ARTICLES

How Much Saussure Is There in Bakhtin's work? A Study Based on a Comment on the Translation of Rabelais into Russian / *O que há de Saussure em Bakhtin? Um estudo a partir de um comentário sobre a tradução de Rabelais em russo*

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ABSTRACT

This article proposes an interpretation of the ideas of Ferdinand de Saussure and Mikhail Bakhtin that seeks to relate them not through an epistemological point of view, but based on a concept proposed by Henri Meschonnic, according to which one author can be linked to another without an explicit reference to an affiliation between them. The starting point is a comment made by Bakhtin about the translation of François Rabelais' work into Russian, which Meschonnic cites in his anti-structuralist interpretation of Saussure. Finally, a reflection is made on the relevance of addressing metalinguistic comments that discuss the condition of the speaker, which can be the object of an enunciative-anthropological theorization.

KEYWORDS: Commentary; Translation; Structuralism; Discourse; Anthropology of enunciation

RESUMO

Este artigo propõe uma leitura de Ferdinand de Saussure e Mikhail Bakhtin que busca colocá-los em relação não por um viés epistemológico, mas a partir de uma ideia de Henri Meschonnic, segundo a qual um autor pode estar ligado a outro sem que esteja explicitada referência de filiação entre eles. Para tanto, parte-se de um comentário, feito por Bakhtin, a propósito da tradução da obra de François Rabelais em russo, que é citado por Meschonnic no contexto de sua leitura antiestruturalista de Saussure. Finalmente, reflete-se sobre a pertinência de abordar comentários metalinguísticos que tematizam a condição do falante, o que pode configurar o objeto de uma teorização enunciativo-antropológica.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Comentário; Tradução; Estruturalismo; Discurso; Antropologia da enunciação

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Introduction

In a book that is a kind of sequel to the monumental *Poética do Traduzir*[1] (1999) [Poetics of Translating] – *Éthique et politique du traduire* (2007) [Ethics and Politics of Translating] – Henri Meschonnic (1932-2009) reproduces, almost at the end, a passage, present in the "conclusion" to "Chapter One – Rabelais in the History of Laughter" in *Rabelais and His World*,[2] in which Mikhail Bakhtin comments on the Russian translation of François Rabelais' work (1494-1553) by the great translator Nicolai Liubimov (1912-1992). Let's read the passage; it's long but necessary:

> In conclusion we wish to say a few words about N. M. Ljnbimov's translation. The publication of this work is an important event. We may say that the Russian public has read Rabelais for the first time, has heard for the first time his laughter. Though the novel was translated into Russian as early as the eighteenth century, these earlier versions presented only excerpts; the originality and wealth of Rabelais' language were not even approximately rendered. This is an exceptionally difficult task. It was even said that Rabelais was untranslatable-an opinion shared by A. N. Veselovsky. Therefore, among all the classics of world literature Rabelais alone did not penetrate into the sphere of Russian culture, as did Shakespeare and Cervantes, for example. This was a serious gap since it was in him that the great world of comic folk culture was revealed. Now, thanks to Ljubimov's remarkable, almost completely adequate translation, Rabelais has begun to speak in Russian, with his unique familiarity and spontaneity, with his immeasurable depth, with his comic imagery. It would be impossible to overestimate the importance of this event (Bakhtin, 1984, pp. 143-144).[3]

Meschonnic (2007, pp. 176-177; authors' translation) is clear in saying: "I love to quote this passage;"[4] and this is because it allows the great translator and linguist to illustrate, with what he calls "a parable,"[5] "the war of the poem against the sign."[6] In

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[1] The original publication is mentioned in the body of the article; however, it's fair to say that there is a Brazilian translation of the work by Jerusa Pires Ferreira and Suely Fenerich (cf. References). In recognition of the excellent work done by the translators, the Brazilian version has been used. The original edition was also consulted.

[2] BAKHTIN, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Translated by Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1984.

[3] See footnote 2.

[4] In the original: "J'aime citer ce passage."

[5] In the original: "une parabole."

[6] In the original: "la guerre du poème contre le signe."

other words, for Meschonnic, this means thinking of *langue* as something of the order of the continuous, of discourse (of the poem), and not of the sign, of the discontinuous. Inspired by Wilhelm von Humboldt, Ferdinand de Saussure, and Émile Benveniste, Meschonnic outlines a theory of *parole* that emphasizes rhythm, historicity, and alterity. A critical theory in which the political has a central place.

In this sense, Bakhtin's quote above is of special interest in this case, because Meschonnic is quoting it in a context in which he is defending an anti-structuralist reading of Saussure, that is, in favor of a Saussure affiliated to *discourse* and not to *langue* as an abstract entity, which allows Meschonnic (2007, p. 175; authors' translation) to defend a conception of translation – and of the treatment of *parole* in general – that takes into account "another point of view, that of the continuous, the body-*parole* continuous, rhythm-syntax-prosody, the continuous of a serial semantics that shows that the sign is only a representation, and a representation that conceals and prevents people from thinking the continuous."[7]

These initial observations are enough to bring up the point that interests here: the fact that Meschonnic presents Bakhtin's "comment"[8] as an illustration of a perspective on *parole* that resonates with Saussure is not something trivial to approach translation. Assuming that Meschonnic's gesture is correct – and the authors believe it is – it could be said that Meschonnic's reading of Saussure allows him to assume that Bakhtin operates with a view on *parole* that, at least in part, is consistent with the Saussurian perspective, and that this is shown, for example, in the passage quoted above.

This is interesting, to say the least, because it opens up the possibility of relating the authors less by what appears textually in their writings (for example, some criticism of Saussure that appears in Bakhtinian[9] work) and more by the fact that they both *deal*

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[7] In the original: "Un autre point de vue, le continu corps-langage, rythme-syntax-prosodie, le continu d'une sémantique sérielle montre que le signe n'est qu'une représentation, et une représentation qui cache et empêche de penser le continu."

[8] The notion of "comment" will be discussed later; for now, the quotation marks are enough to emphasize that the word is used here in a far from usual sense.

[9] On the presence of Saussure in Bakhtin's thought, it is worth reading Brait's study (2016, p. 95), which seeks to focus on "some of the moments in which M. Bakhtin evokes Saussure and his ideas to advance his arguments on a dialogical theory/analysis of *parole*" [In Portuguese: "alguns dos momentos em que M. Bakhtin evoca Saussure e suas ideias para avançar seus argumentos sobre uma teoria/análise dialógica da linguagem"]. The author shows, in a very perceptive way, that Saussure does not appear in Bakhtin "as a mere object of rejection, but as a necessary epistemological counterpoint to the constitution of Bakhtinian argumentation" (Brait, 2016, p. 96) [In Portuguese: "como mero objeto de rejeição, mas como

with questions of the same order. In other words, Meschonnic's idea – in his study of the Saussure-Bakhtin relationship – according to which one author can be in continuity with another without necessarily implying a bibliographical reference (Flores, 2023b).

Meschonnic makes this idea explicit by stating, with regard to the Humboldt-Saussure-Benveniste relationship, the following: "a thought of Humboldt can be recognized where an affiliation is not expressly claimed. Thus, it seems to me that such a thought passes through Saussure and Benveniste. *To think Humboldt is not necessarily to refer to Humboldt*"[10] (Meschonnic, 1995, pp. 16-17; authors' emphasis and translation). Or again, specifically about Humboldt-Saussure: "Contrary to this representation by structuralism, I would say that there is a continuity between Humboldt and Saussure"[11] (Meschonnic, 1995, p. 20; authors' translation). Finally, in the *Poética do traduzir*, he says: "Saussure is in continuity with Humboldt in his thinking of value, functioning (which involves the speaking subject) and radical historicity" (Meschonnic, 2010, p. 209).[12]

Well understood, this article is precisely about using this idea that *a thought can be recognized where an affiliation is not expressly claimed* in support of there being a Saussure-Bakhtin relationship that goes beyond some explicit mention, which concerns thinking about *parole* and the *langue* from a point of view that implies *questions of the same order*. This objective determines the sequence of what follows: firstly, in general terms, the perspective of Meschonnic's anti-structuralist reading of Saussure; then, returning to Bakhtin's "comment" to situate in it *this thought of the same order* that can be seen in Saussure-Bakhtin; and finally, some consequences of the path taken here.

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contraponto epistemológico necessário à constituição da argumentação bakhtiniana"]. This idea of "epistemological counterpoint" seems to be very productive as an operator for reading theories and, it is believed, is in line with how is approached here the relationship Saussure-Bakhtin.

[10] In the original: "une pensée Humboldt peut se reconnaître là où une filiation n'est pas expressément revendiquée. Ainsi il me semble qu'une telle pensée passe par Saussure et par Benveniste. Penser Humboldt n'est pas nécessairement se référer à Humboldt."

[11] In the original: "Au contraire de cette représentation située par le structuralisme, je dirais qu'il y a une continuité entre Humboldt et Saussure."

[12] In Portuguese: "Saussure está em continuidade com Humboldt por um pensamento do valor, do funcionamento (que passa pelo sujeito falante) e da historicidade radical."

1 An Anti-Structuralist Saussure

Many were the authors – in the history of linguistics – who spoke out against the idea of a structuralist Saussure;[13] not a few also saw in the Saussurian theses present in the *Course in General Linguistics* (CGL)[14] the origin of the movement that determined a large part of human sciences studies in the 20th century. The complexity of what is at stake here can be illustrated by Benveniste's words (1971, p. 79; author's emphasis):[15]

> The principle of "structure" as a topic for study was asserted a little before 1930 by a small group of linguists who proposed to react thus against the exclusively historical concept of language, against a linguistics that broke language down into isolated elements and was engaged in following the changes that took place in them. It is agreed that this movement had its origin in the teachings of Ferdinand de Saussure at Geneva, as they were put into writing by his students and published under the title *Cours de linguistique generale*.

Benveniste, at first, recognizes Saussure's founding place for structuralism in linguistics; however, he does not fully subscribe to this perspective:

> Saussure is rightly called the precursor of modern structuralism. He certainly was, except for the term. It is important to note, for exactitude in describing this movement of ideas which must not be simplified, that Saussure never used the word "structure" in any sense whatever. In his eyes, the essential notion was *system.* In that was the novelty of his doctrine, in the idea -so full of implications that it took a long time to perceive and develop-that language forms a system[16] (Benveniste, 1971, p. 79; author's emphasis).[17]

Benveniste's sharpness of mind is decisive in establishing a correct reading of the situation: Saussure can even be seen as a precursor of structuralism, that is, his ideas

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[13] The author refers to Flores (2023a).

[14] SAUSSURE, Ferdinand. *Course in General Linguistics*. Edited and annotated by Roy Harris. London and New York: Bloombury, 2013.

[15] BENVENISTE, Émile. "Structure" in Linguistics. *In*: BENVENISTE, Émile. *Problems of General Linguistics*. Translated by Mary Elizabeth Meek, Miami: University of Miami Press, 1971.

[16] The excerpt quoted from Benveniste contains a note, of no. 5, which reads: "Precursor of the phonology of Prague and of modern structuralism" (B. Malmberg, "Saussure et la phonetique moderne," *Cahiers F. de Saussure* 12 [1954]: 17). See also A. J. Greimas, "L'actualité du saussurisme," *Le français modern, 1956,* pp. 191ff. Benveniste takes B. Malmberg's statement directly.

[17] See footnote 14.

may have influenced the movement in some way, but it is important to safeguard that Saussure's "novelty of doctrine" is not the *structure*, but the *system*. It was 1962 and Benveniste had already lucidly outlined the supposed Saussurian origin of structuralism in these terms.

Decades after Benveniste's analysis, another major linguist, Jean-Claude Milner,[18] announced: "structuralism was not wrong in believing that it came from the *Course*, but it is not in the *Course*"[19] (Milner, 2002, p. 19; author's emphasis and translation).

The question here is not whether or not Saussure is a structuralist, or whether or not his theory was the basis of structuralism. To a certain extent, in the context of specialized Saussurian philology, this problem has already been debated in depth and from different perspectives.[20] The answers seem to endorse the words of both Benveniste and Milner.

However, the real point is to think about the effects that a radically anti-structuralist reading of Saussure can produce. It is these effects that make it possible to place Saussure-Bakhtin in relation. And, in this sense, it must be recognized that Meschonnic was one of the first and most consistent voices. Between the decades that separate Benveniste's statements from Milner's, there is Meschonnic,[21] who, as early as 1975, in a work whose title is emblematic – *Le signe et le poème* [Sign and Poem] –, acutely stated:

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[18] The text by Milner that is recalled here was originally published, with restricted circulation, in 1994, in number 12 of *Lettres sur tous les sujets*, and republished, with revisions, in *Le périple structural*, in 2002.

[16] In the original: "le structuralisme n'avait pas tort de se croire issu du *Cours*, mais il n'est pas dans le *Cours*."

[20] For an analysis of Saussure's thought as it appears in authors such as Andrè Martinet, Louis Hjelmslev, Émile Benveniste and Roman Jakobson, see Toutain (2012).

[21] Naturally, this is not to say that Meschonnic is the first to support a anti-structuralist reading of Saussure. As Puech (2005, p. 105) rightly points out, "it would certainly be necessary to return to the elements of "disagreement" that emerged on the margins of French structuralism in an independent but convergent way, whether on the part of historians of linguistics (such as Normand, for example, in 1970, ed. 1978), or the part of a poet like H. Meschonnic, or from still other horizons (discovery of anagrams by Starobinski, of manuscripts by Godel, Engler...): from different points of view, they always relativize – even oppose – the weight of Saussurianism in the formation of a reductive structuralism, shifting the center of gravity of C. L. G from the theory of the sign (and its arbitrariness) to the theory of value." The interest lies in Meschonnic's view of the Saussure-Bakhtin relationship, which includes his rejection of the structuralist label attributed to Saussure.

> Structuralism is one of the roles that Saussure plays in the theory of *parole*. But Saussure is not reduced to that. Not only because his theory is being revisited as a work in progress, which could only be a step backwards, but because it is not reduced to an effect of its history. Its relevance is renewed, as evidenced by certain polemics (Meschonnic, 1975, p. 208, authors' translation). [22]

Meschonnic distances himself from any connection between Saussure and structuralism. He tirelessly reiterates that his poetics is Saussurian, but antagonistic to structuralism. Like Benveniste, Meschonnic favors the idea of a *system*, "a set of internal differentials, radically historical, unlike the structuralist and semiotic *structure*, which treats pairs of reciprocal implication as pairs of mutual exclusion, in Saussure" (Meschonnic, 2010, p. XXXI; authors' emphasis).[23] For him, linguistic and especially literary structuralism represented a prolonged misinterpretation of Saussure; confusing *system* with *structure*: "the non-differing between system and structure remains the reigning opinion" (Meschonnic, 2010, p. 59).[24] For this reason, his poetic theory of *parole* "is Saussurian, but anti-structuralist. Linguistic and, above all, literary structuralism has long been a contradiction with regard to Saussure" (Meschonnic, 2010, p. XXXII).[25]

There is also a fundamental element: Meschonnic's Saussure is the founder of thinking about *discourse* (Flores, 2019a and 2023a). Meschonnic is right because Saussure's theory of linguistic value is a point of view that provides a broad view of the organization of meaning of *langue*(s) and their existence in discourse. It can be said that Saussure has a point of view on meaning that requires discourse to be considered, that is, the *langue* that is significant only, and only for the speakers. This is how Saussure's question in the famous, "Note on discourse," included in the *Writings in General*

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[22] In the original: "Le structuralisme est l'un des rôles que joue Saussure dans la théorie du langage. Saussure ne s'y ramène pas. Non seulement parce que l'on revient à sa théorie comme à une théorie en cours, ce qui pourrait n'être qu'un recul, mais parce qu'il ne se réduit pas à un effet qui a eu son histoire. Sa pertinence se renouvelle, c'est que prouvent certaines polémiques."

[23] In Portuguese: "um conjunto de diferenciais internos, radicalmente históricos, à diferença da estrutura estruturalista e semiótica, que trata como pares de exclusão mútua os pares de implicação recíproca, em Saussure."

[24] In Portuguese: "a indiferenciação entre sistema e estrutura continua a ser a opinião reinante."

[25] In Portuguese: "é saussuriana, mas antiestruturalista. O estruturalismo linguístico e sobretudo literário terá sido um longo contrassenso a respeito de Saussure."

Linguistics,[26] can be interpreted: "and what allows us to say that a language system *enters into action as discourse* at any given moment"?[27] (Saussure, 2008, p. 197; authors' emphasis and translation).[28] It's worth repeating: discourse is *langue* in action: "System, value, functioning, and the radically arbitrary, radically historical, are thinkable in their relationship from *langue* to discourse" (Meschonnic, 2010, p. XXXII).[29]

This approach reveals what the structuralist view of Saussure concealed: his theory is a semantics that does not dissociate form and meaning, that refuses to separate the levels of linguistic analysis into watertight levels, that goes against the compartmentalization of *langue*, lexicon, syntax, and morphology. Saussure's linguistic theory is a set theory, in which meaning is only real when speakers are involved.

Saussure's theory is thus characterized by being an integral approach, which emphasizes the inseparability between lexicon, grammar, and discourse. This perspective extends to a semantic understanding of each linguistic element, based on the theory of *linguistic value*. The value theory outlines linguistics that centralizes meaning, resulting in the formation of a semantic object.

In this context, phonology, morphology, and syntax are not meaningless. Each level of linguistic analysis, each unit, and each element of a *langue* is imbued with meaning, which permeates each component of the *langue*, giving it a distinction while simultaneously connecting it to the whole of which it is a part. In Saussure, this interconnection is only fully perceived in the context of discourse. And this Saussure is not a structuralist.

On this point, Meschonnic's critique is powerful and worth revisiting time and time again:

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[26] SAUSSURE, Ferdinand. *Writings in General Linguistics*. Translated into English by Carol Sanders and Matthew Pires with assistance of Peter Figueroa. Introduced by Carol Sanders. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

[27] See footnote 26.

[28] For a discussion on this topic see *Saussure e a tradução* (Flores, 2021) [Saussure and the Translation], especially the "*Apêndice – Pequena nota a respeito da 'Nota sobre o discurso'*" [Appendix – Simple note on 'Notes on Discourse'].
The author refers to Flores (2021).

[29] In Portuguese: "Sistema, valor, funcionamento, e o radicalmente arbitrário, radicalmente histórico, são pensáveis na sua relação da língua ao discurso."

the recent history of *parole* thinking has been written so that Saussure is not difficult. This is a limiting example since it is at the edge of the ideological visible, which illustrates the extent to which the structuralist grid has fabricated a false ease of Saussure. With its educational effects. It masks the difficulty of value by a non-Saussurian primacy of meaning. It masks the arbitrary by convention. One by one, it covers up Saussure's fruitful unfinishings under the permanence of a sign and a nature that are, concerning him, a double regression (Meschonnic, 2010, p. 176).[30]

Towards the end of his career, Meschonnic (2005) made explicit his preference for the "Saussure of the *Writings*" over the "Saussure of the *Course*":

the recently discovered *Writings in general linguistics,* Writings in general linguistics allow us to read another Saussure than the one in Bally and Sechehaye's *Course* (1916), another than the one in *Godel's Sources* (1957), and another than the one in Engler's critical edition (1967-1974). He is a thinker of the primacy of discourse that we discover, before Benveniste and in another way (Meschonnic, 2005, p, 10, authors' emphasis and translation). [31]

In this Saussure, Meschonnic sees a better delineation of a Saussurian thought absolutely dependent on the notions of *point of view*, *discourse*, and *systematic* (the system). In Meschonnic's eyes, there is a Saussure in the *Writings* who is free from the bonds of structuralism.

Finally, in *Éthique et politique du traduire* (2007) – the work from aforementioned – Meschonnic establishes a kind of testament to his anti-structuralist reading of Saussure, which makes him see a Saussure of the continuous, who does not split up *langue* (the traditional division between lexicon, morphology and syntax); a Saussure of discourse and not of the sign; a Saussure far removed from the notions of

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[30] In Portuguese: "a história recente do pensamento da linguagem foi escrita de tal maneira que Saussure não passa por difícil. Exemplo limite, já que está no limite do visível ideológico, que ilustra o quanto a grade estruturalista fabricou uma falsa facilidade de Saussure. Com seus efeitos escolares. Ela mascara a dificuldade do valor por um primado não saussuriano do sentido. Mascara o arbitrário pela convenção. Um a um recobre os inacabamentos fecundos de Saussure sob a permanência de um signo e de uma natureza que são em relação a ele uma dupla regressão."

[31] In the original: "Les *Écrits de linguistique générale* récemment découverts permettent de lire un autre Saussure que celui du *Cours* de Bally et Séchehaye (1916), un autre que celui des *Sources* de Godel (1957), et que celui de l'édition critique d'Engler (1967-1974). C'est un penseur du primat du discours qu'on découvre, avant Benveniste et autrement."

langue and *sign*, which are the key concepts of structuralism. He does this by listing nine contradictions that oppose Saussure to structuralism:[32]

> 1. where Saussure says *system* (dynamic notion), structuralism says *structure* (formal and ahistorical notion);
> 2. where he says that everything is a point of view, structuralism presents itself as describing the nature of *parole*;
> 3. where Saussure has an entirely deductive systematization of the theory of *parole*, structuralism makes descriptive sciences of *parole*;
> 4. Saussure thinks of the unity of *langue*-speech as discourse, while structuralism practiced a dichotomy between *langue* and speech;
> 5. Saussure's theory of *parole* also posits a poetics, while structuralism sees only the opposition between the rationalism of the *Course* and the madness of the Anagrams;
> 6. in Saussure, the multiple associative is opposed to the syntagmatic, and structuralism made the binary opposition of the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic;
> 7. for Saussure, the radically arbitrary sign is a radical historicity, but structuralism understood arbitrariness as conventionality;
> 8. for Saussure, diachrony-synchrony is a single history in movement, solidarity, and structuralism saw an exclusive opposition of diachrony, understood as history, movement, to synchronicity, the state of *langue*;
> 9. Finally, instead of criticizing the traditional divisions (lexicon, morphology, syntax) in Saussure, structuralism was the thought of the dichotomies of the sign, the discontinuous (Meschonnic, 2007, pp. 51-52, author's emphasis and translation). [33]

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[32] Meschonnic (2007, p. 51, author's emphasis) frames the contradictions in this way: " in *parole*, is the *langue* opposed to discourse. The paradox of the notion of *langue* is that it prevents us from thinking about discourse. Therefore, the notion of *langue* and the notion of *meaning* prevent us from thinking about *parole*. The *sign* prevents us from thinking about *parole*! This confirms the whole structuralism of the 20th century, which adds its scientism to the cultural heritage of more than two years, since Plato, with the confusion maintained and still taught between Saussure and structuralism, while I list nine contradictions that radically oppose structuralism to Saussure and I list them."
In the original:
"Dans le langage, c'est la langue opposée au discours. Le paradoxe de la notion de la langue est qu'elle empêche de penser le discours. Donc la notion de *langue* et la notion de *sens* empêchent de penser le langage. Le *signe* empêche de penser le langage! Ce que confirme tout le structuralisme du XXᵉ siècle ajoutant son scientisme à l'héritage culturel depuis plus de deux mille ans depuis Platon, avec la confusion entretenue et encore endeignée entre Saussure et le structuralisme, alors que je compte neuf contresens qui opposent radicalement le structuralisme à Saussure, et je les compte."
[33] In the original: "1. là où Saussure dit *système* (notion dynamique), le structuralisme dit *structure* (notion formelle et ahistorique); 2. là où il dit tout est point de vue, le structuralisme se présente comme décrivant la nature du langage; 3. là où Saussure a une systématicité toute déductive de la théorie du langage, le structuralisme fait des sciences du langage descriptives; 4. Saussure pense l'unité langue-parole, comme discours, et le structuralisme a pratiqué une dichotomie entre la langue et la parole; 5. aussi, chez Saussure, la théorie du langage postule une poétique, alors que le structuralisme n'a vu que l'opposition entre le rationalisme du *Cours* et la folie des Anagrammes; 6. chez Saussure, l'associatif multiple est opposé au syntagme et le structuralisme a fait l'opposition binaire du paradigmatique au syntagmatique; 7. pour Saussure, le signe radicalement arbitraire est une historicité radicale, mais le structuralisme a compris l'arbitraire comme un conventionnalisme; 8. pour Saussure, la diachronie-synchronie est une seule histoire en mouvement, une solidarité, et le structuralisme a vu une opposition exclusive de la diachronie, comprise comme l'histoire, le mouvement, à la synchronie, l'état de langue; 9.

The previous quote is admittedly lengthy, but its inclusion here is crucial. The reader must have access to the extent of Meschonnic's thinking about Saussure to realize that, for him, Saussure is, above all, the pioneer of a linguistic theory that establishes a perspective that has yet to be fully understood. Meschonnic's work offers several reasons to revisit Saussure, from different perspectives and interests. Specialized Saussurian philology has played a significant role in "reviving" Saussure's ideas, and an extensive range of manuscript sources has already been thoroughly examined. This context should be enough to question any preconceived view of Saussure. And it is this anti-structuralist Saussure that is illustrated with Bakhtin's passage on the translation of Rabelais in *Éthique et politique du traduire* (Meschonnic, 2007).

2 Saussure-Bakhtin – A Thought of the Same Order

Let's start this section by making an observation: Meschonnic knows Bakhtin's work in detail. He dedicates a study to the Russian philosopher, for example, in *Pour la poétique II* (1973) [In Favor of Poetics II], in which he highlights five points of Bakhtinian work: the relationship between poetics and history; carnival and ambivalence; dialogism; translinguistics; the notion of genre (Meschonnic, 1973, p. 191). Or in the voluminous *Critique du rythme* (1982) [Criticism to Rhythm], in a revival of the critique of monologism in literature (Meschonnic, 1982, pp. 447-457). The passage from Bakhtin that was quoted at the beginning of this article is evoked more than once by Meschonnic, as in *Poetics of translation* (2010, p. LXI). But, as mentioned, it is in *Éthique et politique du traduire* that Meschonnic mentions it following his anti-structuralist interpretation of Saussure.

However, before returning to Bakhtin's passage in the light of Saussure, it is important to clarify the epistemological terms in which this is done. What follows is neither a genealogy of concepts, nor an attempt to determine a Saussure-Bakhtin historiography, nor even to propose any inheritance or similarity of reasoning. The

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et enfin au lieu de la critique des divisions traditionnelles (lexique, morphologie, syntaxe) chez Saussure, le structuralisme a été la pensée des dichotomies du signe, le discontinu."

purpose is more modest: it is to see that both, as great thinkers, mobilized *questions of the same order* regarding *langue/parole*. This is how it is understood: there is an unspoken affiliation that is articulated around the same order of problems. And what problem are Saussure and Bakhtin dealing with that is made explicit in the passage quoted from Bakhtin on the translation of Rabelais? This is the "notion" of *parole* that is mobilized to talk about it; in other words, whenever talking about *parole* (or *langue*), it is done based on a conception – conscious or not – of what *parole* and *langue* are. In the case of the passage quoted from Bakhtin, it is the phenomenon of translation that is focused on and, through it, it is the whole of *parole* (and *langue*) that is summoned to appear. Let's explain.

"Translating implies a representation of the *parole*" says Meschonnic (2007, p. 175; authors' translation).[34] This representation can be that of the closed sign, the discontinuous, or that of the discourse, the continuous (of the poem) for example.

Returning to Bakhtin's passage: there, reading that Liubimov's translation "is an important event;" that, with Liubimov's translation, "the Russian public has read Rabelais for the first time" and "has heard for the first time his laughter;" that "these earlier versions presented only excerpts; the originality and wealth of Rabelais' language were not even approximately rendered;" that it was even thought that "Rabelais was untranslatable;" that, for the first time, "Rabelais has begun to speak in Russian;" that the Russian reader had access to "his unique familiarity and spontaneity, with his immeasurable dept, this his comic imagery;" for all these reasons, Liubimov's translation was an event of which importance was "impossible to evaluate" (Bakhtin, 1984, pp. 143-144).[35]

Firstly, Bakhtin's comment illustrates the understanding that there is a "representation," a starting point, a notion, from which *parole* (and *langue*) are examined. Secondly, Bakhtin realizes that Rabelais' work requires the translator to recognize what is "inventive" in Rabelais' work, and it is this perception that allows Rabelais to "speak" in translation to the Russian reader. Thirdly, Bakhtin assumes that, in order for Rabelais to be translated, he must "speak" to the Russians, that is, he must recognize them as effective speakers of their *langue*.

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[34] In the original: "traduire suppose une représentation du langage."
[35] See footnote 2.

In Bakhtin's statements, Meschonnic's anti-structuralist Saussure operates. The *langue* that "is only created in view of discourse" (Saussure, 2002, p. 277; author's translation)[36] – an explicit statement by Saussure in the "Note on discourse" – decisively implies a notion of a *parole* set. This approach no longer allows *parole* to be conceived, according to structuralist principles, based on the dichotomy between *langue* and speech, nor even with the assumption that *langue* can be isolated from the activity of the speaking subject. The systems of *langue* can only be seen as a set, as "discursive *langue*": "Although determining the elements of a word requires analysis, the word itself is not a product of analysis of the sentence. This is because the sentence exists only in speech, in discursive language, whereas the word is a living entity in the mental storehouse, outside of any discourse" (Saussure, 2008, p. 81).[37] It is the idea that *langue* is the speaking subject itself – "The first formulation of the real situation would be to state that langue (or rather the speaking subject) [...]" (Saussure, 2008, p. 22)[38] – that leads Saussure to think of *langue* as an activity and not as a finished product.

To a certain extent, a Saussurian perspective on discourse emphasizes that each speech act represents an action that mobilizes a potential system which is revealed in each verbal expression. *Langue*, previously conceived as an abstract system by structuralism, is now understood as the use by individuals, by speakers, of the mechanisms that constitute *langue*. *Langue* is the speaker's discourse. This system, present in each individual's activity, implements a network of concepts made up of values, constructed through relations of opposition and difference, syntagmatically and associatively, in synchrony. Discourse emerges as the expression that encapsulates this complexity.

Taking into account the idea that *langue is created in view of discourse*, it is imperative to recognize that, in the act of translation, one starts from discourse to reach another discourse. The translator outlines a discourse in a different *langue*, starting from a discourse. From this process emerges a remarkably important conclusion: the translator, as a speaking subject, identifies in the discourse the presence of other that, like him, is a speaker.

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[36] No original: "La langue n'est créée qu'en vue du discours."
[37] See footnote 26.
[38] See footnote 26.

This is what Meschonnic sees in Bakhtin's passage: a Saussure of discourse. In other words, "only discourses are translated" (Meschonnic, 2007, p. 177; author's translation) [39] and not *langue*. Moving from one alterity to another. As it turns out, understanding what a translation is depends on our understanding of *parole*.

Conclusion

Returning to what was done, the author hopes to have shown in what sense it is possible to see that there is a treatment of questions of the same order between two authors, without this necessarily implying the claim of an "explicit affiliation." The discussion about the differences and similarities between Saussure and Bakhtin[40] on an explicitly epistemological level is well-known in the specialized literature. However, to shift the focus to another area, and based on Meschonnic, their conception of *parole* is highlighted by the possibility of examining the Saussure-Bakhtin relationship. It is in this context that both authors operate with very similar principles, as long as one considers an anti-structuralist Saussure.

Finally, there is something to be said about the "commentary itself," represented here by Bakhtin's passage on the Russian translation of Rabelais.

Over the last few years, the conception of an Anthropology of Enunciation has been progressively developed (Flores, 2019a), a theoretical-methodological construct dedicated to the analysis of linguistic phenomena, such as translation, *langue* learning and *parole* acquisition, etc. This approach considers the speaker's *experience* expressed in *comments*, reports and narratives, with the aim of addressing the speaker's experience of his condition as a speaker. This implies an approach of an enunciative nature, seeking to understand human nature as a speaker that emerges from this experience, characterizing it as an anthropological approach.

The core material of this linguistic approach as an anthropological reflection lies in the natural hermeneutics (*commentary*) that each individual produces about his condition as a speaker when experiencing phenomena in which he is involved as such.

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[39] No original: "on ne traduit que des discours."
[40] At some point, the ideas of both authors were also explored with a view to this discussion (cf. Flores, 2002).

Taking Bakhtin's commentary on his experience of the translation of Rabelais as an example, it can be noted that he outlines an *outline of meaning* – an interpretation – that focuses on his relationship with this translation. In other words, the commentary (of a metalinguistic nature) that delineates an *outline of meaning* is the category that provides access to the anthropological-enunciative study, by situating knowledge about the speaker with his condition as a speaker, as in the case of Bakhtin, a Russian speaker, when he states that Rabelais, with Liubimov's translation, began to speak Russian.

The expression "*langue* in man," an inversion of the title of the fifth part of Émile Benveniste's book *Problems of General Linguistics* (1988; 1989), summarizes the speaker's experience concerning his condition as a speaker. The approach to major linguistic phenomena, such as translation, based on consideration of the speaker's experience, highlights the constitutive presence of *langue* in them.

In this way, the principle of "*langue* in man" leads to an implicit anthropology, accessible through the speaker's experience of his condition, leading us to conceive of the speaker as a kind of ethnographer (Flores, 2015) of his own linguistic experience. Constantly, through this "natural ethnography," the speaker thematizes his position about the fact that *langue* is constitutive of his identity as a speaker.

Interest in these "metalinguistic comments" has provided a field of reflection that opens up an investigation that places the speaker at the center of the discussion, something that has not been commonplace in linguistic studies. Bakhtin's comment analyzed here highlights something that is not always remembered: the person who studies *parole* – the linguist – is also a speaker. The observation made by Bakhtin is undoubtedly a technical analysis, but it is also a speaker's perception. This is the paradox: it's always about the speaker's relationship with *langue*, regardless of whether that speaker is, in some circumstances, a linguist, a *parole* scholar, or a philosopher. This idea, if developed, could have considerable heuristic significance.

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Research Data and Other Materials Availability

The contents underlying the research text are included in the manuscript.

Reviews

Due to the commitment assumed by *Bakhtiniana*. Revista de Estudos do Discurso [*Bakhtiniana*. Journal of Discourse Studies] to Open Science, this journal only publishes reviews that have been authorized by all involved.

Review I

The title of the article summarizes the proposal to analyze Bakhtin's theory of Saussure's linguistic theory, based on Henri Meschonnic's comment that one author can be linked to another without any explicit affiliation between them. To support his work, Saussure's theory is revisited to highlight the linguist's assumptions about the social character of language as a means of interaction between human beings in social life.

This is the starting point that is highlighted to demonstrate a relational aspect between the two perspectives which have different theoretical objectives. The arguments highlighted for demonstration are well-founded and consistent with the proposal suggested in the title. The writing clearly explains the point of view adopted in the article, making use of authors who support the point of view defended. The interest and originality of the article are due to the discussion regarding the radical opposition between the two theorists, due to the position defended by Bakhtin and the Circle regarding the limits that descriptive linguistics presents concerning the social context of enunciative production and reception. The objectives of each theoretical strand are different, although they have in common the social principle of the functioning of language as a means of communication. APPROVED

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Review II

The article, based on a quote from M. Bakhtin by H. Meschonnic, at the end of the first chapter of The Popular Culture in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: the context of François Rabelais, seeks to defend there being a Saussure-Bakhtin relationship that goes beyond some explicit mention, which concerns thinking about *parole* and the *langue* from a point of view that implies *questions of the same order*." (f. 4). The first section, "An Anti-Structuralist Saussure," shows, with the support of an article by B. Brait, how Meschonnic sees "Anti-Structuralism" in Saussure, based on the edition of the manuscripts published in 2002 in *Écrits de linguistique générale* (also using the English translation). He concludes by saying: "[...] This context should be enough to question any preconceived view of Saussure. And it is this anti-structuralist Saussure that is illustrated with Bakhtin's passage on the translation of Rabelais in *Éthique et politique du traduire* (Meschonnic, 2007)." The second section, "Saussure-Bakhtin – A Thought of the Same Order," discusses the aim of the article, analyzing what is proposed: "The purpose is more modest: it is to see that both, as great thinkers, mobilized *questions of the same order* regarding *langue/parole*." (f. 10), finally stating that "[...] Meschonnic sees in Bakhtin's passage: a Saussure of discourse" (f. 12). Finally, in the Conclusion, it is stated "[...] the authors hope to have shown in what sense it is possible to see that there is, between two authors, a treatment of questions of the same order without this necessarily implying the claim of an 'explicit affiliation.'" (f. 13), going on to say: "It is in this context that both authors operate with very similar principles, as long as one considers an anti-structuralist Saussure." (f. 13). Therefore, one is reminded of "[...] the 'commentary itself', represented here by Bakhtin's passage on the Russian translation of Rabelais" (f. 13), referring to "the conception of an Anthropology of Enunciation," an approach that "considers the speaker's experience expressed in comments, reports, and narratives, to address the speaker's experience of his condition as a speaker" (f. 13). The conclusion is: "Bakhtin's observation contains a technical analysis, no doubt, but also a perception of the speaker. This is our paradox: it is always the relationship between the speaker and the language that is dealt with [i.e. "the language in the man," with an

inversion of Benveniste's expression "The man in the language" which doesn't have the same meaning], although this speaker, in some circumstances, is a linguist, a *parole* scholar, a philosopher." (f. 14).

From the above, it can be seen: 1) that the title of the article is appropriate; 2) that the objective of the work is clear and that there is coherence with the argumentation of the text; 3) that, by the proposed theory, knowledge of the theoretical framework cited is demonstrated; 4) that the reflection is original, even if it does not bring a new contribution to the field of knowledge; 5) that there is clarity in the narrative and that the use of language is compatible with scientific work, however, some problems were noted in writing in the last revision.

The article has some problems, certainly due to a review.

1) Right at the start, there is a need to clarify the exact location of the Bakhtin passage used by Meschonnic, the starting point of the argument. It is the "conclusion" to "Chapter One – Rabelais in the History of Laughter," which is not clear enough in the text.

2) On f. 4, concerning the title of the section, it is worth remembering that Saussure is not a structuralist, but neither is he "against structuralism" (i.e. anti-structuralist, as indicated by the prefix anti-, a term used by Meschonnic). A modest question: wouldn't it be better to say anti-structuralist, as is written on f. 13, below?

3) On f. 5, the excerpt quoted from Benveniste has a note, of n. 5, which reads: "Precursor of the phonology of Prague and of modern structuralism" (B. Malmberg, "Saussure et la phonetique moderne," Cahiers F. de Saussure 12 [1954]: 17). See also A. J. Greimas, "L'actualite du saussurisme," Le français modern, 1956, pp. 191ff. Benveniste takes B. Malmberg's statement directly.

4) On f. 6, it is written about the widespread belief that F. Saussure is a structuralist: "Among us, in Brazil, however, the subject can still be further explored. Proof of this is the vast didactic bibliography which, in a not infrequently uncritical manner, is content to state that Saussure is a structuralist." It seems out of place in the context of this article. The question then arises: What does this statement have to do with the purpose of the article?

5) Also on f. 6, in n. 15, the work by C. Normand (?) cited does not appear in the References.

6) Regarding the Note on discourse (Note sur le discours, pp. 275-277), it is worth noting that in the "Note sur le discours," this is actually the second question that F. de Saussure asks, after having stated: "La langue n'est crée qu'en vue du discours [...]" (2002, p. 277), i. e: "Language is only created because of discourse [...]" (2004, p. 237). In the third paragraph, he defines discourse (2002, p. 277; 2004, p. 237).

7) On f. 9, at n. 21, unlike other points, the original text is not included, only the translation.

8) On f. 10, L. 20, there is no date (cf. NBR 10520).

9) In addition to punctuation flaws and the obligatory placement of the pronoun enclisis. APPROVED

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Review III

The text is a very productive discussion of a (theoretically unlikely) relationship between Saussure and Bakhtin. Following in Meschonnic's footsteps, one reads an anti-structuralist Saussure, a Saussure of discourse, a Saussure of the Writings, and in this way the approach to the Russian thinker is made. The theoretical basis is consistent in presenting the line of reasoning. At times, Benveniste is used to help with the conceptual links, and the author does so with skill. The title is significant because it clearly sets the scene. The reader already knows what they're going to find. The language is clear and accessible, but not superficial. On the contrary, it raises questions, arguments, and conclusions in depth. This is a valuable text for readers who want to deconstruct the static image of the Saussure of the *CLG* and establish dynamic dialogues with Bakhtin. The study of language gains from this discussion. APPROVED

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