

The Emergence of a Dialogic Perspective on Language on the Boundary between Language and Literature / *A emergência, nas fronteiras entre língua e literatura, de uma perspectiva dialógica de linguagem*

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ABSTRACT

This text aims to reflect on some aspects of the relationship between *language* and *literature*, *linguistic studies* and *literary studies*. More specifically, it focuses on the means by which this relationship is present in Bakhtin's thought, being directly connected to issues related to *dialogue* and *dialogism*, which traverse and single out the works of the Bakhtin Circle. In this train of thought, it is possible to testify that this relationship between language and literature is discussed, explored and problematized not solely in the works explicitly signed by Mikhail Bakhtin, but also in the ones whose authorship is disputed, for they clarify the way the other members of the Circle, especially Valentin Voloshinov and Pavel Medvedev, conceive this relationship and contribute to make it fundamental to the understanding of language and to the development of concepts, notions, and categories that make language study possible.

KEYWORDS: Works of the Bakhtin Circle; Linguistic Studies and Literary Studies; Language and Literature; Dialogue; Dialogism

RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é refletir sobre alguns aspectos referentes à relação existente entre língua e literatura, estudos linguísticos e estudos literários e, mais especificamente, como essa relação se apresenta ao longo do pensamento bakhtiniano, articulando-se diretamente às questões do diálogo e do dialogismo, as quais atravessam e singularizam os escritos do Círculo. Nesse sentido, é possível constatar que a relação linguística/literatura está discutida, explorada, e problematizada, tanto nas obras assinadas exclusivamente por Mikhail Bakhtin, como também nas que, tendo autoria disputada, iluminam a maneira como outros componentes do Círculo, caso especial de Valentin Volochínov e Pavel Medviédev, pensam essa relação e contribuem para colocá-la como um traço fundamental da percepção da linguagem e da construção de conceitos, noções, categorias que possibilitam seu estudo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Escritos do Círculo; Estudos linguísticos e estudos literários; Relação linguística e literatura; Diálogo; Dialogismo*

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In this article [...] it is more important to penetrate the higher zones of the ideology of life, which have a *creative character*.

It is in these upper layers that there occurs the *author's interaction with his readers* and this is our concern. It is here that their common language is worked out and their interrelationship (or, more precisely, their mutual orientation). Both author and reader meet on common non-literary ground [...] This, then, is where their 'inner worlds' are built up, given shape, and standardized. In other words there is a kind of special 'hybridization' between their views and opinions, a kind of hybridization of the inner language of the whole group of people, like that between tribal languages, which we mentioned above.

V. N. VOLOSHINOV¹

This method of conventionally interpreting a literary utterance as if it were one from real-life, one which has actually occurred historically, is something, of course, that is scientifically risky and not only admissible under exceptional circumstances. As, however, we do not have a gramophone record to give us a true record of conversation between living people, we have to make use of literary material, constantly, of course, taking account of its special, literary, character

V. N. VOLOSHINOV²

The artist's enormous labor over the word has the ultimate goal of overcoming the word, because its aesthetic object arises on the boundaries of words, on the boundaries of language as such. But this overcoming of the material is purely *immanent in character*. That is, the artist frees himself from language in its linguistic determinateness not through negation but by way of *perfecting it immanently*: the artist conquers language, as it were, with its own verbal weapons – he forces language, in the process of perfecting it linguistically, to surpass itself. [...] The aesthetics of verbal art must not skip over linguistic language either, but must utilize all the work of linguistics to understand, on the one hand, the *technique* of the poet's creation on the basis of a correct understanding of the place of material in artistic creation, and, on the other hand, the distinctiveness of the aesthetic object.

M. BAKHTIN³

Pure languages in the novel, in the dialogues and monologues of novelistic characters, are subordinated to the same task of creating images of language. [...] The novel not only labors, therefore, under the necessity of knowing literary language in all its depth and subtlety, but it must in addition know all the other languages of heteroglossia.

¹ VOLOŠINOV, V. N. What is language? In: SHUKMAN, Ann (ed.). *Bakhtin School Papers. Russian Poetics Translation*, Vol. 10. Trad. Noel Owen. Somerton: Old School House, 1983, pp.93-113, p.109.

² VOLOŠINOV, V. N. The Construction of the Utterance. In: SHUKMAN, Ann (ed.). *Bakhtin School papers. Russian Poetics Translation*, Vol. 10. Trad. Noel Owen. Somerton: Old School House, 1983, pp.114-138, p.130.

³ BAKHTIN, M. The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art. In: *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin. Translated by Kenneth Brostrom. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990. pp.257-325. (University of Texas Press Slavic Series, No. 9), pp.296-297 [1924].³

The novel demands a broadening and deepening of the language
horizon, a sharpening in our perception of socio-linguistic
differentiations.
M. BAKHTIN⁴

Extensive and meaningful discussion – of a philosophical, aesthetic, theoretical-literary, linguistic, enunciative, discursive nature, among others – on language in its relation to life, society, and culture has been offered and motivated by the works of Mikhail Bakhtin and of other members of the Circle, especially of Valentin Voloshinov and Pavel Medvedev. Undoubtedly, this discussion relates to the construction of a perspective on language and language studies, which interferes with paradigms of language teaching and language learning, reading, and research. This is because it is in an open and interdisciplinary dialogue with different Human Sciences and their disciplines.

This text aims to reflect on some aspects of the relationship between *language* and *literature*, *linguistic studies* and *literary studies*. More specifically, it focuses on the means by which this relationship is present in the Bakhtinian thought, being directly connected to issues related to *dialogue* and *dialogism*, which traverse and single out the works of the Bakhtin Circle. In this train of thought, it is possible to testify that this relationship between language and literature is discussed, explored and problematized not solely in the works explicitly signed by Mikhail Bakhtin, but also in the ones whose authorship is disputed, for they clarify the way the other members of the Circle, especially Valentin Voloshinov and Pavel Medvedev, conceive this relationship and contribute to make it fundamental to the understanding of language and to the development of concepts, notions, and categories that make language study possible.

Pavel Medvedev plays an important role in exploring the interrelationship between language and literature. This can be certified in his work *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics* (1978)⁵. Although this work focuses on literary studies, it offers important elements to

⁴ BAKHTIN, M. Discourse in the Novel. In: *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin. Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981. pp. 259-422. (University of Texas Press Slavic Series, No. 1).

⁵ This important text, first published in Leningrad in 1928, has been translated into many languages. The excellent Portuguese version (MEDVIÉDEV, 2012) was translated by Sheila Grillo e Ekaterina V. Américo, who also wrote the preface and the notes. The reference to the English version is: BAKHTIN, M.; MEDVEDEV, P. *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*. Translated by Albert J. Wehrle. Baltimore; London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1978.

contemporary studies on speech genres (whether literary or not). Despite all that, the reflection presented here will be centered on M. Bakhtin's and V. Voloshinov's works, since these two authors are (apparently and occasionally) polarized into linguistic studies (V. Voloshinov) and literary studies (M. Bakhtin).

From their very first works, we notice that they understand language and literature not only as two constitutive elements present in the reflection upon language and upon a new way to approach it, but also as part of their own professional development and work. Apart from the current polarity between language and literature, the articulation and interpenetration of literary, linguistic, and philosophical studies single out the Bakhtinian thought in general and specifically in each author's work.

Although we recognize the diverse views which differently confer authorship to Voloshinov's and Bakhtin's works, the idea of *dialogue* (among others) is a point of contact in their concept of language: They study language by identifying verbal and extraverbal specificities, which involve and define interlocutors of a face-to-face interaction situation, advancing towards *dialogism*⁶. In other words, the works of both authors follow a dialogical principle of language, from which the idea of organized and socially situated interlocutors does not relate solely to face-to-face interactions, but to varied and distinct forms and degrees of I/other interaction, of polemic interactions of consciousness, of intertwined ideas, values, discourses and/or ideologies in tension. This is found in the works of both thinkers.

Thus, if it were possible to follow the cliché that has erroneously established that Mikhail Bakhtin dealt with literature whereas Valentin Voloshinov dealt with language and that Bakhtin is the literature philosopher whereas Voloshinov is the Marxist linguist, we would be surprised by the results of a more detailed analysis of their work as a whole. It is important to point out that this cliché has lost its potency due to discoveries of their archive as well as to writings of prominent researchers. As we closely analyze each author's work (despite authorship dispute), specifically the relationship each one establishes between language and literature, linguistics and literature theory/analysis, we find that, because of their intellectual formation and the context in which they lived, this relationship is a two-way path that leads to a new understanding of language, to the development of a dialogical perspective on discourse.

⁶ For a theoretical and practical discussion on *dialogism*, please refer to Brait & Magalhães (2014).

Bakhtin, Language, and Literature in Dialogue

As to Bakhtin, a first and overall view of his work should be focused on two of his significant and renowned texts – *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (PDP)⁷ and *Rabelais and His World*.⁸ In them, he used the production of two renowned writers – Dostoevsky and Rabelais – as a theme in order to contribute not exclusively to literary studies, although he did it expressively, but to ethics and aesthetics as privileged places where he could observe the process of language production, its history and articulation with life and with individuals who constitute it and are constituted by it. In both works, the relations between speakers and the use of language in different social, cultural, historical situations, in different contexts as well as in threshold situations in which inner and outer discourses are confronted receive ample and considerable attention. In each work, the way fiction faces and shows life allows language to be surprised, revealed, and studied according to what it tells of *identity* and, at the same time, of *otherness*, with its varied, rich, and vital use.

In this perspective, *dialogue* and *dialogism* become prominent in *PDP*. Here is an example out of the countless excerpts that could be quoted to show how language and literature, linguistic studies and literary studies are intertwined:

Indeed, the essential dialogicality of Dostoevsky is in no way exhausted by the external, compositionally expressed dialogues carried on by the characters. *The polyphonic novel is dialogic through and through*. Dialogic relationships exist among all elements of novelistic structure; that is, they are juxtaposed contrapuntally. And this is so because dialogic relationships are a much broader phenomenon than mere rejoinders in a dialogue, laid out compositionally in the text; they are an almost universal phenomenon, permeating all human speech and all relationships and manifestations of human life – in general, everything that has meaning and significance.

Dostoevsky could hear dialogic relationships everywhere, in all manifestations of conscious and intelligent human life; where

⁷ BAKHTIN, M. BAKHTIN, M. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Translated into English by Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

⁸ BAKHTIN, M. *Rabelais and His World*. Translated by Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984.

consciousness began, there dialogue began for him as well (BAKHTIN, 1984, p.40; italics in original).⁹

Here is an example of the issue related to the different languages Rabelais captured and brought to his work, which is summed up by Bakhtin in one excerpt of *Rabelais and His World*:

[...] in the marketplace a special kind of speech was heard, almost a language of its own, quite unlike the language of Church, palace, courts, and institutions. It was also unlike the tongue of official literature or of the ruling classes – the aristocracy, the nobles, the high-ranking clergy and the top burghers – though the elemental force of the folk idiom penetrated even these circles. [...] Rabelais was familiar with the marketplace and the fairs of his time (1984, p.154).¹⁰

These aspects, which characterize the relationship between language and literature and, thus, language studies and literature studies, are explicit and fundamental in Bakhtin's work and his dialogical concept of language. Besides the two aforementioned books, other works offer examples of this relationship. Such is the case of *Discourse in the Novel*, an essay found in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin (BAKHTIN, 1981)¹¹ and, specifically, the essay sections *Modern Stylistics & the Novel* (BAKHTIN, 1981, pp.260-275), *Discourse in Poetry and Discourse in the Novel* (BAKHTIN, 1981, pp.275-300), and *Heteroglossia in the Novel* (BAKHTIN, 1981, pp.301-331). In this important study, which harks back to 1934 to 1935, the author presents and discusses concepts that are core to the analysis of literary and everyday language, stemming exactly from their articulation in literary production and their operation in daily language.

This is the case, for example, of the concept of *centripetal forces*, which, according to Bakhtin (1981, p.272),¹² are the processes of verbal-ideological centralization and unification of language. They are alongside the *centrifugal forces*, viz., the ones responsible for the processes of decentralization and disunification of language. These two concepts, which are still extremely important and useful to understand language in use and the means by which it penetrates literature, are directly

⁹ For reference, see footnote 5.

¹⁰ For reference, see footnote 8.

¹¹ For reference, see footnote 2.

¹² For reference, see footnote 2.

related to *heteroglossia*, *pluridiscourse*, *pluridiscursivity*, that is, the total number of different languages that constitute a single language and the total number of different languages that constitute the prose-novel writer's discourse¹³.

Here, we can also present two excerpts in which this line of thought is explicit:

The unity of a literary language is not a unity of a single, closed language system, but is rather a highly specific unity of several "languages" that have established contact and mutual recognition with each other (merely one of which is poetic language in the narrow sense). [...] the actively literary linguistic consciousness comes upon an even more varied and profound heteroglossia¹⁴ within literary language itself, as well as outside it (BAKHTIN, 1981, pp.295-296).¹⁵

It is necessary to refer to another work of Bakhtin, i.e., *The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art*, which comes as a supplement in *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays* by M.M. Bakhtin (BAKHTIN, 1990, pp.257-325).¹⁶ In this important study of 1924, as the title itself indicates, the author discusses the relations between content, material, and form in literature, attempting, as he puts it, "a methodological analysis of the fundamental concepts and problems of poetics on the basis of general systematic aesthetics" (BAKHTIN, 1990, p.257).¹⁷ As he does in several of his later works, Bakhtin prompts the discussion by presenting the state of the art of the issue and by establishing some interlocutors with whom he dialogues in a somewhat polemical way. As the material of literature is the word, i.e., the verbal material, in the section *The problem of Material*, he necessarily has to deal with Linguistics, with its development in the early 1920s, and with the way literature dealt with its object, i.e., language.

He recognizes, even in a polemical manner, the importance of Linguistics and poses some questions about the *material* of literary art:

¹³ In the Portuguese version of *Discourse in the Novel* [*O Discurso no romance* (BAKHTIN, 1988)], the translators point out, in a footnote on p.107, that they translated *rasnoriétchie* as *pluridiscourse* and *rasnoriétchivost'* as *pluridiscursivity* in order to emphasize the difference there is between these words and *rasnoiazítchie*, i.e., the totality of different languages.

¹⁴ TN. In the Portuguese version of this essay, the translators did not use the word heteroglossia, as we find in this excerpt, but pluridiscursivity. Please refer to footnote 11.

¹⁵ For reference, see footnote 2.

¹⁶ For reference, see footnote 1.

¹⁷ For reference, see footnote 1.

Must we perceive or feel the word in the artistic object precisely as the word in its linguistic determinateness? Must we feel the word's morphological form precisely as morphological? – the syntactic as syntactic? – the semantic order as semantic? Must we apprehend the poetic whole in artistic contemplation as a verbal whole, and not as the consummated whole of an event, of a certain striving, of an inner tension, etc.? (BAKHTIN, 1990, p.295).¹⁸

In order to answer these questions, which explicitly and deeply establish and discuss some existing relationships between language and literature, linguistic studies and literary studies - issues upon which Bakhtin and the other members of the Circle undoubtedly reflected, i.e., the Linguistics and the Literary Theory practiced in Russia at that time - Bakhtin takes a philosophical-discursive stand. Two excerpts, which were used as epigraphs in this paper, can be presented as examples of his answer:

The artist's enormous labor over the word has the ultimate goal of overcoming the word, because its aesthetic object arises on the boundaries of words, on the boundaries of language as such. But this overcoming of the material is purely *immanent in character*. That is, the artist frees himself from language in its linguistic determinateness not through negation but by way of *perfecting it immanently*: the artist conquers language, as it were, with its own verbal weapons – he forces language, in the process of perfecting it linguistically, to surpass itself. [...] The aesthetics of verbal art must not skip over linguistic language either, but must utilize all the work of linguistics to understand, on the one hand, the *technique* of the poet's creation on the basis of a correct understanding of the place of material in artistic creation, and, on the other hand, the distinctiveness of the aesthetic object (BAKHTIN, 1990, pp.296-297, italics in original).¹⁹

Without doubt, these answers show Bakhtin's need to turn his attention to language and to the way Linguistics studied it so that he could show that Literature, while dealing with its verbal material and recognizing linguistic developments, had to prioritize verbal specificities within the artistic concreteness. In the same sense, Bakhtin believes that the artist does not deal with the verbal material as a speaker does, for the speaker's main goal is communication. For Bakhtin, the artist deals with the word in a special manner. Thus, this line of thinking leads to some aspects of articulation, in the Bakhtinian thought, between language and literature, their points of proximity and tension.

¹⁸ For reference, see footnote 1.

¹⁹ For reference, see footnote 1.

As we end this brief examination of Bakhtin's dialogic or philosophical-discursive perspective, pinpointing some works in which the boundary between language and literature is revealed, another example will be presented:

Pure languages in the novel, in the dialogues and monologues of novelistic characters, are subordinated to the same task of creating images of language. [...] The novel not only labors, therefore, under the necessity of knowing literary language in all its depth and subtlety, but it must in addition know all the other languages of heteroglossia. The novel demands a broadening and deepening of the language horizon, a sharpening in our perception of socio-linguistic differentiations (BAKHTIN, 1981, pp.365-366).²⁰

Valentin Voloshinov: Dialogical Relationship between Language and Literature

Somehow the reference to works exclusively signed by Bakhtin, as we witnessed in the prior section, seems to lead us to the conclusion that the relationship between language and literature, Linguistics and Literary and Aesthetic studies is more evident and transparent in Bakhtin than in Voloshinov's works. However, although the author of *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language (MPL)* (1986) did not devote himself to the study of novel writers as Bakhtin did, his writings show that his understanding of the linguistic/discursive phenomena stemmed also from literature, and, as a consequence of this articulation, he developed a theory of *dialogue*²¹, which led to *dialogism*.

Given the fact that *dialogue* constitutively participates in the relationship between individuals and language, this concept, both in Bakhtin and in Voloshinov, extends to the condition of *dialogism*, for it goes beyond the definition of verbal interaction as the one that occurs between interlocutors in a face-to-face communicative exchange. Undoubtedly, Voloshinov is responsible for giving language studies the possibility to examine language in use, be it in literature or in everyday communication. This aspect of his theory can be found both in his renowned work *MPL* and in a group of articles published in 1930. These articles have been translated into English, Italian,

²⁰ For reference, see footnote 2.

²¹ There are countless studies which point to Voloshinov's interest in dialogue and to his relation with scholars who also observed this language mechanism before them. I refer here to Brait (2013), who brings significant bibliographic references on the topic.

Spanish, and Portuguese (VOLOCHÍNOV, 2013). Some excerpts from these articles are presented in this paper. They are from the Portuguese version of the articles, which were edited by João W. Geraldi and published by Pedro & João Editores (VOLOCHÍNOV, 2013a; 2013b; 2013c).²² The reference of other versions of these articles is found in *References*. They were an important source of research when there was no Portuguese version and were, thus, used in papers before that.

These selected articles are crucial to the understanding of the dialogic concept of language. Published, whether separately or altogether, a little after *MPL*, they offer fundamental elements that help understand: a) Voloshinov’s concept of language, which is consonant with the one embraced by the other members of the Circle; b) his perspective on the structure of the utterance; c) his perception of the social value of words; d) his social and ideological view on human phenomena in language production. This paper focuses, however, on the way he articulates language and literature, linguistic studies and literary studies.

Right in The origin of language, the first section of the article *What is Language?* (VOLOSHINOV, 1983a), the author declares that although the writer works with linguistic elements which are ready to be used, he/she knows that these elements follow linguistic laws and rules that cannot be infringed. Then he asks himself if the writer could create new rules. To answer that question, he gives the example of poets who tried to create a new language a little before the 1917 Revolution. According to Voloshinov, the only success they achieved was to enter history as an anecdote, and that was the reason why he intended to write this article, for “he [a writer] must understand *what language is*, this language that provides us with such special and peculiar material for our creative work” (VOLOSHINOV, 1983a, p.95; italics in original).

What we clearly see is that, although the object of the article as a whole is language - as a theoretical concept and an object of study -, Voloshinov’s starting point was artistic creativity; better yet, it was the relationship between everyday language and artistic language. Moreover, after discussing several aspects of language which involve its relation to life and social class, consciousness, experience and expression, and the

²² TN. We have opted not to translate the excerpts from Portuguese into English, but to use the English version of the articles, found in *Bakhtin School Papers* (1983). This book was edited by Ann Shukman and published by RTP Publications.

ideology of life, he went on to write a section entitled Artistic creation and inner speech (VOLOSHINOV, 1983a, pp.109-111).

For us to comprehend this line of thinking, we need to turn our attention to the way he defines the *ideology of life*. The Ideology of Life (VOLOSHINOV, 1983a, pp.108-109), which is the section before Artistic Creation and Inner Speech, is fundamental to the understanding of the relationship between language and literature and follows the same perspective of *MPL*. In this section, Voloshinov states the following:

Let us agree to call the totality of life experiences, which reflect and refract social life, and the exterior expressions directly connected with them – *the ideology of life*. [...] Out of this inconstant and ever changing ocean of the ideology of life there gradually emerge the numerous islands and continents of ideological systems, those of science, art, philosophy and political theory. [...] It should not be thought that the ideology of life forms an integral monolithic whole, in all its parts undifferentiated and identical. We must distinguish within it a whole series of layers [...] (VOLOSHINOV, 1983a, p.108; italics in original).

Coherently with everything that was explained throughout the article and based on what he considered to be the ideology of life and the ideological systems associated with it, he goes on to justify why he chose to define language the way he did.

In this article [...] it is more important to penetrate the higher zones of the ideology of life, which have a *creative character*. It is in these upper layers that there occurs the author's *interaction with his readers* and this is our concern. It is here that their common language is worked out and their interrelationship (or, more precisely, their mutual orientation). Both author and reader meet on common non-literary ground [...] This, then, is where their 'inner worlds' are built up, given shape, and standardized. In other words there is a kind of special 'hybridization' between their views and opinions, a kind of hybridization of the inner language of the whole group of people, like that between tribal languages, which we mentioned above (VOLOSHINOV, 1983a, p.109; italics in original).

This important reflection, used as an epigraph in this paper, shows just how concerned the author was about his object of study – language. Besides, we notice that the way he presents the path he would take to achieve his goals is almost didactic. He then writes about Artistic Creation and Inner Speech, the section in which he reveals “a

more systematic picture of the process of creation” (VOLOSHINOV, 1983a, p.110) and summarizes this process in three stages. He conceives the first stage, which is “The transition from experience as inner expression to the externally manifest utterance” (p.110), as the first stage of ideological – and, in this case – literary creation. However, he states that this transition only occurs if the anticipated listener, i.e., the anticipated participant in this event, is taken into account.

At the second stage, the one in which “the primitive life-based formation is already turning into an *ideological product*” (VOLOSHINOV, 1983a, p.110; italics in original), “the tentatively projected, anticipated (‘inner’) listener begins to be taken into account as real, present, listener, and the organized mass of readers likewise” (p.110). He believes that the most important point in this stage is “the mastery of the material, its conversion into the object of art (into a statue, picture, symphony, poem or novel, etc.)” (p.110). However, when specifically speaking of literature, the literary material, he states that the second stage “is closely connected with the previous one” (p.111), for “language serves here both as the material and the instrument of creation” (p.111).

As to what he calls the third and concluding stage, Voloshinov states that at this stage the material is technically rearranged: “The work has to be oriented towards its editors, publishers and printers, and in relation to the book market, etc.” (p.111). Thus, through this article and its very current remarks, the author provides a reflection on the nature and social structure of language, conceiving language expressions as *oriented towards the other*. Moreover, he highlights the constitutive relationship between language and literature, Linguistics and Literature. It is a theoretical reflection, so to say, that evokes examples that are not from literary texts, and yet he clearly discusses this relationship with defining principles of what he considers language.

This reflection continues in his article The Construction of the Utterance. In other language versions of this article, its title is The Construction of the Enunciation, The Structure of the Utterance, or The Structure of the Enunciation. Although the Brazilian Portuguese version very appropriately translated it as The Construction of the Enunciation, the choosing of the word *utterance* is a result of the fact that it is more frequently used nowadays and that it encompasses the idea of enunciation, which is fundamental to a theory/analysis of discourse on which both Bakhtin and Voloshinov worked.

As Voloshinov starts his second article, he makes reference to *What is language?* and briefly summarizes its main points, aiming to state that “All this [that is, the content of the previous article] makes it possible for us to construct a complete definition of language and to move on to a more detailed analysis of the way utterances are constructed in general, whether these are ordinary, everyday ones, or literary ones” (VOLOSHINOV, 1983b, p.114). Again, everyday language is an object of investigation, which leads the author to define what an utterance, an *enunciation*, is so he can understand literary language. With that in mind, he presents and defines the verbal and the (implied) non-verbal components of an utterance, the participants, the audience, genres (as types of communicative interchanges), the language of monologue and dialogue, the dialogic character of inner speech, the social orientation of the utterance, its form, intonation, the choice and arrangement of words, among others. All these aspects showcase that this study is fundamental to understand a dialogical conception of language.

The focus here is on the two instances in which Voloshinov uses literature to show his understanding of *utterance*. Firstly, in section 4, *The Social Orientation of the Utterance*, the author states that all discourses are *dialogic* (a word he emphasized with italics), for they are directed at other people, at their understanding, and at their effective or potential response. He uses literary discourse, thus, to develop his line of thinking. He refers, although briefly, to the manners of some characters from Gogol’s *Dead Souls* (1996).²³

The strategy he uses to explicitly show the dialogical dimension of discourse is further used in section 6, entitled *The Situation and the Form of the Utterance; Intonation, the Choice and Arrangement of Words*. At this stage of the article, he transcribes two excerpts from *Dead Souls* – Chapter 3, pp.43-44 & Chapter 6, pp.115-116 (GOGOL, 1996), which, according to him, can demonstrate what he is trying to theorize on utterance, its form and situation, the social condition of its participants, and its style, which involves word choice, rhythm, and intonation.

These excerpts call the readers’ attention, for example, to the way Gogol “describes the abrupt change in the intonation when there is a change in the situation

²³ GOGOL, N. *Dead Souls*. Translated by Bernard Guilbert Guerney. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996.

and the audience of the utterance extremely accurately” (VOLOSHINOV, 1983b, p.126). We can notice this in the conversation that is part of the first excerpt he used. It indicates that this aspect, which is fundamental to understand utterances, is expressed not only through the person’s or the character’s voice but also through his/her whole body. At the same time, this aspect connects with the context in Russia and with social inequality.

It is exactly here that he defines intonation as “first and foremost the expression of an *evaluation* of the situation and the audience” (p.128; italics in original). Therefore, he uses the conversation from an excerpt of *Dead Souls* to show what *dialogism* is, taking on a discursive perspective.

In the second excerpt, he finds elements to demonstrate that this is about

[...] a precise description of the process of choosing the word that best fits the social interchange between speaker and listener, that takes account with the utmost refinement of absolutely every detail of the social character of the other person – his status, rank, social position, etc.” (p.128).

He then comments, “Here in Chichikov’s [character] mind there is still some debate as to the best among several of the most fitting words” (p.128). He goes on, explaining that “[...] having sorted the situation out magnificently in his own mind, having grasped and judged it correctly, Chichikov found the right intonation and the words to go with it” (p.129). We, thus, certify the fact that it is in Russian literature that Voloshinov finds the means by which he explains the complex concept of intonation, of evaluation. Moreover, in order to make clear what the stylistics of enunciation is, he uses the same literary work, the same characters and examines, in a verbal communicative exchange, not only how words are chosen, but also how they are deployed so as to meet Chichikov’s goals in relation to the person he is addressing.

In the third excerpt of *Dead Souls* found in this article, Voloshinov remarks that

Their [the words’] actual arrangement needed to be special, so as to endow his [Chichikov’s] speech with a smooth, rhythmic flow, a sort of musical and poetic quality. It was not enough to state his thoughts simple and clearly; they had to be adorned with comparisons, to be decked out with special turns or phrases and he had to make them

almost into a literary product, into a poem (VOLOSHINOV, 1983b, p.129).

As he analyzes everyday enunciations from literary texts, Voloshinov realizes that, as someone who studies everyday language and not literature and who is devoted to describing *the construction of the utterance*, he owes his readers some explanation. After all, he is writing about literary language, about characters that represent people in specific situations and not in all everyday situations of language use. Aware of that, he makes the following remark, which was also used as an epigraph in this paper:

This method of conventionally interpreting a literary utterance as if it were one from real-life, one which has actually occurred historically, is something, of course, that is scientifically risky and not only admissible under exceptional circumstances. As, however, we do not have a gramophone record to give us a true record of conversation between living people, we have to make use of literary material, constantly, of course, taking account of its special, literary, character (VOLOSHINOV, 1983b, p.130).

Having said that, Voloshinov starts his in-depth analysis of the conversation in the third excerpt of *Dead Souls*. Based on this dialogue, he makes important remarks on the structure of the utterance, taking into account and even deepening, besides the other aspects mentioned in the article before, the idea that the social relationships between the characters, between the interlocutors, determine the style of discourses. Based on that, it is possible to state that Voloshinov uses literature to explicitly define a number of concepts that engage in dialogue with the ones found in *MPL*, and he does that in a very clarifying manner. In *MPL*, especially in its third part, entitled *Toward a History of Forms of Utterance in Language Constructions: Study in the Application of the Sociological Method to Problems of Syntax*, Voloshinov also refers to literature not only to study narrators but also to characterize indirect discourse, direct discourse, and their modifications. Thus, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Andrei Bely, Sologub, Turgenev, and Tolstoy are powerful arguments in favor of his stand on language.

In *The Word and its Social Function* (VOLOSHINOV, 1983c), the third article we have chosen for this paper, the author starts his reflection by referring to the conclusions he was able to draw from the analysis of the construction of utterances spoken by characters of *Dead Souls*:

[...] the stylistic coloration of Chichikov’s utterances, as is generally the case for any utterance, is in no way determined only by individual, psychological intentions, and not only by ‘experiences’. We have shown that the entire sum total of the conditions of a given situation and a given audience (and in particular the socio-hierarchical distance between the speakers) determine the entire construction of the utterance: both the general *sense* of Chichikov’s speech utterance, as well as the *themes* of this utterance, its *intonation*, the *choice of words*, and their *disposition* (VOLOSHINOV, 1983c, p.139; italics in original).

In fact, in this article, Voloshinov deepens the idea that “*the social orientation of the utterance plays a decisive role in its stylistic structure*” (VOLOSHINOV, 1983c, p.139; italics in original). He also focuses his attention on the relationships between ideology, class, and utterance structure, or yet, on the word as ideological sign, and on the relationship between sign and class. He emphasizes that words are always permeated with different evaluations and intonations that are conditioned by enunciators. He makes a brief mention of Mayakovsky (p.147) and, in order to present his ideas, he uses a fictional work, the novel *Envy* by Yury Olesha, published in 1927. According to him, “This work is exceptionally convenient for our purposes because of the stylistic pointedness which characterizes sharply the social orientation of the protagonists’ utterances” (VOLOSHINOV, 1983c, p.148).

The theme of the novel chosen by Voloshinov is the contrast between the old and the new order, individualism and collectivism in Soviet Russia. He analyzes two speeches of two main characters in detail so that he could prove that contemporary discourses characterize different ideologies and determine the way the speeches of these two characters are constructed. Before doing that, though, Voloshinov makes a remark on the construction of utterances similar to the one in the prior article:

The examples we offer from two speeches, which deal with one and the same theme, will be, of course, just as much a surrogate for real-life utterances as those of Chichikov which we examined in our preceding article.

Therefore, once more with major reservations, let us suppose that these extracts are not taken from a novel but from a stenographic record of the utterances of two real people – Nikolai Kavalero and Ivan Babichev.

They are talking about one and the same person – Andrei Babichev, the manager of the food trust, a great enthusiast for delicious and cheap communal catering (1983c, p.148)

From this point on, as Voloshinov presents long excerpts from *Envy* by Yury Olesha, he works on and scrutinizes the stylistics of utterances from the novel. Moreover, he clearly shows the style differences to which the utterances are and would be subject according to the different social and ideological positions of the enunciators. In this train of thinking, Voloshinov shows that

Each of these utterances is the expression of an absolutely specific class grouping, whose ideology, indeed, conditioned not only the variations in the points of view of one and the same event, but also the variations in the stylistic structure (1983c, p.151).

To conclude this examination of some expressive works of M. Bakhtin and V. Voloshinov, pinpointing the relationship between language and literature we find in them, it is possible to state that the issue on the *stylistics of the utterance*, whether it is an everyday or a literary one, becomes very important when, based on this articulation, it is analyzed in the totality of their work. In this sense, *language* and *literature*, in this dialogical perspective, are not fortuitous elements of their work and neither are they present only in Bakhtin's reflection. To the contrary, this relationship is a founding notion of this new perspective on human language and on new possibilities to study it, enabling it to be debated and to reach our day and time.

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