*Anna Karenina*], XXIV)” (as quoted in Poyatos, 2002b: 106).

Also, regarding its association with language and paralinguage, “speech is momentarily interrupted in order to sigh, we inhale and then we can again speak through its exhaling phase, that is, as sighed speech, or just emit a speechless but voiced sigh (e.g. with pharyngeal friction)” (Poyatos, 2002b: 107).

Besides, as Poyatos also pointed out:

A sigh always conveys a message and can modify the coinciding or adjoining verbal message. In fact, the expressive ambiguity of a verbal utterance like ‘Okay’ disappears when it is overridden by a sigh signifying ‘Okay, have it your way’, and pitch is higher than normal in the first syllable, indicating a yielding attitude (2002b: 107).

- 4.2. Gasping: it is considered to be “the first part or phase of a sigh, only it is a sudden intake of breath that actually interrupts breathing” (Poyatos, 2002b: 106).

Then, as for their functionality, both gasping and sighing share most of it, and according to Poyatos sighing could express “*physical relaxation* and *physical relief*, expressed by natural or involuntary sighing” (2002b: 108), and “*happiness*” (2002b: 109), among other

feelings. Besides, they can also express “real or feigned *tiredness, sleepiness, or fatigue from exertion*” (Poyatos, 2002b: 109), and “*unexpected physical pain* can trigger a gasp (holding our breath) as a reflex reaction, rather than a longer sigh” (Poyatos, 2002b: 109). Finally, there is an extensive list of caused effects by sighing and gasping, as for example annoyance, sadness, fear, relief, exertion, excitement (Poyatos, 2002b).

5. Pauses: “another aspect of paralinguage concerns pauses and pause intervals” (Williams, 2010: 27). As Williams suggests, “[the] pause interval is the time from the end of your utterance to the beginning of the [other] person's response” (2010: 27). The pauses may vary according to emotions, and so to contents: if they are strong, then the pause is shorter (Williams, 2010). But “if the pauses are always short we might consider hyperthyroidism, autonomic overactivity or anxiety. Excessively long pause intervals might signify depression”, among others (Williams, 2010: 27-28).

Now that the main vocal elements of the paralinguistic field have been described, we can see how much they are influenced by the emotions and intentions of the speaker towards the hearer. In order to see it more easily, we are including the following table about how those emotions which are associated with paralinguistic features might modify the vocal elements mentioned above.

<i>Feeling</i>	<i>Loudness</i>	<i>Pitch</i>	<i>Timbre</i>	<i>Rate</i>
Affection	Soft	Low	Resonant	Slow
Anger	Loud	High	Blaring	Fast
Boredom	Moderate to low	Moderate to low	Moderately resonant	Moderately slow
Cheerfulness	Moderately high	Moderately high	Moderately blaring	Moderately fast
Impatience	Normal	Normal to moderately high	Moderately blaring	Moderately fast
Joy	Loud	High	Moderately blaring	Fast
Sadness	Soft	Low	Resonant	Slow
Satisfaction	Normal	Normal	Somewhat resonant	Normal

Table 1. Emotions associated with paralinguistic features
(Davitz, 1964, as quoted in Elam, 1980: 50)

As we can see, vocal components can be totally different depending on contrary emotions. For instance, when the speaker's emotion corresponds to joy, his or her loudness is high, the pitch would be high, his or her timbre would be moderately blaring, and the rate would be fast; but if the speaker is sad, his or her loudness would be soft, the pitch would be low, he or she has a resonant timbre and a slow rate. However, sometimes the way we speak barely changes when our emotions are in fact quite contrary, e.g., although joy and anger are quite

different emotions, the way in which the speaker says something is almost the same: high loudness, high pitch, the timbre would be moderately blaring for joy and blaring for anger, and the rate would be fast in both cases.

As Keir Elam affirms, “[such] features supply essential information regarding the speaker’s state, intentions and attitudes, serving further (in conjunction with kinesic factors) to disambiguate the speech act: ‘the conversational use of spoken language cannot be properly understood’, as D. Abercrombie has suggested, ‘unless paralinguistic elements are taken into account’ (1968, p. 55)” (1980: 49).

3.3. NON-VOCAL ELEMENTS

We will start this section with a definition of kinesics, as “in most cases the paralinguistic features correspond to kinesics, and vice versa, since both systems function within discourse in perfect morphological and semantic cohesion with verbal language” (Poyatos, 2002b: 187-188). Kinesics, or body language, makes reference to gestures and other body movements. Body movements “can be distinguished as actions and positions” (Harrigan, 2013: 52). The former refers to movements, and the second one to postures.

3.3.1. Body actions

Firstly, regarding body actions or body movement, it is important to say that, according to Argyle, “there is a great deal of bodily movement during social interaction, though movements of the hands are the most informative” (1975: 188). Also, according to Harrigan (2013), within body actions there are four main kinds: emblems, illustrators, self-adaptors and regulators.

Emblems “are symbolic actions with a ‘specific verbal translation known to most members of a subculture, and [are] typically intended to send a message’” (Harrigan, 2013: 52). Also, according to Harrigan, “they include head nods and hand movements like pointing, waving, ‘OK’ and other signs, and shoulder shrugs” (2013: 52). However, it is important to say that signs are not used identically or have the same meaning in every culture, for instance

the finger-ring gesture, meaning ‘Okay’ or ‘Good’ in English, or used in Spanish for emphasis in a conversation, [is] quite obscene in Venezuela; the central phase of the hand-purse gesture (usually opening and closing twice), [is] used for ‘crowded’ in Spanish, but as questioning gesture in Italian (without opening and with a slight head-toss) (Poyatos, 2002a: 156).



Image 1. “Okay” sign (Kindpng, n.d.)



Image 2. “Good” sign (Kindpng, n.d.)

Both of these signs could mean ‘Okay’ and ‘Good’ in England and Spain, and both of them can be understood by themselves, i.e., no words or sounds are needed. Although using it in countries such as Venezuela, where this sign has a different meaning, would not be appropriate.

Illustrators correspond to “movements directly tied to speech, serving to illustrate what is being said verbally”, as suggested by Harrigan (2013: 53). In other words, they are used intentionally by the speaker in order to reinforce or make clearer his/her utterances. For example, if somebody asks another one to call him/her, the former can simply say the words ‘call me’, or he/she can use a sign to illustrate what he/she is saying in order to make the message clearer. Image 3 is provided for a better understanding.



Image 3. Illustrator tied to speech (Freepng, n.d.)

In this case, the speaker uses this sign, moving it closer to his/her ear, and at the same time, the speaker utters the words ‘call me’. So, in that way the speaker’s message is more explicit.

Self-adaptors refer to “one part of the body [which] has contact with another body part such as when grooming, scratching one’s head, or hand-to hand rubbing” (Harrigan, 2013: 53). Also, according to the function of this category, self-adaptors are considered an affective sign, “an attempt to cope with feelings, relieve self or bodily needs, or comfort, irritate, or release emotional arousal” (Harrigan, 2013: 53). Image 4 has been provided in order to make this clearer.



Image 4. Self-adaptor from stress

As we can see in this image, the self-adaptor would be the action of both hands getting in contact with the head, and it has been triggered by mental stress or anxiety.

Regulators “[include] actions with no explicit meaning in themselves, but help ‘maintain and regulate the back-and-forth’ flow of conversation between speakers and listeners” (Harrigan, 2013: 53-54). So, we can consider as regulators head nods or eyebrow movements. For instance, speakers can use head nods if they are saying something affirmative and they want to emphasize it; and also, the listener can use head nods in order to show the speaker he/she agrees or simply that he/she is following the conversation. Now, regarding eyebrow movements, they are quite relevant due to how much eloquence they can add to speech, for example, brow raising could mean disconcertment or surprise.

3.3.2. Body positions

Regarding body positions or postures, and according to Argyle, “there are three main human postures” (1975: 203): (1) standing; (2) sitting, squatting and kneeling; and (3) lying (Argyle, 1975: 203).

Also, according to Argyle,

For every situation in a culture there are approved postures. There are correct postures for eating, giving a lecture, being interviewed, sunbathing, and riding a horse.

A person who fails to adopt correct posture may be the object of savage disapproval – he (*sic*) is regarded as slack, immoral, uncivilized, or eccentric (1975: 204-206).

For instance, image 5 has been provided below in order to understand the main postures and what they mean.

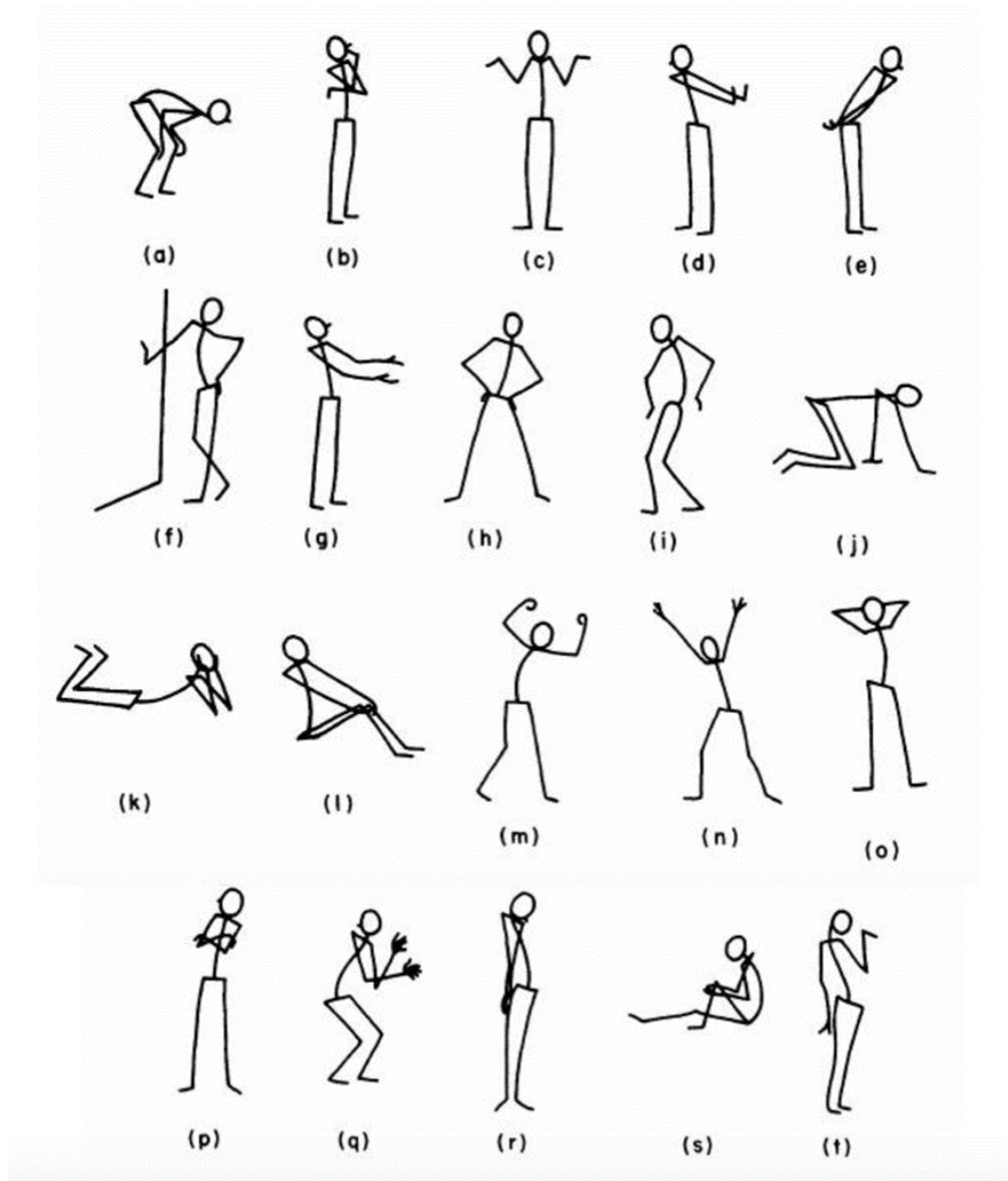


Image 5. The meaning of some postures (Rosenberg and Langer, 1965, as included in Argyle, 1975: 205).

The meaning of the postures in this image would be the following:

(a) curious; (b) puzzled; (c) indifferent; (d) rejecting; (e) watching; (f) self-satisfied; (g) welcoming; (h) determined; (i) stealthy; (j) searching; (k) watching; (l) attentive; (m) violent anger; (n) excited; (o) stretching; (p) surprised, dominating, suspicious; (q) sneaking; (r) shy; (s) thinking; (t) affected (Argyle, 1975: 205).

It is important to bear in mind that “[the] ways in which particular attitudes or emotions are expressed vary from culture to culture, but there are common features” (Argyle, 1975: 204). For instance, a “humility” feeling has different postures in every culture but nearly all the postures involve “bowing” (Argyle, 1975: 203-204). Chinese people have the following posture to show humility: joining hands over head and bowing. While Sumatran people bow while putting joined hands between those of another person and lifting them to one's forehead (Krout, 1942, as mentioned by Argyle, 1975: 204).

Therefore, not all paralinguistic components are similar in every culture: some elements are usual in certain societies, but others can be quite specific to certain communities. So, for this reason, the context in which a communication process is performed is determining.

4. PARALINGUISTICS AND DRAMA

As has already been seen, Paralinguistics deals with a series of largely involuntary actions of the human being that accompany language to bring more meaning to the message. Therefore, this means that such actions are carried out in daily life, e.g. in unfeigned interaction between two or more speakers. So now, taking this into account, provided that drama is not an unfeigned form of interaction, can we find any relation between paralinguistics and drama? Are paralinguistic elements used in drama?

It is important to bear in mind that plays are to be seen and not to be read, and this has to do with the importance of not only how a play is written but also how it is performed. In fact, according to D. Abercrombie (1968: 55), the conversational use of spoken language cannot be properly understood unless paralinguistic elements are taken into account (as mentioned by Elam, 1980: 49). Such elements as pitch, loudness, tempo, timbre and non-verbal sounds supply essential information regarding the speaker's state, intentions and attitudes,

serving further (in conjunction with kinesic factors) to disambiguate the speech act (Elam, 1980: 49). Besides, according to Elam, “[a] linguistic utterance is not simply a product of the phonological, syntactic and semantic rules of the language” (1980: 49). Therefore, other elements which accompany the utterance such as the context, and so the kind of language the speaker uses, are necessary for its correct interpretation by the addressee (Elam, 1980: 49).

According to Paul Cartledge, in comparison with the ancient Greek theatre and Aristophanes’ idea of drama, “[the] theatrical setting, the costumes, the movements, gestures and delivery of the actors, the singing and dancing of the chorus, the musical score, above all the sense of occasion – these have all gone, for good” (1990: 13).

Furthermore, all these elements and the utterances which they accompany may achieve a balance:

Before literary or any other criticism of the subtleties and beauties of the texts may legitimately be conducted, the physical scene of the dramas must be set by reconstructing something at least of their external manifestations, what I have called their material props (Cartledge, 1990: 13).

In favour of what has been said before, Elam suggests that “[every] aspect of the performance is governed by the denotation-connotation dialectic: the set, the actor’s body, his (*sic*) movements and speech determine and are determined by a constantly shifting network of primary and secondary meanings” (1980: 7).

Therefore, according to Elam, it is the voices and the bodies of the actors in a balanced procedure which become the transmitters of the message (1980: 23). They are considered as different elements during the representation but they cannot be manifested in isolation, as both of them come from the speaker and from his/her intentions. Nevertheless, as has been said before, those paralinguistic elements not only show the intention of the speaker, but also his/her state, attitude.

Throughout the years, different studies and divisions have been made not only of the paralinguistic elements, but also of other systems which add information to the message. According to Elam, Tadeusz Kowzan (1968) refers to thirteen systems, of which some belong

to the paralinguistic field and some others do not. They provide extra information to the utterance, in the following way: “[he] lists language, tone, facial mime, gesture, movement, make-up, hairstyle, costume, props, décor, lighting, music and sound effects (including ‘noises off’)” (1980: 30-31). It is a fact that all of them provide information of what is happening inside (feelings or states) and outside (on the stage) of an actor, but regarding exclusively paralinguistic elements, it would be interesting to comment on language, tone, facial mime, gesture and movement.

SYSTEM	CONTRIBUTION TO THE MESSAGE
LANGUAGE	It is present in almost every play, but, for instance, it is the case of mime, in which everything depends on the other systems. Also, it is important to take into account the use of language, because how language is used can contribute information to the message.
TONE	Here, it is important to mention elements such as volume, pitch, timbre and rate. All of them disrupt or modify the language, as for example, increasing or decreasing the pitch or the rate.
FACIAL MIME	This system makes reference to non-vocal elements, i.e., those elements which do not produce any sound. These facial gestures express emotions, states.
GESTURE	In the case of this system, it makes reference to any kind of gestures and movements made by any part of the body, for instance, the hands and arms, e.g., emblems or illustrators.
MOVEMENT	This one makes reference to the movements or displacements that an actor makes on the stage. For instance, if the actor moves from side to side quickly, it could mean that he/she is nervous about something.

Table 2. Paralinguistic elements on stage

As can be seen, with the classification made by Tadeusz Kowzan, there are many elements (not only necessarily paralinguistic, such as make-up) that can provide more information than the words uttered by actors, and all this information will help the reader or the audience to better understand the play.

Although, throughout the years, there have been diverse forms of drama and diverse theatrical movements, they all share one common characteristic: performances cannot exist without an audience. Also, they have the same objective: to communicate instantly and to let the audience know what is happening on stage, and this is achieved with the use of the different systems mentioned above. However, as a difference between them, it can be mentioned that the use of the systems mentioned above or the paralinguistic elements can vary, for instance actors can overuse those elements, or on the contrary, they can use them slightly; but in both cases the actors have the purpose of communicating something. The Theatre of the Absurd is one of those very peculiar dramatic styles, we will focus on it and on its connection with existentialism in the following section.

4.1. THE THEATRE OF THE ABSURD AND EXISTENTIALISM

The Theatre of the Absurd emerged in the second half the of 20th century as a consequence of a play that “confounded audiences, arguably, unlike any play that has come before or after it” (Bennett, 2011: 1). This play was Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*, which conveyed the deep sense of anxiety that marks that century, partially caused by the First and Second World War.

As we can see, this movement appeared after the WWII, i.e., it was caused by the consequences of the war. Therefore, the Theatre of the Absurd is like a representation of the world and the society after the Second World War. Then, as people were more conscious of the consequences of the war, there was an emphasis on a reality that had fallen and was still falling apart. In this period, everything is irrational, nostalgic and absurd, it is full of elements “that must necessarily end with all the logic of which an existence is capable” (Camus, 1955: 32). Beckett showed a barely recognizable world, a post-war world where everything had changed.

Besides, Samuel Beckett was influenced by James Joyce, who “[anticipated] the Theatre of the Absurd’s preoccupation with language” (Esslin, 1961). However, there were many differences between their works. For instance, interior monologue was the channel which Beckett used to express an empty world, characters who are isolated. For him, interior monologue was “the form best suited to his new desire for self-excavation” (McDonald, 2007: 16). That isolation refers to people living in their own world, in a society which forces citizens to feel isolated, and this has to do with Existentialism, the concerns of which “were read into Beckett’s work, at least so far as it was seen as a generally bleak and bleakly general view of human existence” (McDonald, 2007: 2). Beckett focused on questions of existence and nonexistence, the relation between the mind and the body. Albert Camus also carried out this existentialism, or this searching for meaning and truth, in *The myth of Sisyphus* (1955), which, according to him, represents the human condition. This condition is shown by the punishment of Sisyphus. This mythological hero tried to deceive deities avoiding death, and this can be seen as an action by an absurd hero, as he neither confronts the reality nor accepts his destiny, but he tries to avoid it. So he was convicted “to roll (...) [a huge stone] and push it up a slope a hundred times over” (Camus, 1955: 108), and then the stone rushed down and he had to go back down to the plain in order to roll it again and again (Camus, 1955: 108). This punishment is related with the human search of meaning and truth in a meaningless, strange and illogic world.

In addition, this myth shows how Sisyphus is frustrated when he sees the stone rushing down as he is aware of his destiny: “That hour like a breathing-space which returns as surely as his suffering, that is the hour of consciousness” (Camus, 1955: 109). He is conscious that he will have to do it over and over again, and therefore, this will never have an end: “I see that man going back down with a heavy yet measured step toward the torment of which he will never know the end” (Camus, 1955: 108-109). This is related with nature and how days go by, it is a cyclical view of life, actions in life being repetitive and meaningless, and this would be the inevitable human condition.

Another important aspect for existentialism is suicide. For Camus, “[there] is but one serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide” (1955: 11). He rejects suicide as the solution of absurdity, Camus affirms that people have to stop looking at things so gravely and accept the situation. In spite of human condition, it is possible to accept the absurdity of life if it is

seen from a different perspective. So as we have seen, in Esslin's words, "Camus tried to diagnose the human situation in a world of shattered beliefs" (1961):

A world that can be explained even with bad reasons is a familiar world. But, on the other hand, in a universe suddenly divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land. This divorce between man and this life, the actor and his (*sic*) setting, is properly the feeling of absurdity (Camus, 1955: 13).

Many of the aspects that Albert Camus had in mind correspond with the characteristics of the Theatre of the Absurd. Regarding meaning, it is confusing, as the stories and language are unclear, so difficult to understand. Also, it is not a lineal and logic plot but a circular one: it is a cyclical perception of life in which not much happens and there is no progression and resolution of the story, no end. Besides, this kind of plays are directly influenced by the consequences of the Second World War, and therefore, they show how this chaos and absurdity are to be managed.

As we can see, the Theatre of the Absurd includes those plays which cause a feeling of confusion on the audience as they face the representation of a world, a reality, where the events and the human behaviour have no logic and everything is considered as absurd. Some critics, however, do not fully agree with this definition. For instance, Bennett refused to call this dramatic movement the 'Theatre of the Absurd', as it does not consider life and reality absurd, but needed to find a meaning to it. He avoids using this term because "[calling] this 'theatre' the Theatre of the Absurd really places the emphasis of the play on the wrong part of it" (Bennett, 2011: 4). As an example, Bennett (2011) refers to *Saving Private Ryan*, which to him is a film about war, but it actually is not a war film. Instead, he argues that it is about how humans either cope, overcome, succumb, etc., to the horrors of a situation like war, or the 'absurd' contradictions present that juxtapose the desires of the combatants with the realities of war (Bennett, 2011: 4). Therefore, what he is trying to say with this example is that "the Theatre of the Absurd is not about absurdity, but about making life meaningful given our absurd situation" (Bennett, 2011: 4).

4.2. *FOOTFALLS*, BY SAMUEL BECKETT

As can be seen, it is impossible to talk about the Theatre of the Absurd without focusing on Samuel Beckett, as this movement emerged from one of his plays. Therefore, we are going to focus on one of his plays, *Footfalls*. Moreover, Beckett wrote many plays contextualized within the absurdity. Therefore, his plays share mostly the features which will be presented next.

Firstly, in his plays his bleak view of life and his mordant sense of humour are noticeable, as suggested by McDonald (2007: 1):

bleak vision of life leavened by mordant humour: derelict tramps on a bare stage waiting desperately for nothing, a legless old couple peering out of dustbins, geriatric narrators babbling out their final incoherent mumblings. It evokes sparseness and minimalism and, with them, a forensic, pitiless urge to strip away, to expose, to deal in piths and essences.

This humour is directly related with a tragicomic genre that characterizes Beckett's work. It is a dark comedy vision that makes a representation of daily life events, and hence, shows the chaos and absurdity of reality, and evidences the human condition. This is known as 'Beckettian comedy', which is "dark, daring, intelligent and disturbing [and has] (...) the same roots as tragedy, rather than simply providing comic relief from it" (McDonald, 2007: 31). As Beckett remarked in one of his plays, *Endgame*, "nothing is funnier than unhappiness" (1957).

Secondly, Beckett questioned life and human existence through most of the characters of his plays. Those characters represent how society is conditioned by the consequences of the war and, at the same time, how each person is conditioned by that society. Also, they show a pessimistic view of the world: they are normally isolated and talk about the situation after the Second World War. They, at a different degree, "are aware of what they have already lost" (McDonald, 2007: 46).

Furthermore, in his plays, the number of characters is limited or, even, it may be the case that there are no characters, as in the case of *Not I*, where there is simply a talking mouth against a black background. Therefore, if there are not many characters, there cannot be much plot. Also, the stage is simple, so there is no ornamentation: a dark background with a light

illuminating the stage. Now that we know some of the features of his plays, we will next offer a brief analysis of his play *Footfalls*, written in 1975 and first performed the following year, 1976, at the Royal Court Theatre in London.

4.2.1. A brief analysis of *Footfalls*

This play is about two women (mother and daughter) having a conversation, but only one of them is present on stage. The daughter's name is May (M), and the mother's is (V), as it is simply a voice. It is a conversation which does not have much sense: at first, May is constantly asking doubts and offering help to her mother, who always responds "Yes, but it is too soon" (Beckett, 1975: 10)². During the whole story, May is pacing the stage from right to left and vice versa over and over again. Besides, they talk about the memories of May's childhood, and also, both characters talk about each other: firstly, the mother talks about May and then May talks about her mother. Then, towards the end of the story, May tells a story about a feminine figure (a "she") who slips into a little church, apparently herself. Finally, the protagonist seems to see a spectre, her name changes from May to Amy, and the play ends with "No trace of May" (Beckett, 1975: 13). As has been said, there is not much logic in this play, but it will be studied in some depth for a better understanding.

As has been mentioned before, plays are to be seen better than to be read. Therefore, apart from analysing the text of the play, we will use a representation of it in order to exemplify and visualize the text. The chosen representation was directed by Walter Asmus, with Susan Fitzgerald as May and Joan O'Hara as the Voice in the only two roles.

Regarding the structure, this play has been divided in the representation into three scenes. Each one of them starts with a "*faint single chime*" (Beckett, 1975: 9), except for the last ringing, which coincides with the end of the play. At the very beginning of each scene, May starts pacing from right to left or from left to right, and the scene properly starts when she stops and faces the front of the stage, then is when she begins to talk. Besides, as the scenes go by, the light which lights the stage up diminishes, until the end of the play, when the stage is almost dark.

² All page numbers will be indicated parenthetically from now on, according to the Faber edition of 1976.

As for the plot, there is a clear lack of plot (not much happens). The fact that there is not any dramatic conflict is unconventional: this kind of theatre is breaking with conventionality. Besides, the plot has no logic, as there is no sense and resolution of the story. For instance, May offers help to her mother, who answers “Yes, but it is too soon” (Beckett, 1975: 10). Even so, this help never comes. Also, there is no logic in the fact that the ending is not clear, as it is unexplained. This lack of plot represents a world which is static and where nothing happens, as if everything had been destroyed.

Now, we will focus on how the story is told. It is important to say that both characters seem to blend into each other through language, as sometimes it is not clear who is talking. Also, we have to say that the way the story is told changes from the beginning to the end. For example, in the first scene there is a dialogue between May and her mother, but from the second scene to the end there are two monologues: first the mother (V), in scene 2, and then her daughter (May), in scene 3. This does not mean that both of them are monologues in themselves, since, for instance, as her mother (V) says, “[my] voice is in her mind” (Beckett, 1975: 11). Therefore, here we can see how both characters sometimes seem to blend into each other. In the play’s representation this fact is presented differently from how it is suggested in the written play: in some parts of scene 2, while the mother (V) is speaking, May moves her lips.

Although at the beginning of the play there is a dialogue between two characters, May is the only one physically on the stage. This dialogue is broken and fragmented, and there is nonsensical language in it. Besides, it is a conversation which goes nowhere: there is no progress or resolution. Then, towards the end of the play there is simply one speaker (May). She appropriates of the voice of her mother in order to continue with the talk, and also, she creates dialogues between other people with her own voice. Besides, it is not only a verbal communication, as the use of paralinguistic elements, such as facial gestures, silences, pauses and gaps (which will be seen later) is highly relevant. For instance, May appropriates of the voices of other people changing the pitch of her own voice: high-pitched if it is a girl’s voice and deep if it is the voice of a man. Even, the fact that May is speaking to a faceless and unknown listener gives the impression that she has a mental disorder. We can appreciate this when the mother says about May that “[she] hears in her poor mind” (Beckett, 1975: 11).

Regarding the setting, it is the indoor of an unknown place. It is a “dark upstage” (Beckett, 1975: 9). Also, the strip is “*parallel with front, [with] length nine steps, width one metre, [and, it is] a little off centre audience right*” (Beckett, 1975: 9). On the stage, there is simply a woman who seems to be isolated from the rest of the world. The light is “*dim, strongest at floor level, less on body, least on head*” (Beckett, 1975: 9). Considering the representation mentioned above, we can see that the dim light comes from a window, as can be observed in image 6.



Image 6. Dim light from a window (Asmus, 2001, 5:26).

As can be seen, the window is on one side of the stage. So, when the character is speaking to the front, only half a face is lit up. The light is quite relevant to know about the time-space, as it lets the readers and the spectators know that the story happens in one day. Also, as has been said previously, the light diminishes as hours and scenes go by, and this may be because it is getting dark. Images 7 and 8 are provided to illustrate this point.



Image 7. Light at first scenes (Asmus, 2001, 2:00).

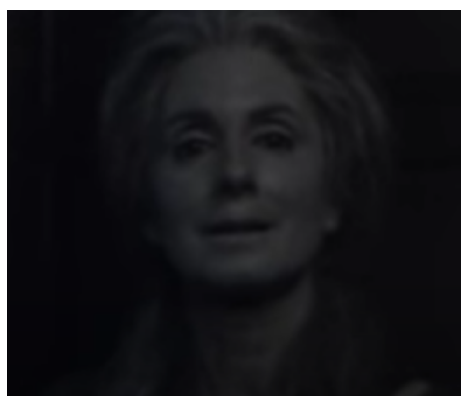


Image 8. Light at last scenes (Asmus, 2001, 23:20).

The relation between past and present is quite important, and the conversation between May and her mother can be a metaphor of this. It seems that, while May is talking from the present, her mother is talking from the past. However, the only perceptible time is present, there is no past and no future. So, this reflects a present which is tied to the past, and where there is no progression, but a cyclical perception of life. Therefore, as we can appreciate, both space and time are confusing and unclear.

As we can see, repetitions are present in many aspects in this play. For instance, it has a cyclical structure, same setting, same day, same dialogues (the same sentences or words said more than once, e.g., “Mother” is repeated twice in the same sentence, or “Yes, but it is too soon”, which is repeated more than once in the same scene), we get the same scene endings, etc. All of this is used to express this feeling of no progression of life, of absurdity. Also, when the speaker repeats something, she does not do it louder, but with the same loudness, and this would express no motivation, but a pessimistic perception of life.

One of the most important facts to take into account has to do with the title of the play, connected to pacing. During the whole story, May is pacing from side to side: “*starting with right foot (r), from right (R) to left (L), with left foot (l) from L to R*” (Beckett, 1975: 9). Each pacing should be exactly nine steps, and it should start with the right foot when the pace is to the left, and it should be with the left foot when it is to the right:

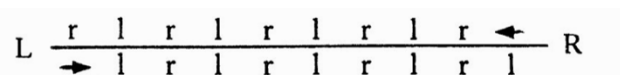


Figure 2. Pacing at left and at right (Beckett, 1975: 9)

The rate is unequal and unbalanced, e.g.,

The floor here, now bare, once was— (M *begins pacing. Steps a little slower.*) But let us watch her move, in silence. (M *paces. Towards end of second length.*) Watch how feat she wheels. (M *turns, paces. Synchronous with steps third length.*) Three four five. (M *turns at L, paces one more length, halts facing front at R.*) (Beckett, 1975: 11).

As we can see, the movement is not organized, and it shows instability that can be a metaphor of the reality and the society. Also, May is pacing from right to left and vice versa, but aimlessly: she is representing a society which has a pessimistic vision of life. Pessimism is present in many aspects of this story. As we have seen, it can be transmitted by the way of pacing. Also, the setting is pessimistic: a dim lighting, an indoor which is empty, there is no ornamentation, but simply a woman who does not look well (“*dishevelled grey hair, worn grey wrap hiding feet, trailing*”, Beckett, 1975: 9). With this appearance May looks older, as if she was tied to the past. Furthermore, this pessimism is noticeable in her tone of voice, which never changes, but it is always the same, e.g., “Mother. (*Pause. No louder.*) Mother. (*Pause.*)” (Beckett, 1975: 9). It shows no enthusiasm. Finally, it is important to talk about the pauses which are made constantly in the dialogues. According to Martin Esslin, “Beckett was addicted to silences” (1961) and he used them to express sadness. Those pauses lead to some seconds of silence where there is nothing, and nothing happens. Also, when there is a change of scene, there is a longer space of time of silence, and then, from silence sounds a faint single chime.

As far as existentialism is concerned, it is also significant in this play, as the characters question their own existence. For instance, neither May nor her mother know how old they are:

M: What age am I now?

V: And I? (*Pause. No louder.*) And I?

M: Ninety.

V: So much?

M: Eighty-nine, ninety (Beckett, 1975: 10).

As we can see, neither of them know their age, they are not conscious of who they are. Also, this existentialism is present in the appreciation of life: there is not any meaning, purpose

or enthusiasm. We do not even know the name of the mother or her appearance, as it is simply a voice during the whole play.

Another important element to bear in mind is the change of the name of the protagonist (from May to Amy). Towards the end of the play she starts talking about a girl whose name is Amy. This is known as an anagram, and it happens when the same letters of a word are rearranged in order to form a new word. According to James Knowlson (2012), this change would be a word play or a pun if we focus on the English pronunciation of it (ay-me). Also, as Knowlson affirms, “she materializes as yet another image of herself, in the shape of Amy” (2012: 267).

Finally, the last element to comment on would be the ghost. At the end of the play, the woman tells the story of a feminine figure (a ‘she’) who slips into a little church, and a story about a ghost which is also walking in a church. The ghost can be a metaphor of this woman who walks slowly and apathetically with worn grey clothes. Amy is not even able to see this ghost although it is present.

5. CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, and after having undertaken this study, it is possible to draw the following conclusions.

First of all, we have seen that non-verbal communication plays a very important role in the language of daily life communication, and therefore, it cannot be understood without taking into account paralinguistic elements.

In addition, both prosodic and other vocal elements, and kinesic or non-vocal elements are quite important for human communication. Also, we have appreciated that they cannot be studied separately, as in real communication they can appear simultaneously. Besides, they cannot be studied in a vacuum, but paying attention to some influential factors such as the context in which the conversation is taking place.

Then, as has been already said, paralinguistic elements can be found in daily life, but after a previous analysis, it can be said that it is also used in non-real conversations. For it, we have focused on Samuel Beckett's play *Footfalls*, which belongs to the Theatre of the Absurd.

As has been mentioned, the Theatre of the Absurd was quite influenced by some of the historical events of the 20th century, specially, of the second half of it, and by a pessimistic attitude of the society. In this society, most of the characters question their own existence and look for some meaning in life. Then, Beckett succeeded burying the readers in strange atmospheres and uncomfortable situations which were characteristic of the society after the second world war. As we have seen, he did this with the purpose of revealing the reality of life. Furthermore, Beckett experimented with language, sounds and silence.

As we have seen in *Footfalls*, not only is language used to communicate, but there are also other elements which add more information to the message. They can be both paralinguistic elements, such as repetitions, pitch modifications, pauses or silences, and even non-paralinguistic elements, such as costumes, make-up, or lighting.

To finish, Beckett was able to prove that human beings are too obsessed with the search for truth and it is quite difficult for them to create a communication channel with the rest of the people.

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