LACAN'S DIALOGUES FOR A REINVENTION OF THE UNCONSCIOUS[1]

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ABSTRACT. This paper aims to present and explain three of the dialogues established by Jacques Lacan with the Structuralism in his journey to the reinvention of the unconscious. The methodology consisted of analyses of three specific texts of structuralist theorists referred to by Lacan: the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss and the linguists Ferdinand de Saussure and Roman Jakobson. Aiming to put into perspective his assertion that "the unconscious is structured like a language", we propose a reading course that seeks to show the in-depth dialogue that Lacan maintained with these authors. Such a proposal is developed through an attentive reading of and comments on the texts of the authors mentioned above, with focus on the appropriation and reformulation of their ideas, carried out by the Lacanian text. Thus, we seek to clarify how some of the concepts proposed by the Structural Anthropology of Lévi-Strauss and the Structural Linguistics of Saussure and Jakobson constitute the pillars to the structure of the unconscious formalized by Lacan's Écrit "The instance of the letter in the unconscious".
Keywords: Unconscious; structuralism; Lacan, Jacques-Marie Émile, 1901-1981.

DIÁLOGOS DE LACAN NA REINVENÇÃO DO INCONSCIENTE

RESUMO. Este artigo tem como objetivo apresentar e explicitar três momentos da interlocução de Jacques Lacan com o estruturalismo em seu percurso de reinvenção do inconsciente. Como metodologia, foram analisados três textos dos teóricos estruturalistas referidos por Lacan: o antropólogo Claude Lévi-Strauss e os linguistas Ferdinand de Saussure e Roman Jakobson. Com o intuito de dimensionar a asserção lacaniana de que "o inconsciente é estruturado como uma linguagem", este trabalho propõe um percurso de leitura que busca evidenciar em profundidade o diálogo que Lacan manteve com estes autores. Tal proposta é desenvolvida a partir da leitura rigorosa e elaboração de comentários sobre os textos dos autores estruturalistas, com foco na formulação original de seus conceitos e apropriações efetuadas por Lacan. Desse modo, busca-se demonstrar como alguns conceitos propostos pela antropologia estrutural de Lévi-Strauss e pela linguística estrutural de Saussure e Jakobson, uma vez reformulados, constituem os pilares sobre os quais repousam a estrutura do inconsciente lacaniano formalizada no escrito "A instância da letra no inconsciente".
Palavras-chave: inconsciente; estruturalismo; Lacan, Jacques-Marie Émile, 1901-1981.

LOS DIÁLOGOS DE LACAN EN LA REINVENCIÓN DE LO INCONSCIENTE

RESUMEN. Este artículo tiene como finalidad presentar y explicar tres momentos de la interlocución de Jacques Lacan con el Estructuralismo en su recorrido de reinvención del inconsciente. La metodología empleada se basa en un análisis de tres textos de los teóricos estructuralistas mencionados por Lacan: el antropólogo Claude Lévi-Strauss y los lingüistas Ferdinand de Saussure y Roman Jakobson. Con el objetivo de dimensionar la aserción lacaniana de que "el inconsciente es estructurado como un lenguaje", este trabajo propone un recorrido de lectura que busca evidenciar en profundidad el diálogo que Lacan mantuvo con estos autores. Dicha propuesta es desarrollada a partir de la lectura minuciosa y elaboración de comentarios sobre los textos de los autores estructuralistas, con enfoque en la formulación original de sus conceptos y apropiaciones efectuadas por Lacan. Así, se busca demostrar cómo algunos conceptos propuestos por la Antropología Estructural de Lévi-Strauss y por la Lingüística Estructural de Saussure y Jakobson, una

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vez reformulados, constituyen los bastiones sobre los cuales está asentada la estructura del inconsciente lacaniano formalizado en su escrito "La instancia de la letra en el inconsciente".
Palabras clave: Inconsciente; estructuralismo; Lacan, Jacques-Marie Émile, 1901-1981.

This work seeks to make explicit three dialogues of Lacan in his journey towards reinventing the Freudian unconscious. To do so, the interlocution of Lacan with the Structuralism is presented in three logical, distinct and complementary moments. At every stage of this journey – which comprehends the period between 1953 and 1957 –, the French psychoanalyst extracts fundamental notions and concepts, which, reformulated, constitute the pillars to his proposal of an unconscious structured like a language.

The first Lacan's dialogue in his interlocution with the Structuralism is effective from the reading of the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009), which provides the notion of symbolic effectiveness and the proposition of an empty unconscious. The second dialogue, more extensive herein, refers to the appropriation of the concept of signifier formulated by the Swiss Ferdinand Saussure (1857-1913), founder of the Modern Linguistics. His work establishes the conditions to a structural reading of language, from which he seeks to grasp the general principles of its functioning. Finally, the third dialogue is proposed from contributions of the Russian linguist Roman Jakobson (1896-1982), heir of Saussure's thinking. It is about a dialogue still little explored, but whose reading shows that Jakobson's contributions were decisive for the structuration of the Lacanian unconscious, and especially of that which Lacan will call laws of the unconscious, isolated in metaphor and metonym formulas.

Lacan and Lévi-Strauss: the symbolic effectiveness of an empty unconscious

According to Roudinesco (2008), the encounter of Lacan with the principles of the Structural Linguistics of Ferdinand Saussure occurred through the work of the founder of the Modern Anthropology, Claude Lévi-Strauss. In special, through the reading of "The Elementary Structures of Kinship" (1949/1975) and of articles published in the late 1940's.

In "The Effectiveness of Symbols" (1949/1975), Lévi-Strauss analyzes a report about a tribe in Panama in which its shaman is called to heal a sick woman, with serious childbirth difficulties. Lévi-Strauss observes, in that case, that the shaman intervenes exclusively by means of words: the shaman speaks, through songs, to the sick woman that listens to him, using a myth that was common to the members of that group to metaphorize the drama being physically experienced by the woman in labor. At the end of the process, she manages to give birth to the baby. However, Lévi-Strauss points out, the effectiveness of the shaman's song would be compromised if, even before the wait for its results, he did not present the sick woman an outcome, that is, a situation in which all the protagonists of the myth find their place again. (Lévi-Strauss, 1949/1975). In this way, Lévi-Strauss asseverates that the success of the healing is effected thanks to a rearrangement in the symbolic field of that myth with which the subject could identify herself. By presenting an outcome to the characters of the myth, an analogous outcome was produced to the sick woman. It does not matter if the shaman mythology corresponds to an objective reality, what matters is that the sick woman believes in it and is a member of a community that believes as well.

Based on that, the anthropologist draws an approach between the shamanic and the psychoanalytic healing, highlighting that both happen, in their structure, in an analogous manner. Although the names of the characters (patient and analyst, on one side, shaman and woman in labor, on the other) are not the same, this does not change, at all, the structure of what is at stake in both of the healings: the symbolic effectiveness. From this notion, it is possible to grasp the capacity the word has – whether uttered by the patient or by the shaman – of reorganizing the place of the subject in a myth, whether individually arranged (in a family and Oedipal neurosis, in the case of the analysis), or a myth that is collectively shared (in the case of the members of the Panama tribe). It is to the symbol – therefore, to the word -that the subject abreacts, because it is

a relationship between symbol and thing symbolized, or, to use the terminology of linguists, between signifier and signified. The shaman provides the sick woman with a *language*, by means of which it is possible to express immediately unexpressed state otherwise inexpressible. And it is the transition to this verbal expression - at the same time making it possible to undergo in an ordered and intelligible form a real experience that would otherwise be chaotic and inexpressible - which induces the release of the physiological process, that is, the reorganization, in a favorable direction, of the process to which the sick woman is subjected. (Lévi-Strauss, 1949/1975, p 229, author's italics).

These elements allow dimensioning the impacts of Lévi-Strauss' works on Lacan's teaching and, in special, on the construction of his notion of symbolic order. Lévi-Strauss crashed the belief in an objective reality, allegedly located beyond that which the word was able to order, and pointed to an unconscious whose laws are the very same that rule symbolic orderings. As Werneck (2012) reminds us, "the myth exists to solve a contradiction society does not know how to solve. For this reason, just as the dream, it cannot ever be apprehended in its literality". (p. 45).

In this way, the unconscious foreseen by Lévi-Strauss does not fit notions of depth, of inner contents, or the field of the ineffable. On the contrary, he was the one to say that "the unconscious is always empty" (Lévi-Strauss, 1949/1975, p. 234) and therefore "it is reducible to a function - the symbolic function, which no doubt is specifically human, and which is carried out according to the same laws among all men [sic], and actually corresponds to the aggregate of these laws." (Lévi-Strauss, 1949/1975, p. 234). This reference paved the way for Lacan to find in Saussure the elements needed to the formalization of the theory of the signifier and of an unconscious structured like a language.

Lacan as a reader of Saussure: bases to understand the language structure

Published in 1916, the notorious "Course in General Linguistics" (CGL) by Ferdinand de Saussure (1916/2006) was written and organized by his disciples Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye. After his death, they gathered the material of three years of his courses on the theory of the sign at the University of Geneva. In his CGL, Saussure postulated the existence of a general science of the sign (semion), Semiology, and a perspective that formalizes language through a series of dichotomies, grounded on the notion that "language has both an individual and a social side, and we cannot conceive of one without the other." (Saussure, 1916/2006, p. 16). The social side of language corresponds to what the linguist called Tongue[3], whereas Speaking would be the individual realization of the code made available by the tongue. Based on this distinction, Saussure defends that the Linguistics would be the part of the Semiology that has as object only speaking, taken as the norm to every language manifestation.

Thus, Saussure builds a notion of linguistic sign and language as an organized system whose study enables establishing the general principles that rule the symbolic operation of language. His considerations about the nature and the operation of the linguistic sign, allied to what he called essential principles of language, are fundamental to Lacan's formulations, as they encompass the logic that governs language operations and the invariant elements of its structure.

a) Language division: Tongue x Speaking

To Saussure (1916/2006), speaking is the individual part of language and involves phonation (production of the sounds of words), the effectuation of language rules and the contingent combination of signs the code provides. These are the three aspects present in every speech act. Therefore, speaking means subjecting oneself to the rules of the language. When speaking, we cannot say two words at the same time, because we need to choose one word at a time. Additionally, each element selected in the speech act needs to be combined to other elements. In this process of selection and combination, of word-by-word, speaking organizes a chain of signs lined up one after another.

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[3] Faced with some issues resulting from the concept of the French term "langue" in Portuguese – language in which Saussure was read and studied for the production of this article – and its translation into English, the authors of this text and translators who have worked on it agreed to employ the term "tongue".

Tongue, the social part of language, equals the code, which encircles all signs that can be combined and ordered in speaking. Saussure (1916/2006) defines it as "the treasure deposited by the practice of language, in the subjects belonging to the same community" (p. 21). In this way, tongue is the language without the speaking dimension. Tongue is simultaneously a social institution and a system of values. No individual can alone create or change the tongue. No individual could decree on his or her own will that, hereafter, cars will no longer be called cars, but brooms. This shows the dialects that exists between tongue and speaking, because speaking can only be handled when we detach it from the tongue, whereas the tongue is only effected through speaking or writing. Thus, the rules imposed by the tongue in the use of the sign determine how an individual can arrange his or her speaking. To be understood by another individual, the speakers of a tongue need to share the same code, in which the sign 'table' always designates a furniture piece, not a season of the year.

b) The linguistic sign according to Saussure: connection between signifier and signified

To some experts, Saussure (1916/2006) argues, the essential principle of tongue would be the fact that it works as a nomenclature: a list on which, for each term of a tongue, there would be a corresponding object in reality. However, the Saussurean perspective of the linguistic sign is radical and innovative in two senses: a) for understanding that language is a social fact, and not a continuity of the biological order (therefore, the genes do not guarantee that there will be speaking), and b) for pointing that the sign does not name a pre-existing thing in relation to the word, an object of the objective reality. Tongue is not a nomenclature.

> The linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound-image. The latter is not the material sound, a purely physical thing, but the psychic imprint of the sound, the impression that it makes on our senses. The sound-image is sensory, and if I happen to call it 'material', it is only in that sense and by way of opposing it, to the other term of the association, the concept, which is generally more abstract. (Saussure, 1916/2006, p. 80).

It is a fundamental distinction that superimposes the sign on the very notion of reality, and indicates, just as Lévi-Strauss did, that the human world is fundamentally the world of language. Language, in turn, is supported by a code (set of signs) that is socially shared and carried out in an orderly manner by speaking. These elements help us situate the way that Lacan was able to make use of this "epistemological cutout" (Manso de Barros, 2012, p. 27) promoted by the Structuralism in order to found the concept of unconscious from a new reading frame of reference, out of the scope of a psychic interiority, which would oppose a real exteriority, since the sign does not unite the word to a thing, but to a concept, a psychic representation.

If the sign is something dual, Saussure's next step (Saussure, 1916/2006) consists of proposing "to retain the word sign to designate the whole and to replace *concept* and *sound-image* respectively by *signified* and *signifier*" (p. 81, author's italics). It is on this page of the Course that the signifier is born, basal concept that Lacan will take and subvert. Saussure introduces it, at first, as one of the faces of the coin that the sign is, as a sound-image that conveys the signified. In both representations of the sign, the signified is proposed as something that precedes the signifier or superposes it. In Saussure, the signified has the primacy and it corresponds to a signifier that designates it, which means that, to the linguist, the signifier has as a function to be the vehicle that expresses a concept or idea. From this, he proposes the following continuity of representations of the linguistic sign (Figure 1):

Figura 1. The structure of the signifier according to Saussure
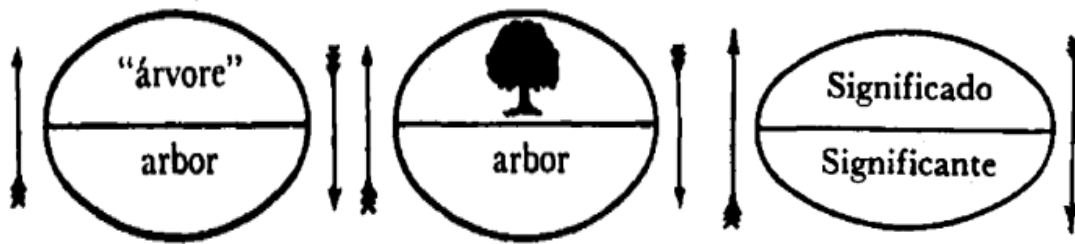
Source: Saussure (1916/2006, pp. 80-81), CLG.

In this sense, to Saussure, tongue has a homogeneous nature: to each signified there is a signifier that represents it. This is the sense of the arrows, which emphasize the reciprocal and biunique relationship between its elements; one always refers to the other in a fixed relationship of signification. The ellipsis that encircles the elements illustrates the notion of junction that there is between its terms. From this perspective, the signifier manga, for instance, could only have two meanings in Portuguese: the fruit that is eaten, or the part of a garment, the sleeve of a shirt. Signification, according to Saussure, is produced when signified and signifier is joined, forming a unit – the sign.

c) Two principles that rule the sign: the arbitrariness and linearity of the signifier

When proposing the sign as a two-faced entity (the concept and its signifier), Saussure establishes two general principles or laws that rule the sign, two primordial characteristics: the arbitrariness of the sign and the linear character of the signifier. Such principles dominate over linguistics. When situating the first, he argues that "the bond between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary." (Saussure, 1916/2006, p. 81). In addition, "since I mean by sign the whole that results from the associating of the signifier with the signified, I can simple say: *the linguistic sign is arbitrary*." (Saussure, 1916/2006, p. 81, author's italics).

Such definition is fundamental, because it indicates that there is nothing, for instance, in the image of the animal 'ox' that is linked to the sound of the two letters of the signifier 'o-x'. One does not write ox with the drawing a footprint, but with the two letters that have no connection with the concept or the idea of the animal itself. In other languages, the signifiers that serve to express the idea of the animal ox may not have any radical in common. It is to dimension this unmotivated and arbitrary character of the signifier that Saussure despises the term symbol to define what he rather calls sign. If the concept of ox was written with the drawing of a footprint on the ground, or if, for us to refer to an ox, we needed to imitate the sound of the animal, then we would be in the field of the symbols, not of the signifier.

Next, the principle of linearity is recognized by Saussure in the fact that the signifier "unfolds only in time and possesses the characteristics which it borrows from time: (a) it represents an extension and (b) that extension is measurable in only one dimension: it is a line." (Saussure, 1916/2006, p. 84). It is something evident, the author argues, but whose consequences are incalculable, because all the mechanism of a tongue depends on its linearity. The signifiers have only the timeline, and "elements unfolds one after the other; they form a chain" (Saussure, 1916/2006, p. 84). We illustrated this when we pointed that it is impossible to speak two different words at the same time; they need to be arranged in a linear chain, one after the other. Moreover, to combine them in a line, one needs to choose what signifier will come next. When one says 'the girl', other possible signifiers have been abandoned, a selection has been operated: 'the girl' has been chosen instead of 'the woman' or 'the boy'. Thereby, a simple change in the position of the elements in the timeline completely changes the value of its signs.

d) The time in the Saussurean linguistics: synchrony and diachrony

The introduction of the time factor as an organizing element of the signifying chain constitutes one of Saussure's most notable theories. Saussure expands its implications and highlights two temporal axes according to which tongue and speaking articulate. They are: the time axis in its simultaneity in the speech act (synchrony), and the time axis throughout history (diachrony). Diachronic studies take

into account the historical axis of the tongue. What matters is to investigate, for instance, how the use of the Portuguese personal pronoun 'vossa mercê' has evolved and changed, turning into 'vosmecê', until coming to its current form 'você'. The synchronic axis, on the other hand, privileges the relationships of one sign with the other during speaking only. Thus, synchrony refers to the cutout of the speaking moment, in which the elements of the signifying chain establish relationships with each other simultaneously, that is, synchronically. To Saussure, the diachronic element of a tongue includes time; it is about evolutionary studies of a tongue. The synchronic part, in turn, is static and excludes the temporal factor; what matters is the relationship between the signs in a sentence, and not how they have evolved until being employed in that chain.

e) Syntagma and paradigm: the two axes of language and the witticism mechanism

Based on the distinction between synchrony and diachrony, Saussure postulates that the relationships and differences between every linguistic term develop on two different levels, and each of these levels generates a certain order of values (Saussure, 1916/2006). On the first level, the signs establish relationships with each other through their linear chaining in a sentence. These combinations supported on an extension are called syntagmas. As Roland Barthes (1964/2007) clarifies, the syntagmatic level is that of the articulated language, of speaking, hence, irreversible. Once 'I no longer love you' is said, for instance, it is not possible to unsay it. On this axis, that of combinations, the signifiers are articulated in presence, for being materialized in the speaking chain. According to Saussure, the syntagma is composed from a minimum of two units. For instance, the sentence 'God is' does not generate signification value, because another syntagmatic unit is necessary so that an order of value is generated: 'God is good', or 'God is fair' composes the minimum necessary. As Saussure (1916/2006) stresses, "placed in a syntagma, a term acquires its value only because it is opposed to that which precedes or to that which follows, or to both." (p. 142).

The second level Saussure highlights is that of relations by association between linguistic terms. It is about what later came to be known as paradigmatic level (Barthes, 1964/2007). The linguistic paradigm works as a big virtual model of a tongue, which stores all of the relationships that can be established between signs. Under this logic, the paradigmatic level incurs in a virtual manner, making available all possible associations of a sign with other signs during speaking.

It is fundamental to read how Saussure defines the axis of these associative relations:

> Outside discourse, on the other hand, words acquire relations of a different kind. Those that have something in common are associated in the memory, resulting in groups marked by diverse relations. For instance, the French word *enseignement* [teaching] will unconsciously call to mind a host of other words (enseigner [teach], *renseigner* [acquaint] etc.; or *armement* [armament], *changement* [amendment] etc.; or education [education] *apprentissage* [apprenticeship] etc.). All those words are related in some way. (Saussure, 1916/2006, p. 143, author's italics).

A careful reading of this excerpt in Saussure's text surprises readers more familiar with Freud's text. When presenting a hypothesis about the associative logic of the signifiers, even though taken as outside to the discourse, his text draws near Freud's work with wits, slips of the tongue and dreams. In Freud's text, such phenomena are solved from the elucidation of the associative paths through which a signifier finds its way towards consciousness thanks to an associative unconscious connection.

Without incurring a naive assertion, we know that the notion of language system, postulated by Saussure, excludes completely the unconscious and the subject, and this is one of the points of divergence that Lacan sustained with linguistics and that does not make him a structuralist in the strict sense of the term (Coutinho Jorge, 2005). However, if we take into consideration Saussure's comment that a word can make arise unconsciously in the spirit a plenty of other words (1916/2006), there is nothing that prevents one of these signifiers from sliding on the tongue paradigmatic axis towards the syntagmatic axis of speaking through the formation of a slip, that is, of a saying that the self lets escape in the speech act. Saussure illustrates his proposition of an infinite field of paradigmatic associations with the following model (Figure 2):

Figura 2. The paradigmatic axis of language imagined by Saussure

Source: Saussure (1916/2006, p. 146), CLG.

Having in mind this scheme of Saussure, we can mention Freud's text about the technique employed by the wit *famillionär* [famillionairely], elucidated in "Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious" (1905/1996). Freud borrows a report of the German poet Heinrich Heine in which a simpleton lottery agent, Mr. Hirsch-Hayacinth rejoices with his relations with the wealthy Baron Rothschild. In a conversation with the poet, he says: "And, as true as God shall grant me all good things, Doctor, I sat beside Salomon Rothschild and he treated me quite as his equal - quite famillionairely" (Freud, 1905/1996, p. 25). Freud highlights that "the character of the wit in this example does not adhere to the thought." (p. 26), and adds his argument pointing out that "but if the witty character of our example does not belong to the thought, then it must be sought for in the form of expression in the wording." (p. 26). It is evident how much Freud anticipates a notion of web-like relations of signs, which associate in the chain of signifiers according to the contiguity of their positions. Putting it in Saussurean terms, they link to each other in the system of signs because of the respective positions of the signifiers *familiär* and *millionär* on the paradigmatic axis, that is, on the tongue virtual axis just as it is represented by Saussure's model.

It is important to remember that the word syntagma has its origins in the military vocabulary, being used to designate the distribution of soldiers, the position of each one in the lineup, which, structurally, happens to the words, distributed in a line. Freud (1905/1996?) highlights that the condensation that occurred with the terms *familiär* [familiarly] and *millionär* indicates an attempt of substitution of the term *millionär*, which slid from the paradigmatic level of the associations to the syntagmatic level of speaking. Thus, the enunciation that should point the familiar manner in which the lottery agent had been treated by the wealthy Baron gave way to the wit "he treated me quite as his equal - quite famillionairely" (Freud, 1905/1996, p. 25), because, according to Freud

> The newly constructed word coincides in its earlier portion with the 'familiär' of the first sentence, and in its final syllables with the 'Millionär' of the second sentence. It stands, as it were, for the 'Millionär' portion of the second sentence and thus for the whole second sentence, and so puts us in a position to infer the second sentence that has been omitted in the text of the joke. (1905/1996, p. 27).

From this, Freud outlines a diagrammatic picture to show the form through which the condensation of the signifiers *familiär* and *millionär* produced a third signifier, *familionär* [famillionairely]. This reading of the wit provided Freud with subsidizes to his postulate according to which the witticism technique is analogous to the mechanisms of displacement, substitution and condensation that operate in the formation of dreams (Freud, 1905/1996).

Until this point, it is possible to assume certain equivalence between the readings of Freud and Saussure concerning the relations between the association system (paradigm) and the combination axis of speaking (syntagma). It becomes clear, also, that Saussure draws himself near a reading of the signifier's primacy. However, he crosses such notion for lacking a conception of subject or of unconscious to articulate any other implications.

In this way, the question Freud's text raises to Saussure's is this: if the signifier is the vehicle to the signified, that is, if they are united in a so harmonious and biunique manner – in which one always refers to the other in a reciprocal way –, what signified corresponds to the signifier famillionairely? As for that, Saussure's text cannot answer. Contrarily to the position of the linguist, Lacan's theory demarcates that,

> in the unconscious, each one of the signifying elements is signifying in relation to what could be an intention or a desire, and while repressed; in the unconscious, the elements that define its textures do not acquire value, in absolute, neither for their relation, neither for the difference they may have with each other. (Melman, 2011, p. 281).

Jakobson and the metaphorical and metonymic poles of Language

According to Altoé and Marinho (2012), the introduction of the term structuralism to describe tongue as a system is credited to the Russian linguist from the Prague School, Roman Jakobson (1896-1982). Jakobson used the term in a work presented at the 1st International Congress of Linguistics, in Haya, 1928. Saussure privileges the term system and for only three times he uses the term structure in his CLG. From Saussure's teaching, Jakobson and Trubzjoy diffuse the use of the terms structure and structuralism, which have been exported to the French thinking thanks to a prolific encounter between Jakobson and Lévi-Strauss in the city of New York, in 1942 (Altoé & Marinho, 2012).

Jakobson's works, along with Saussure's and Lévi-Strauss's, constitute the third fundamental reference of Lacan to the Structuralism. By re-reading Saussure's works, the Russian linguist formalized a structural perspective of tongue that contributed decisively to the Lacanian construction of a language structure. In his work "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances" (1954/2010), Jakobson identifies and highlights two language poles: the metaphoric pole and the metonymic pole. It is a re-reading of the paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes pointed by Saussure.

In his text, the Russian linguist starts from a series of studies about the aphasia issue to point that, although it has as cause a brain injury, "aphasia is a language disturbance" (Jakobson, 1954/2010, p. 42). Therefore, without the participation of a linguist that is familiar with the structure and the operation of language it would not be possible to identify what aspects of language would be hindered in the different species of aphasia. In this way, the study of language disturbances observed in aphasic patients has allowed Jakobson to establish the general laws of language in its normal operation.

Beginning with a reference to Saussure's teaching, Jakobson (1954/2010) restates the dual character of language and points that "any linguistic sign involves two modes of arrangement" (p. 49). In them, the linguistic signs (signifiers) are arranged by selection or combination. At the first language pole identified by Jakobson, the signifiers are arranged through a selection among alternative terms. For instance, one can say house or residence, which means the substitution of a term for the other. The substitutive character implicit in this arrangement mode characterizes what Jakobson calls the language metaphoric pole. At it, a signifier can be substituted in the chain with the selection of another term. The second language pole, in turn, is identified by Jakobson as the metonymic pole, because it works by combination and contextualization, in which any signifier serves as a context to another signifier, or finds its own context in another linguistic unit.

a) The metaphorical pole and the similarity disturbance

From this dichotomization of the laws that rule the operation of the signifier, metaphor would be that which produces sense through the effect of substituting a signifier for another one. It can be said that 'Pedro is strong' or 'Pedro is a lion'. In this way, the signifier Lion metaphorically abolishes – to use Lacan's expression – the signifier Pedro, being the poetic spark of the metaphor a result from this process, because there is a transfer of sense in the substitution of a signifier for another. "One word for another" is the formula that Lacan (1966/1998a, p. 510) employs for the metaphor.

In the cases of aphasic patients, Jakobson noticed that aphasia always affects one of the language poles: the metaphorical pole or the metonymic pole. When aphasia affects the metaphorical pole, the patient, as an alternative to his or her incapacity of substituting a signifier for another one – that was somewhat similar to it–, makes use of a displacement, searching for the signifier that is closer to it, that is in contiguity or in the context. In one of the cases reported by Goldstein (1948, quoted by Jakobson, 1954/2010), the patient was not able to say the word knife. If the object was pointed to him with a finger, he could not substitute the gesture for the signifier knife. Instead of knife, he said sharpener, cutlery, apple cutter, resorting to the metonymic pole. In this way, the capacity of selection and substitution had been affected, and the metaphorical pole, compromised by aphasia.

b) The metonymic pole and the contiguity disorder

Metonym as a figure of speech is entirely based on the contiguity between signifiers, in relations of neighboring, privileging, thus, the whole axis of connections, that is, of the context that is formed by the proximity between signifiers. News on a website read: "Fluminense scores with different shirts and beats Flamengo 3 x 0". The signifier shirts, therefore, is selected for its proximity, for the contiguity it maintains in the context with the signifier Fluminense players. After all, shirts do not score, which shows, thus, all the metonymic work of displacement from a signifier to another. "One word after another", Lacan will say (1966/1988a, p. 509) about the metonymic structure, that is, for a connection that is established from a signifier to another.

In a second group of aphasic patients, in the case of contiguity disorders, Jakobson points that aphasia compromised the metonymic pole of language. In this way, all of the sequence and order of words are affected, the proximities, the relations of coordination and subordination, making the subject's speech chaotic. What is left to them is to resort to the metonymic pole via metaphor, answering through similarities, in which all close identifications have metaphorical characteristics. Jakobson cites as example the cases of patients capable of enunciating 'Cascadura' or 'Ilhabela', but who were not able to understand or to say 'casca' and 'dura' or 'ilha' and 'bela' because the entire combination of the root with the suffix had been affected.

Based on that, Jakobson concluded that the entire normal discourse, whether individual, legal or social, is organized in consonance with this bipolar language structure. Aphasia, in this sense, corresponds to a fixation at one of these poles. In this way, "in manipulating these two kinds of connection (similarity and contiguity) in both their aspects (positional and semantic) - selecting, combining, and ranking them - an individual exhibits his personal style, his verbal predilections and preferences." (Jakobson, 1954/2010, p. 71).

Dialogue effects: the unconscious is structured like a language

In the beginning of his teaching, when proposing that "the unconscious is that chapter of my story which is marked by a blank or occupied by a lie: it is the censored chapter.", (Lacan, 1966/1998b, p. 260), Lacan argues that the subject's truth, in spite of the censored chapter, can be recovered for being already written in another place. One of these places is exactly that of the semantic evolution of the discourse, "which corresponds to the stock and to the acceptations of the vocabulary peculiar to me, as well as to my life-style and character" (Lacan, 1966/1998b, p. 261). Such indication would be reaffirmed four years later, in his conference "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud" (Lacan, 1966/1998a), when he points out that

> Periphrasis, hyperbaton, ellipsis, suspension, anticipation, retraction, denegation, digression, and irony, these are the figures of style… just as catachresis, litotes, antonomasia, and hypotyposis are the tropes, whose names strike me as the most appropriate ones with which to label these mechanisms. Can one see here mere manners of speaking, when it is the figures themselves that are at work in the rhetoric of the discourse the analysis and actually utters?" (Lacan, 1966/1998a, p. 525).

This is how, therefore, the questions of style and the figures of speech, including metaphor and metonym, are embraced in the field of the Lacanian clinic. Ever since Lacan, language is no longer taken as a simple instrument of communication, but as the very constitution field of the subject. Lacan highlights this continuously, stressing that when he says employment of language, he does not mean that we employ it. We are its employees. Language employs us. (Lacan, 1992).

In the Lacanian clinic, style can be decisive when it comes to the production of metaphors in the subject's discourse. If there is metaphor, our discourse field is that of the analyst. If something bothers the subject and manifests as if it were a voice that disturbs him or her, one can ponder a neurotic structure, but, when affirming with no doubt that it is a voice inside his or her head that speaks and commands orders, one can ponder a psychotic structure. Likewise, the elaboration of mourning incurs the possibility of inscription of the loss and metaphorization of the object lost, substituting it for another. As the popular saying indicates to us, "a love lost can only be healed with another love", that is, the metaphorical operation is what allows the signifier Paula to be substituted for the signifier Júlia, or the signifier André for Bruno, so on and so forth.

The text of Jakobson (1954/2010) highlights these two forms of organization of signifiers in the language structure: the metaphorical order and the metonymic order. In the text of Lacan (1966/1998a), they are presented as the laws of language. It is in this sense that Lacan refers to the "laws of the unconscious" (1966/1998a, p. 158), to show that unconscious and language possess an analogous structure, obey the same rules and principles. Thus, the laws of the signifier organize the language structure at stake in the unconscious. It is through this pathway that Jakobson's text provides to Lacan the figures of style that operate in the formation of dreams

> A competition between both devices, metonymic and metaphoric, is manifest in any symbolic process, be it interpersonal or social. Thus in an inquiry into the structure of dreams, the decisive question is whether the symbols and the temporal sequences are based on contiguity (Freud's metonymic "displacement" and synecdochical "condensation") or on similarity (Freud's "identification" and "symbolism"). (Jakobson, 1954/2010, p. 76).

Jakobson's reference to the investigation of the structure of dreams is a direct reference to the Freudian proposal presented in "The interpretation of dreams" (1900/2013) and to the processes of condensation and displacement that alternate in the work of formation of the dream. Based on Jakobson's contributions, Lacan, in "The instance of the letter in the unconscious" (1966/1998a), formalized two fundamental questions to the structure of the unconscious. In a first moment, he establishes the algorithmic formulas of metaphor and of metonym. Subsequently, he resumes the work of deformation of the dream to identify the condensation to metaphor, and the displacement to metonym. Then, he raises the question:

> What distinguishes these two mechanisms [condensation and displacement], which play such a privileged role in the dream-work (Traumarbeit), from their homologous function in discourse? Nothing, except a condition imposed upon the signifying material, etc., called Rucksicht auf Darstellbarkeit, which must be translated by 'consideration of the means of representation' (The translation by "role of the possibility of figurative expression" being too approximative here.) (Lacan, 1966/1998a, p. 515).

In this way, Lacan argues that the staging means of the dream – whatever happens in the other scene – is symbolically ordered through metaphor and metonym, so that the unconscious is structured in consonance with the arrangements and principles that rule the language operation. This is the condition imposed to the signifying material: that it may be structured, articulated in agreement with its laws. For this reason, Lacan (1966/1998a) asseverates that "dream images are to be taken up only on the basis of their value as signifiers" (p. 514), and that "the dream-work follows the laws of the signifier" (p. 515).

From this, Lacan was the one to show that if the work of the dream follows the laws of the signifier, all of the other formations of the unconscious also do so: wits, symptoms and slips. It is in this context that one should read the notorious assertion by Lacan, uttered in the Seminar "The psychoses":

> The unconscious is fundamentally structured, woven, chained, and enmeshed, by language. And not only does the signifier play as big a role there as the signified does, but it plays the fundamental role. In fact, what characterizes language is the system of signifiers as such. (Lacan, 1981/2008, p. 142).

To Conclude

The findings herein presented should not be mistaken for an alleged omnipotence of the effectiveness of the symbolic field in Lacan's teaching. Nor can one assume equivalence between the Lacanian proposal and the structuralist perspective. The Lacanian appropriation of structuralist concepts has some radical differences in relation to them, differences that bring the marks of conceptual reformulations and twists carried out by Lacan in his interlocution with the Structuralism. As stressed by Couto and Souza (2013, p. 186), "in spite of using concepts from the structural linguistics, through a retroactive movement, he [Lacan] makes them return in a different way to the field where they were born". Such logics is applied to the appropriation done by Lacan of the Saussurean signifier as well as to the metaphorical and metonymic poles of language highlighted by Jakobson, being detailed and commented in texts such as "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious" (1966/1998a) and "Radiophony" (1970/2003).

In addition, to deal with what cannot be reduced to the signifier, to the letter as its material support, Lacan introduces in his teaching the concept of the real. Such reading is grounded on the very structure of the subject's truth as a semi-saying, indicated by Lacan in the seminar "The Other Side of Psychoanalysis" (1992). On this same track, Lacan emphasizes in "Television" (1973/1993, p. 11): "I always speak the truth. Not the whole truth, because there's no way to say it all. Saying it all is materially impossible: words fail. Yet it is through this very impossibility that the truth holds to the real."

In this way, the proposition that the unconscious is woven with the same material as and in a manner that is analogous to the structure of the language does not eliminate the dehiscence, the irreducible of the symptom and the real of the structure. Furthermore, the notion of a real as a limit to the word and to the image does not implicate the ineffectiveness of these two, it only dimensions their range in the clinic and in the theoretical developments that are ulterior to this stage of Lacan's teaching.

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