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LINGUISTIC AND STYLISTIC MEANS IN THE FUNCTION OF (NON)COMMUNICATION IN THE NOVELS OF ERNESTO SABATO[1]

Abstract: The subject of the paper is the research of linguistic and stylistic aspects of prose texts of the Argentinian novelist Ernesto Sabato, with the aim of presenting the impossibility of communication between the heroes of the novels: "El Túnel" ("The Tunnel"), "Sobre héroes y tumbas" ("On Heroes and Tombs") and "Abaddón, el Exterminador" ("The Angel of Darkness"). This paper will consider (non) communication as a result of loneliness, mistrust and lack of understanding of the heroes of Sabato's novels; it will provide an overview of the discourse features, i.e., speech used by Sabato's heroes and their stylistic choices, in order to point out the frequency of certain lexical and syntactic forms in their speech, as well as the meaning hereof in the text. The aim of this paper is to examine the manners in which the text comprehension is slowed down by exploring the discourse of the heroes of Sabato's novels, whereas the process of text comprehension also includes experiencing the (un) spoken in narrative communication, as well as the aspect of redundancy in linguistic expression. In addition, the paper reveals the presence of certain figures of syntax in Sabato's novels as an additional tool in the research of (non)communication at the syntactic level, whereas collecting indicators of the character of Sabato's heroes in the text, have led to the conclusions on individual and stereotypical character-traits.

Key words*: Ernesto Sabato, (non)communication, the (un)spoken, linguistic and stylistic aspects, redundancy, figures of syntax*

1. Introduction

Ernesto Sabato (1911-2011), an Argentinian novelist and essayist, is one of the most eminent figures in the contemporary culture of Hispanic America. With J. L. Borges and J. Cortázar, Sabato is one of the three most important modern Argentinian writers. The first novel, *El Túnel* (*The Tunnel*, 1948), is a trilogy written with two other famous Sabato's novels: *Sobre héroes y tumbas* (*On Heroes and Tombs*, 1961) and *Abaddón, el Exterminador* (*The Angel of Darkness*, 1974). The novel *El Túnel (The Tunnel)* is a drama about the impossibility of communication, since the main character is an introverted painter who despises everything around him. The main theme of the novel is human existence and the search for personal identity, which result in the alienation of the hero Castel due to his inability to communicate and, finally, culminates in a crime of love. In the second novel, *Sobre héroes y tumbas*

(On Heroes and Tombs), Sabato indicates that hope does exist showing that the hero Martin found the meaning of life in Alejandra, although the continuous lack of communication leads him to the brink of suicide. However, contrary to the novel *El Túnel (The Tunnel)*, this novel does not end in tragedy, but represents the expression of metaphysical hope. In order to understand the last Sabato's novel, *Abaddón, el Exterminador (The Angel of Darkness)*, it is necessary to read the previous two, because most of the characters from the first two novels reappear in the third one. The central hero is the novelist himself, Sabato. The novel is demanding in terms of summarizing, because it consists of a large number of short chapters in which the narrators take turns. The novel is the culmination of Sabato's literary expression – it is written in the form of meditative discussions with a large number of episodes and it is not simple to single out the main characters. This novel differs from the previous ones in a way that it mostly expresses the thoughts and attitudes of the novelist Sabato through the hero Sabato.

The research of the problem of (non)communication among the heroes in Sabato's prose will present non-existence of communication, the manners in which the motives of (non)communication and loneliness are expressed in Sabato's prose. In addition, it will display the stylistic means by which Sabato depicts the impossibility of communication among his heroes in the novels. After the introductory part, (non)communication will be considered in the following four sections: *Speech characterization of heroes in the novels of E. Sabato*, *The (un)spoken in narrative communication in the novels of E. Sabato, Redundancy in the novels of E. Sabato* and *Figures of syntax in the novels of E. Sabato.* These four sections will provide an interpretative insight into the narrative of Sabato's novels, with the aim of conducting further research into the non-existence of communication between the heroes and indicating its direct connection with the loneliness of the heroes. The tendency to establish communication is related to the process of releasing the hero, since only after liberation the purpose of existence can be found.

2. Speech characterization of the heroes in the novels of E. Sabato

A novelist who decides to let us know the thoughts of a character is actually inviting us to see things from that character's point of view (Leech and Short, 2007: 271). The aspirations of the novelists in the nineteenth and twentieth century (Dostoevsky, Kafka, Sartre, Camus), who tended to present the inner drama that took place in the consciousness of the heroes, through dealing with the concept of self-knowledge as well as the concepts of loneliness and alienation from the central anti-hero, caused that certain novelists redirect their narrative focus from the story to the consciousness of the hero, which is also visible in the case of Sabato's novel *El Túnel (The Tunnel).* It is not always easy to single out many variations within the point of view achieved through the manipulation of the author's voice in relation to the voices of the participants in the fiction. These interactions between speech and thought presentation and a point of view have become one of the most considered

areas of interpretative significance in the novel and, therefore, represent a very productive aspect of the study of style in fiction (Leech and Short, 2007: 281).

For Rimon-Kenan (2007: 77), a construct of character within the story presents a network of character-traits – namely, the character is constructed by assembling various character-indicators distributed along the text-continuum, which contribute to the conclusion about the character's traits. The indicators in the text can be presented through direct definition and indirect presentation. A direct definition can be identified when the traits of a character are described by an adjective, nouns or a clause. In *El Túnel (The Tunnel)*, Castel, as a narrator, directly defines himself as follows:

> "Mi cabeza es un laberinto oscuro." (Sábato, 2008: 24).

However, the novel leaves no space for shaping the image of Maria on the basis of direct definition. Contrary to the above, one can get acquainted with her traits through the action and presentation of her surroundings. Through Maria's conversation with Castel one learns much more about Castel, whereas to a lesser extent Maria narrates about her marriage, family, and herself in general:

> "Era un hombre incapaz de crear nada, era destructivo, tenía una inteligencia mortal, era un nihilista. Algo así como tu parte negativa." (Sábato, 2008: 51).

The character-traits can be displayed indirectly – through the actions of the characters (one-time action or habitual ones), characters' speech (through conversation or as a silent activity of the mind), external appearance and surroundings. The actions of the characters can be classified into the acts of commissions (an act performed by the character), the acts of omissions (something that the character should do, but fails to do so) and the acts of contemplation (unrealized plan or intention of the character) (Rimon-Kenan, 2007: 80). The impossibility for Martin to express himself in front of Alejandra (the act of omission) and the obsession of the narrator-hero Sabato to point out to implicit readers that attention should be redirected from their inner world to the actual state in the society (character's intention) become central motives in the novels *Sobre héroes y tumbas (On Heroes and Tombs)* and *Abaddón, el Exterminador (The Angel of Darkness)*. The images of the characters of Martin and Alejandra are shaped by Bruno's observations, whose presence in the novel is barely conceivable. Alejandra's behavior on the scene:

> "No te entiendo... — balbuceó Martín. — Nunca te he entendido...
> No te preocupes. Yo tampoco me entiendo. Ni sé por qué te hago todo esto. No sé por qué te hago sufrir así." (Sábato, 2007: 187)

simultaneously symbolizes her need to create intimacy with Martin and her mental instability; instability of Alejandra's personality and unpredictability of her actions are visible in her speech, within which her inability to understand her own behavior has been expressed and, finally, her inability to find the reason for continuously causing pain to Martin. The individual character-traits of Castel, Martin and one of numerous heroes in *Abaddón, el Exterminador (The Angel of Darkness)* (Jorge

Ledesma) become stereotypical (reclusiveness, loneliness, inability to communicate) and are suggested in the following:

> "Existió una persona que podría entenderme. *Pero fue, precisamente, la persona que maté*". (Sábato, 2008: 7);

> "Y también, como en muchas otras ocasiones posteriores, su silencio y su incapacidad para el diálogo eran compensados por Alejandra, que siempre, o casi siempre, adivinaba sus pensamientos". (Sábato, 2007: 30);

> "Aquella sensación me sigue, este viento helado que a veces me duerme un costado de la cara: la soledad infinita". (Sábato, 1981: 169).

In Sabato's novels, underlining through analogy, as one of the ways of indirect presentation of characters, occurs when characters are destructive. Jealousy, possessiveness, and emotional manipulation, as patterns of behavior, culminate in inappropriate behavior. Castel kills Maria, although he considers her to be the only person who can understand him. Martin needs Alejandra and considers her a being of distinctive qualities, an unhappy and lonely being as he is. However, for him she still remains distant and unattainable. When comparing the characters of Castel and Martin, it can be concluded that Martin's character is as agonizing as Castel's; however, contrary to Martin, he is self-destructive. Castel *knows* that he needs Maria, but he *does not know* what he needs Maria for; he *knows* that Maria thinks like him, but he *does not know* what Maria thinks, and finally he *knows* that Maria feels what he feels, but he *does not know* what he himself feels. Martin speaks more often about his need for Alejandra, to whom he constantly returns, despite her numerous attempts to end the relationship with him. Martin's character is actually modelled on Castel, in the sense that he is also truly afraid of loneliness, and therefore obsessed with the fact that Alejandra will abandon him and each time they meet, he asks her to prove to him how much she loves him. That is why he becomes pathologically jealous whenever he sees her with another man. Nevertheless, at no point does Martin, contrary to Castel, think of ending Alejandra's life unless she completely surrenders to him. Martin makes conclusions on the things that Alejandra did not say, that is, on the things she implies – through the entire novel *Sobre héroes y tumbas (On Heroes and Tombs)*, Martin strives to reconstruct what Alejandra intended to say through her answers: how he could help her, why she needs him, whether she loves him, what Alejandra dreams of and what she thinks of. Alejandra's discourse is, indeed, the discourse of an anxious, dramatic and tragic individual; she is the protagonist of an obscure and inaccessible world unknown to Martin, whose mystery makes him shiver. In *Abaddón, el Exterminador (The Angel of Darkness)* the hero Sabato was not satisfied with the mere human mind exploring through dialogue with numerous heroes, but on the contrary, he took a step further – he demonstrated that the loneliness, not only his own, but also of other heroes, is more intense than loneliness of pairs of heroes in previous novels. The fragmentary narrative structure presents a mosaic of autobiographical events and fantastic elements, accompanied by parallel stories, literary theories and philosophical discussions. The novel focuses

on the hero Sabato who judges the world around him and tries to find his place in such a world.

3. The (un)spoken in narrative communication in the novels of E. Sabato

Rimon-Kenan (2007: 157) indicates two ways of slowing down text comprehension and creating tension in readers: delays and gaps. Delays occur when the imparting of information in the text is left for a later stage. This type of narrative procedure can create two types of tension: the one oriented towards the past and the other oriented towards the future of the story. The state of tension is described as a feeling, arising from apprehension and uncertainty related to the progress or the outcome of the action. Tension depends on hints and occurs when an outcome is possible, but it is not clear whether it will be achieved, or when it is suspected that a certain outcome will occur, but it is unclear when and how it will happen (Prince, 2011: 113). Although at the beginning of the story in *El Túnel (The Tunnel),* Castel explicitly says that he killed Maria, i.e., the reader is aware of the outcome of the event, tension arises on the one hand, in order to find out the circumstances that were driving him to write about his crime, whereas on the other hand, the reader wants to know the details of the relationship between them and how the idea of the crime occurred to him. In order to maintain interest, the reader of *El Túnel (The Tunnel)* keeps tension in terms of presentation of information about the act of murder until the final pages when the whole process of reading the novel is sublimated in the last effect contained in Castel's sentence:

"Tengo que matarte, María. Me has dejado solo." (Sábato, 2008: 94).

The intertwining of tension with surprise is a significant feature of a gripping plot; surprise occurs when expectations regarding future events are disrupted by the things that actually happen (Prince, 2011: 80). In the following excerpt from the novel *Sobre héroes y tumbas (On Heroes and Tombs)*:

"Explicarme a mí cómo es Alejandra, se dijo Bruno, cómo es su cara, cómo son los pliegues de su boca." Y pensó que eran precisamente aquellos pliegues desdeñosos y cierto tenebroso brillo de sus ojos lo que sobre todo distinguía el rostro de Alejandra del rostro de Georgina, a quien de verdad él había amado. Porque ahora lo comprendía, había sido a ella a quien verdaderamente quiso, pues cuando creyó enamorarse de Alejandra era a la madre de Alejandra a quien buscaba, como esos monjes medievales que intentaban descifrar el texto primitivo debajo de las restauraciones, debajo de las palabras borradas y sustituidas. Y esa insensatez había sido la causa de tristes desencuentros con Alejandra…" (Sábato, 2007: 10),

the reader is suddenly told that Bruno also had certain emotional affection, not only for Alejandra's mother, but also for Alejandra herself. By inserting Bruno's

thoughts into Martin's retrospective presentation on the encounter with Alejandra, there has been achieved the delay oriented towards the past. By this procedure, in the interaction between the text and the reader, a simultaneous effect of surprise and tension has been achieved – the effect of surprise by putting in the centre Martin's narration to Bruno about (non)communication with Alejandra, whereas Bruno is presented in the novel as a listener of the contemplative character. Tension arises when the reader finds that Bruno is also a personification of another irrational character in Sabato's series hereof. This irrationality *(la insensatez)* has been the cause of misunderstanding. However, in the end, the reader remains uninformed about the details of the relationship between Bruno and Alejandra, that is, the reader does not find out whether feelings were mutual and what the reasons were for Martin's silence about that fact. In this way, the time of the story continues to flow, however, the reader's understanding of the narrated events is hindered by the created gap, that is, by omitting information about the past and the present (Rimon-Kenan, 2007: 158). In *Abaddón, el Exterminador (The Angel of Darkness)*, the reader is presented with a manipulated picture of reality, given that one of the protagonists in the novel is named in two ways, in one place as Sabato, and in another as S. It has not been clarified whether numerous conversations, confessions and dreams in the novel refer to the same character. In addition, there were alternate episodes with the incestuous relationship between young man Nacho (a projection of rebellious and violent Martin) and Agustina (reincarnation of the late Alejandra), and who, eventually represent the followers of the primordial and (non)communicative characters – Castel and Maria. It seems that Sabato's characters in the novels are timeless, that they continue to live and act outside of fiction – as if Sabato does not control the lives of his heroes, but they exist independently. Numerous details from Sabato´s biography, as the author of the novel, are given in the novel *Abaddón, el Exterminador (The Angel of Darkness)*, and when at the beginning of the novel the reader is faced with the fact that one of the heroes has the same name as the real author of the novel, tension arises for the purpose of solving the riddle concerning the extent to which it is possible to identify the hero Sabato with Sabato as the author of the novel. Due to the large number of unrelated episodes, chapters and characters in the novel, i.e., abandoning the concept of a traditional novel, the narrative has no chronological sequence – therefore, it can be said that owing to Sabato's new attitude towards the text, surprise is constantly present in the process of reading *Abaddón, el Exterminador (The Angel of Darkness)*. This paper supports the opinion of Rimon-Kenan (2007: 152) stating that some texts were designed with the intention of preventing the formation of any "final hypothesis" or comprehensive meaning; this is achieved by making various items cancel each other out, without providing clearly opposed possibilities. The end of *Abaddón, el Exterminador (The Angel of Darkness)* does not happen without a final hypothesis. Moreover, the reader certainly forms several hypotheses – each of these is undoubtedly based on the concept of fighting the forces of the irrational.

The procedure of "temporarily being silent in terms of providing information hereof", i.e. the procedure of delaying, was fully applied in *El Túnel (The Tunnel)* due to Sabato's primary goal – it is of negligible importance to present information on

whether and in what way Castel killed Maria and, therefore, such a scene can be left for the end of the novel. The sequence of events which have led to that act is of much greater importance, that is, the intimate confession of Castel's eternal loneliness. Tension ends the moment one witnesses the fulfillment of Castel's intention – if Maria cannot be exclusively his, she has no right to live. The novel *Sobre héroes y tumbas (On Heroes and Tombs)* without delay presents the information that Alejandra was killed in a fire, therefore, we know that both Martin and Alejandra's agonizing relationship will come to an end at some point – the goal is to find out how Alejandra contributed to the Martin's process of becoming mature. Bruno's relationship with Alejandra remains marked by a gap in the novel, without a possibility to reconstruct the events. Finally, *Abaddón, el Exterminador (The Angel of Darkness)* presents a riddle without a final solution – it proves the thesis that comprehensive reading does not lead to the integrated meaning and to the clarification of the text as a whole.

The gap can be temporary (filled-in at some point in the text) or permanent (remained open even after the text has come to an end), and the distinction between them can be made only retrospectively (Rimon-Kenan, 2007: 161). Temporary gaps exist only at the text level, while the permanent ones exist both at the text level and at the story level. The discrepancies between story-time and text-time are denoted by the terms *prolepsis* and *analepsis*. In the case of prolepsis, the events that will follow after the present moment are hinted at, while in the case of analepsis, we return to the events that preceded the present moment. In the first case, the gap appears by leaving out the events between the present narrative and the predicted future, whereas in the second, the gap appears by looking at the already narrated events from a new point of view. In the paragraph from the novel *Sobre héroes y tumbas (On Heroes and Tombs)*:

> "Pero si no es así", le diría dos años después la muchacha que en ese momento estaba a sus espaldas; un tiempo enorme — pensaba Bruno —, porque no se medía por meses y ni siquiera por años, sino, como es propio de esa clase de seres, por catástrofes espirituales y por días de absoluta soledad y de inenarrable tristeza; (Sábato, 2007: 7),

the comment on the conversation between Martin and Alejandra, which will follow two years later, results in a shift from Martin's story to Alejandra's, constituting a heterodiegetic prolepsis in relation to Bruno's narration of the events between Martin and Alejandra. This leap into the future of the story actually presents a temporary gap, which aims to increase the interest and curiosity of the reader. Primary narration in the following episode from *Abaddón, el Exterminador (The Angel of Darkness)*:

> "Subieron al puente y se acodaron sobre la baranda, en la mitad del río, mirando hacia la desembocadura; como antes, como en tiempos infinitamente más felices, tiempos que en ese instante (pensaba Bruno) a Martín le parecerían pertenecer a alguna vida anterior, a una lejana encarnación de la que uno se recuerda ambiguamente, como de los sueños (...) Entre aquella Alejandra y la que un par de años antes había encontrado

en un parque de Buenos Aires se abría un abismo de siglos tenebrosos." (Sábato, 1981: 207-208)

would be the events between Martin and Alejandra in the present moment, whereas the story of former Alejandra has been subordinated to the mentioned course of action. Analepsis provides information about the character of Alejandra from the past and evokes the past filtered in the memory of the narrator Bruno. Creating the place for analepsis confirms the fact that for a complete understanding of individual characters from *Abaddón, el Exterminador (The Angel of Darkness)*, it is necessary to read the previous novel; by Alejandra's revival in *Abaddón, el Exterminador (The Angel of Darkness)* after her death in the previous novel, Sabato's obsession with the idea of the immortality of the soul has been pointed out to the reader, in the form of vague memories or dreams. Martin's love, desperation and loneliness do not fade away even fifteen years later, on the contrary, Alejandra continues to exist in Martin's spirit. Structuring the parts of the text in the novel *Abaddón, el Exterminador (The Angel of Darkness)* is further complicated by the fact that there are a large number of permanent gaps within the text, although they do not prevent the reader from being continuously surprised by the appearance of numerous characters from all spheres of Argentinian life. Sabato sees them as people helplessly lost in chaos and darkness, whereas every conversation with them is considered as one of the journeys through nothingness. In *Abaddón, el Exterminador (The Angel of Darkness)* the reader constantly makes an effort to understand Sabato's concept of events and the relationships among numerous heroes. It is complicated to single out the central characters, however, it is much easier to single out, as the cornerstone of every event, Sabato's character, who unobtrusively expresses his opinion about art. Therefore, the reader gets the impression that at certain moments he encounters another of Sabato's autobiographical essays. There are no detailed descriptions as in previous novels, but the general impression is that it is a performance of a play in which the actors take turns. All the characters in *Abaddón, el Exterminador (The Angel of Darkness)* are mostly Sabato's interlocutors, and in the novel they are not given enough space so that one can learn more about their destinies.

4. Redundancy in the novels of E. Sabato

Contrary to the concepts of delays and gaps in the text, this paper will also consider the concept of redundancy. The basic settings of the concept of redundancy can be found within language, whereas its characteristic features are shown in terms of grammar, syntax and other aspects of language. The main disadvantage of the discussion on redundancy is the lack of a precise definition and an answer to the question of what redundancy is. A wide range of definitions is present in the literature – some of these rely on psycholinguistics, whereas some exclusively rely on linguistics. Starting from the aspect of information in communication, most definitions of linguistic redundancy in the literature are based on the explanation that the essential basis of redundancy

is the repetition of information. A number of definitions of this term are focused on the purpose of redundancy, which means that redundancy herein is directly related to ensuring the comprehensibility of the message in the communication process. In the paper entitled *What is Linguistic Redundancy*? the researchers Wit and Gillette (Ernst-Jan C. Wit, Marie Gillette) distinguish grammatical redundancy, which is systematic and obligatory and forms an integral part of the language system (it is derived from the grammatical language rules) and contextual redundancy, which is used to achieve a certain rhetorical effect (Wit and Gillette, 1999: 1-17). Leech and Short also spoke about the degree of redundancy (2007: 207), marking it as the result of the relative uncertainty of the situational context of the literary message. The purpose of linguistic redundancy does not merely refer to the enhancement of comprehensibility, i.e., to comprehensive understanding of what has been said. Moreover, it expands to the aspect of emphasizing and intensifying, contrasting elements, creating a "poetic" effect, avoidance of ambiguity and indicating features of individual elements, i.e., usage of words and expressions that explain, single out, compare and emphasize what has already been contained in the message. Unlike contextual redundancy and due to its obligatory nature, the grammatical redundancy can serve only for the purpose of the first category of comprehensive understanding of statements, but not for the other five "intentional" functions. Thus, contextual redundancy is the repetition of information that is, in grammatical terms, nonobligatory. However, within contextual redundancy the following categories are distinguished (Wit and Gillette, 1999: 9-12):

- *identical or synonymous repetition*, which occurs when the expression contains two or more identical or synonymous words, and this type of redundancy has a semantic goal:

  „— Esa escena de la playa me da miedo — agregué después de un largo rato —,aunque sé que es algo más profundo. No, más bien quiero decir que me representa más profundamente <u>a mí</u>... Eso es. No es un mensaje claro, todavía, no, pero me representa profundamente <u>a mí</u>." (Sábato, 2008: 27);

- *isolated (salient) repetition* - is constituted when one group of words implicitly repeats what the other group of words explicitly expresses:

  "<u>En el momento en que se separaban</u>, <u>después de haber caminado unos pasos</u>, recordó o advirtió que no habían combinado nada para encontrarse. Y volviéndose, corrió hacia Alejandra para decírselo". (Sábato, 2007: 16);

  "No habría dado ninguna importancia a esa pregunta si después de tantos años de no verlo, más o menos en el año 1962, imagínese, no se me <u>hubiera cruzado</u> de nuevo en el camino. <u>Cruzado</u>… Este lenguaje distraído que esamos en la vida corriente, usted sabe. Porque no creo que <u>se cruzase</u> en el sentido causal que se le da de ordinario a esa expresión. Ese individuo me *buscaba*. Comprende? Más, todavía: me <u>seguía</u> desde lejos, quién sabe cuánto tiempo. Cómo sé que <u>me seguía</u>? Es cosa de olfato, es un instinto que no me engaña jamás. Y <u>me seguía</u> desde que leyó mi primera novela, <u>probablemente</u>. Y sin <u>probablemente</u>". (Sábato, 1981: 65);

- *contrasting repetition* - when two or more words, which semantically constitute a contrast, are repeated or in some other ways are redundantly coded:

„Mi corazón golpeó. Necesitaba detalles: me emocionan <u>los detalles, no las generalidades</u>". (Sábato, 2008: 29);

"Son seres que <u>no escriben con facilidad sino con desgarramiento</u>. Hombres que un poco sueñan el sueño colectivo, expresando <u>no sólo sus ansiedades personales sino las de la humanidad entera</u>..." (Sábato, 1981: 185);

- *distinguishing repetition* - repetition of information in the context of differentiating one object from another:

"— Y <u>en el que</u> yo nunca pude entrar — concluyó, poniendo su mirada sobre los ojos de Bruno." (Sábato, 2007: 31).

In Sabato's prose, the redundancy is primarily intended to contrast individual elements, as when in *El Túnel (The Tunnel)* Castel compares himself to a scene with a beach painting, which, in his opinion, represents a true message of desperation; or it is a matter of emphasizing (intensifying) the elements, when Castel wants Maria to describe him in detail her experience of encounter with him, because he is a fan of comprehensive descriptions. The redundancy in the function of isolating the features of certain elements appears in the novel *Sobre héroes y tumbas (On Heroes and Tombs)*, when the specific features of Alejandra's character and her inaccessibility are pointed out, in the sense that the time of reunion should not be specified to Martin because she will find him spontaneously. In the case of Alejandra (moments of jokes, anger, silence, partings, long-lasting disappearances, occasional moments of serenity), the (un)spoken is understood to a greater extent if her world is covered by the term *el territorio (the territory)*, a part of which Martin could never become. Repetition for the purpose of avoiding ambiguity and achieving a "poetic effect" is especially visible when one encounters Sabato's personal views, most often through the hero Sabato in *Abaddón, el Exterminador (The Angel of Darkness):* in that case the subject of conversation are the heroes of his previously written novels, the totality of human experience and consideration of evil forces, differences between art and scientific knowledge, great creators as witnesses of their time who are torn by writing, marginal personalities as great protagonists of the novels, differences between art and dream, etc.

Bal (2000: 102) considers repetition to be an important principle while shaping the image of a character. The repetition of the relevant qualities of the character contributes to the reader's more profound understanding which leads to achievement of clarity. Thus, Sabato emphasizes reclusiveness, shyness and timidity as the main characteristics of the protagonists in his novels. In *El Túnel (The Tunnel)* Castel explicitly presents his characteristics – initiating the conversation with people he underlines as one of the main difficulties he was facing, and throughout the novel he is terribly afraid of being left alone:

"Creo haber dicho que soy muy <u>tímido</u>; por eso había pensado y repensado un probable encuentro y la forma de aprovecharlo. <u>La dificultad mayor</u> con que siempre tropezaba en esos encuentros imaginarios <u>era la forma de entrar en conversación</u> (...) En esos encuentros imaginarios había analizado diferentes posibilidades. Conozco mi

naturaleza y sé que las situaciones imprevistas y repentinas me hacen perder todo sentido, <u>a fuerza de atolondramiento y de timidez</u>." (Sábato, 2008: 9);

"A medida que avanzaba en estas reflexiones, más iba haciéndome a la idea de aceptar su amor así, sin condiciones <u>y más me iba aterrorizando la idea de quedarme sin nada, absolutamente nada</u>." (Sábato, 2008: 87).

The heroes of Sabato's novels are obsessed with finding absolute and unconditional love and are infinitely afraid of loneliness – so in the novel *Sobre héroes y tumbas (On Heroes and Tombs)* we meet again with shyness and insecurity, this time of the hero Martin who unequivocally surrenders to Alejandra:

"Martín analizó el velador y se volvió a sentar al lado de Alejandra, <u>con su espíritu revuelto, lleno de perplejidad y de timidez</u>: ¿para qué lo necesitaba Alejandra? Él, por el contrario, pensaba que <u>era un ser superfluo y torpe</u>, que no hacía otra cosa que escucharla y admirarla." (Sábato, 2007: 93).

In Sabato's novels the lexis is an important factor when it comes to characterization of the heroes – all of them are restless, worried and full of inner turmoil, conflict and apprehension. Sabato emphasizes the states of their spirit by reiterating the events in which the heroes are trying to communicate or Sabato gives them freedom to present themselves as incapable of bidirectional communication. Therefore, the redundancy in this sense does not have the purpose of eliminating ambiguity or indicating features of individual elements of the statement. It is exclusively used in the function of intensifying the highlighted elements and their more comprehensive understanding.

Repetition is a term created by elimination of specificities of individual events as well as by keeping those qualities which such an event has in common with the events of similar kind (Rimon-Kenan, 2007: 74). Although in the Sabato's trilogy the repetitive relationships of the protagonists are presented (their separation is shown by a lonely tunnel in *El Túnel* (*The Tunnel*), dark chasm in *Sobre héroes y tumbas* (*On Heroes and Tombs*) and an open abyss in *Abaddón, el Exterminador* (*The Angel of Darkness*)), it cannot be said that a complete repetition of events happens between the heroes. If the attempt to establish communication is taken for the central event of Sabato's novels, then the differences in the presentation on that process are reflected in the change of the narrator, as well as in the duration of the narration itself about the mentioned (non)communication. In *El Túnel (The Tunnel)*, Castel is the exclusive narrator, whereas the frequency of (non)communication is realized within the continuum of the text. In the novel *Sobre héroes y tumbas (On Heroes and Tombs)* the process of (non)communication is interrupted and continues with the change of narrator, while in *Abaddón, el Exterminador* (*The Angel of Darkness)* the narrator remains the same, whereas the recipients in the communication flow are different. In such a discourse situation, the relative uncertainty of the situational context of the literary message is further clarified – in order to ensure that the point is made, the novelist tends to say the same thing in many different ways, and at different levels of structure (Leech and Short, 2007: 207).

Sabato resorts to redundancy, i.e. the repetition of relations between the heroes, in order to direct the reader's attention to the evolutionary character of the approach to the topic of loneliness and (non)communication – in *El Túnel (The Tunnel)* Castel's isolation from the world around him is radical, while the novel *Sobre héroes y tumbas (On Heroes and Tombs)* presents a step forward, that is, a bridge in evolution – from the scream of loneliness in *El Túnel* (*The Tunnel*) to interiorized contemplation in *Abaddón, el Exterminador* (*The Angel of Darkness*). In the fourth novel, Sabato would have given a final response to loneliness and (non)communication – after the third novel, the research gives hope that the hypothetical protagonist of Sabato's last novel would start from a less pessimistic existential basis (Barrero Pérez, 1992).

5. Figures of syntax in the novels of E. Sabato

Figures of syntax occur by a specific arrangement of words in a sentence, whereby each deviation from the usual order of words achieves a stronger impression and enhances the reader's experience of literary texts. J. A. Mayoral (1994: 125) indicates that figures of syntax imply different ways of modification, i.e., violations of certain syntactic rules in defined contexts and in accordance with special discursive conventions. As a starting point for classification of figures of syntax, the category of modification of expression elements was used, i.e. adding and omitting elements of the basic expression (figures of addition and figures of omission) or positional changes of syntactic units within the expression (figures of permutation). The figures of addition, by which the basic expression is expanded, in the first place include *pleonasm*, in the sense of inserting appropriate elements of redundant character into the sentence construction, all with the aim of strengthening its expressiveness (Mayoral, 1994: 127). In this way, the atmosphere of silence between Castel and Maria in the novel *El Túnel (The Tunnel)* is specifically intensified:

"De modo que cuando la puerta del ascensor se abrió ya tenía perfectamente decidido lo que debía hacer: *no diría una sola palabra*." (Sábato, 2008: 20);

"Parecía desprovista de voluntad; no dijo una sola palabra." (Sábato, 2008: 23).

The listing of semantically complementary words is also considered as a figure of addition, where the addition can be achieved by the principle of coordination or subordination. In the first case, a rhetorical figure of *enumeration* is in question, within which, in the syntactic sense, functionally homogeneous elements are grouped:

"— ¿Pero cómo, cómo?... — pregunté con creciente ansiedad. — Yo he pensado en cada uno de sus rasgos, en su perfil cuando miraba el árbol, en su pelo castaño, en sus ojos duro y cómo de pronto se hacen blandos, en su forma de caminar..." (Sábato, 2008: 29);

"Sabato quedó paralizado por su actitud, por sus palabras, por su sombría y áspera belleza." (Sábato, 1981:61).

The syntactic connection of the elements in each of the underlined sequences is reflected in the fact that each sequence refers to a specific verb and is in the function of the object. These sequences give an answer to the following questions: What was Castel thinking of? What was Sabato paralyzed with? In the first example Castel talks on the phone with Maria and tries to convey his impressions after a recent encounter. When Maria confirms to him that she also thinks of him, Castel impatiently asks Maria to explain to him all details she had on her mind; in order to come to an answer, Castel describes in detail what he meant –here the enumeration is used to show Castel's fascination with Maria. The passage from the novel *Abaddón, el Exterminador* (*The Angel of Darkness*) displays the moment after the parting of the heroes Sabato and Agustina. After giving Sabato a vague explanation in relation to Nacho's insolent behavior, Agustina ran away and Sabato remained surprised by her pointing out the horror of the absolute characters from Sabato's novels, including her brother and herself.

The third rhetorical figure included in the figures of addition is *the epithet*, which is traditionally considered as one of the most effective means of decorating poetic discourse (Mayoral, 1994: 134). Bearing in mind that the main goal of using epithets is to make the noun more picturesque, as well as to draw the reader's attention to the speaker's sensitivity or to contribute to the depiction of emotions and moods, numerous epithets in Sabato's prose style can be found:

> "La observé todo el tiempo con ansiedad. Después desapareció en la multitud, mientras yo vacilaba entre un miedo <u>invencible</u> y un <u>angustioso</u> deseo de llamarla." (Sábato, 2008: 8);
>
> "…el recuerdo del encuentro era vigoroso y tenía la sensación de haber estado con alguien muy <u>fuerte</u>, de rasgos <u>muy marcados</u>, <u>desgraciado</u> y <u>solitario</u> como él." (Sábato, 2007: 17);
>
> "Cuántos horrores como el de ellos habría en ese mismo momento, cuántas <u>desconocidas</u> soledades en esa ciudad <u>execrable</u>? A sus espaldas, sentía el otro rencor, el de ella. Se dio vuelta; su cara <u>dura</u>, su mandíbula <u>apretada</u>, sus <u>grandes</u> labios <u>desdeñosos</u> mostraban que su resentimiento había llegado al límite, y que un poco más y estallaría esa caldera de odio a presión. Casi sin proponérselo, impulsado pur su <u>intolerable</u> sufrimiento, Nacho le gritó qué le había hecho *él*." (Sábato, 1981: 408).

Sabato carefully shapes Castel's expression when he sees Maria in the exhibition of paintings – the fact that only Maria's look remained on the hidden motive in the painting represents an essential thing for Castel, because precisely that scene in the painting suggested the desired and complete loneliness. Thus, the epithets *invencible* (*indomitable* fear) and *angustioso* (*painful* desire) have the special strength as they evoke the intensity of Catel's inner conflict – the desire to meet Maria and simultaneous primordial fear of ending his complete loneliness, because a possible encounter with Maria would cause Castel's initiating of conversation. The desire and need for the next encounter continues in the novel *Sobre héroes y tumbas (On Heroes and Tombs)*, because Martin, as a counterpart to Castel, knows after the first encounter that Alejandra is *distinctive* (being) of *exceptional* (qualities), just as *unhappy* and *lonely* as Martin is (*muy fuerte, de rasgos muy marcados, desgraciado y*

solitario). Apprehension and anxiety felt by Nacho at every encounter with Agustina are shown in a passage from *Abaddón, el Exterminador* (*The Angel of Darkness*) – Nacho experiences communication with Agustina as *horror* and *loneliness (soledad)*; with desperation and resentment he observes Agustina when she intends to leave and, as usual, to interrupt any attempt of conversation. Agustina's anger is reflected in the following epithets: *cara <u>dura</u>*, *su mandíbula <u>apretada</u>, grandes labios <u>desdeñosos</u> (rough face, her <u>clenched</u> jaws, <u>big</u> <u>contemptuous</u> lips)*. In general, it is noticed that the adjectives of negative, vague, a bit obscure and disturbing connotation represent the constant in Sabato's expression; these are, among others: unhappy, lonely, apprehensive, mysterious (unknown), endless, gloomy, dissatisfied, insignificant, necessary, unbearable, etc. In order to emphasize the problem of (non) communication in Sabato's novels, the attention will also be drawn to the multiple repetition of the same syntactic units in certain places, which is always related with emphasizing the need for absolute love, although the word "love" remains unspoken. Repetition also highlights the emotional state of the heroes of Sabato's novels:

> "— Prométame que no se irá nunca más. La necesito, <u>la necesito mucho</u> — le dije." (Sábato, 2008: 25);
> "¡Te quiero, María, <u>te quiero</u>, <u>te quiero</u>!" (Sábato, 2008: 40);
> "Necesito saber si me querés. Nada más que eso: <u>saber si me querés</u>." (Sábato, 2008: 41).

In the next group of figures of syntax – figures of omission, the expression is reduced by omitting certain elements within the sentence; these elements can be implied in order to determine the appropriate syntactic connections of elements given in the sentence and finally, in order to successfully achieve the correct meaning of the given expression (Mayoral, 1994: 139). The concept of the ellipse has also been studied in the narratology, in the sense of omitting parts of the story, and in that capacity it could be researched within the levels of narration; *the ellipse* here will be perceived as a figure of syntax, and contrary to the pleonasm, it occurs by violating the syntactic norm by omission, as in the following examples:

> "…era áspero y violento, en toda su actitud se adivinaba el rencor. <u>No sólo contra Sabato: contra la realidad entera</u>." (Sábato, 1981: 60).

The description of Nacho's behavior towards Sabato is given in the example from *Abaddón, el Exterminador* (*The Angel of Darkness*) and the underlined subordinate clause is actually a syntagma referring to the noun *el rencor (the hatred)* from the previous sentence – so here the expression is understood on the basis of the overall meaning with the previous sentence, since both the verb and the noun are omitted, in terms of concepts that integrate the given syntagma. It is also noticed in the following example of the dialogue between Castel and Maria in *El Túnel (The Tunnel)* that omitted parts in the elliptical expressions can be reconstructed in accordance with the communication situation:

- „Yo también — musitó.
- ¿Yo también qué? — pregunté con ansiedad.
- Que yo también no he hecho más que pensar.

- ¿Pero pensar en qué? — seguí preguntando, insaciable.
- En todo.
- ¿Cómo en todo? ¿En qué?
- En lo extraño que es todo esto... lo de su cuadro... el encuentro de ayer... lo de hoy… qué sé yo....” (Sábato, 2008: 29).

The synthetic nature of Maria's discourse is reflected in the elliptical expressions used in phone conversation with Castel. While Castel shows her to what extent he thinks about her after the last encounter, Maria's answers are vague and with minimal elements of expression: *Que yo también no he hecho más que pensar (I was also just thinking)* and it would not be simple to reconstruct the omitted elements out of context.

By using the figures of permutation (*inversion* and *hyperbaton*), the figurativeness of the expression is achieved by positional changes of syntactic units. Although the elements within a sentence change position, they continue to be in contact that implies their semantic connection (Mayoral, 1994: 149). Deviation from the usual order of words in a sentence (subject-predicate-object) actually emphasizes the meaning of an individual word, as in the following example from the novel *Sobre héroes y tumbas (On Heroes and Tombs)*:

“Así que se sentía *solo, solo, solo*: únicas palabras que claramente sintió y pensó, pero que, sin duda, expresaban todo aquello. Y como un náufrago en la noche se había precipitado sobre Alejandra.” (Sábato, 2007: 196).

Although the noun *la palabra (the word)* has the function of the object, it is placed in front of the verb, which achieves the effect of sentence inversion and, therefore, the reader's focus is also directed to the expressiveness of Martin's loneliness. The repetition of adjectives *solo, solo, solo* (*lonely, lonely, lonely*) further nuances Martin's loneliness. Change in the position of the subordinate and independent clause is also considered as an inversion, when the subordinate clause is placed first, although this type of inversion does not have stylistic features:

“Que fuerzas obraron sobre mí, no se lo puedo explicar con exactitud.” (Sábato, 1981: 21).

Contrary to simple inversion, hyperbaton is considered as a phenomenon of “narrower” violation of syntactic and semantic relations between sentence constituents (Mayoral, 1994: 150), and in these cases words can be inserted between elements of the syntagma. In the passage from the novel *Abaddón, el Exterminador (The Angel of Darkness)*, in which the hero Sabato explains to Marcelo what the duty of a fiction writer is, two figures of syntax are represented:

“Hablo del autor de ficciones. Su deber es nada más pero nada menos que decir la verdad. Pero la verdad con mayúscula, Marcelo. No una de esas verdades chiquitas que leemos en los diarios todos los días. Y sobre todo las más escondidas.” (Sábato, 1981: 256).

The passage firstly contains the hyperbaton, when the second sentence: *Su deber es decir la verdad* (*His duty is to tell the truth*) is broken into two parts by the inserted phrase *nada más pero nada menos* (*nothing more, but also nothing less*). The ellipse can be found in the following: *Pero la verdad con mayúscula, Marcelo* (*But the truth with the capital letter T, Marcelo)* and *No una de esas verdades chiquitas que leemos en los diarios todos los días* (*Not some tiny truth that can be read in the newspaper every day*), when it comes to phrases in which the verb is omitted, so that the elliptical expressions refer to the verb *decir* (*to tell*) from the previous sentence and serve as a syntagma that additionally describes the object *la verdad (the truth)* from the previous sentence. Separation of closely related sentence parts, which represent a meaningfully completed whole, does not require changes at the semantic level, but indicates the informality of the discourse – in this case hyperbaton only achieves the effect of supplementing Sabato's shaped thought. The omission of the verb *decir (to tell)* in two sentences aims to draw attention to the key word, when it comes to writers who write fiction and that is *la verdad (the truth),* followed by the epithet *la más escondida (the most hidden).* Therefore, for the hero Sabato, the task of the writer of the novel is not to write about trivial, everyday topics, but about the dark sides and the subconscious of the tragic man.

6. Conclusion

Individual characteristics and stereotypical traits of the heroes in Sabato's novels are presented by researching the linguistic and stylistic system of communication among them – Sabato's heroes are reclusive, lonely and emotionally unreachable. The pattern of their behavior is based on jealousy, possessiveness and emotional manipulation. The vocabulary of Sabato's heroes is mostly related to their inner anxiety, expressed through the motives of (non)communication and loneliness in Sabato's prose; these motives are presented inseparably from the manner in which Sabato portrays the states of his heroes. The discouragement and listlessness of individuals form an integral part of the story of every Sabato's novel.

(Non)communication of the heroes in Sabato's novels is presented as a universal process; on the linguistic and stylistic level the (non)communication of the heroes in Sabato's novels is achieved through the communication model, based on the principle of wrong "coding" of messages. In conclusion, Sabato used the technique of simultaneous presentation of heroes' speech and thoughts, aimed at changing the point of view, tone and distance. The omission of relevant information in the communication flow of Sabato's heroes indicates the fact that the impossibility of their communication is reflected in awkward pauses and alternating in speech, while the discourse of the heroes in Sabato's novels is characterized by concise answers and unfinished sentences. In the avant-garde spirit, Sabato moved the boundaries within the field of the (un)spoken in narrative communication, which were set by S. Beckett.

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LINGVOSTILISTIČKA SREDSTVA U FUNKCIJI (NE) KOMUNIKACIJE U DELIMA ERNESTA SABATA

Apstrakt. *Predmet rada je istraživanje lingvostilističkih aspekata proznih tekstova argentinskog pisca Ernesta Sabata, sa ciljem prikazivanja neostvarivosti komunikacije junaka romana: El Túnel („Tunel"), "Sobre héroes y tumbas" („O junacima i grobovima") i "Abaddón, el Exterminador" („Abadon, anđeo uništenja"). (Ne) komunikacija će biti sagledana kao rezultat usamljenosti, nepoverenja i nerazumevanja junaka Sabatovih romana; dat je pregled diskursnih obeležja, odnosno govora koji Sabatovi junaci koriste i njihovih stilističkih izbora, u cilju ukazivanja na učestalost određenih leksičkih i sintaksičkih oblika u njihovom govoru, kao i na njihov smisao u tekstu. Rad ima za cilj da proučavanjem diskursa junaka Sabatovih dela ispita načine pomoću kojih se postiže usporavanje razumevanja teksta; proces razumevanja teksta sagledan je putem doživljavanja (ne)izrečenog u narativnoj komunikaciji, kao i razmatranjem aspekta redundantnosti u jezičkom izrazu. Pored toga, radom se ukazuje na zastupljenost određenih sintaksičkih figura u Sabatovim delima kao dodatnog sredstva prilikom istraživanja (ne)komunikacije na sintaksičkom nivou, a sakupljanjem indikatora karaktera Sabatovih junaka u tekstu, došlo se zaključka o individualnim i stereotipnim crtama njihovog karaktera.*

Ključne reči: *Ernesto Sabato, (ne)komunikacija, (ne)izrečeno, lingvostilistički aspekti, reduntantnost, sintaksičke figure*