**ELEMENTS OF SEMIOLOGY REPORT**

**ROLAND C. BARTHES**

**LANGUAGE, LINGUISTIC CODE AND SPEECH**

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**Read Report**

Saussure (1857-1913) in his paper named “Course of general linguistics” postulated a science of signs named Semiology, that has for object that any systems of signs whit its substances images, gestures, musical sounds, objects, and the complex associations of all these, which form the content of ritual, convention or public entertainment: these constitute, if not languages, at least systems of signification. (Barthes, 1964). Despite these findings the semiology remains a tentative science to deal of concerned about codes of no more than slight interest, such as the Highway Code. Saussure said that linguistics is not a part of the general science of signs; it is semiology, which is a part of linguistics.

In the other hand, Saussure changed the concept about language and speech. Before his descriptions, the linguistics treated to search the causes of historical changes in the evolution of pronunciation, spontaneous associations and the working of analogy, and was therefore linguistics of the individual act.

Saussure was different; He started from the multiform and heterogeneous nature of language. In this vein, we consider that ***the language***, based to Barthes, is a *system of values and a social institution or a law* because the individual cannot modify for itself the language system. Then we considered that ***the speech*** is the individual act of selection and actualization, here the individual use the language and its codes to transmit his/her thinking in his/her words.

Roland C. Barthes (1915-1980) in his paper “Elements of Semiology” (1964) he shows us the four main headings borrowed from structural linguistics, the dichotomies of:

1. *Language and speech:*

* **Language** (langue, system): Remember that Saussure perspective was that the language has a multiform and heterogeneous' nature and it is at the same time physical, the physiological, the mental, the individual and the social. Now, Barthes affirmed that his disorder disappears if is extracted a purely social object, the systematised set of conventions necessary to communication; this is a ***language***. It is at the same time a social institution and a system of values, language is a system of contractual values (in part arbitrary, or, more exactly, unmotivated) that it resists the modifications coming from a single individual, and is consequently a social institution.
* **Speech** (parole, process): In contrast to the language, Speech covers the purely individual part of language (phonation, application of the rules and contingent combinations of signs). The speaking subject can use the code or a varied combination of recurrent signs of the language with a view to expressing his personal thought in which speech is essentially a sing combinative activity that it corresponds to an individual act and not to a pure creation.

To sum, a language is at the same time the product and the instrument of speech: their relationship is therefore a genuinely *dialectical* one, since any speech, as soon as it is grasped as a process of communication is already part of the language; to separate the language from speech means ipso facto constituting the problematic of the meaning.

Consequently, we can see the different modes of communication or semiotic systems in which Roland B. analyzed its importance within the society and culture. Also, Barthes studied the Saussure’s dichotomy of the sign, signified and signifier. He explained that:

***Linguistic sign:*** for Saussure, Hjelmslev and Frei at least, since the signifieds are signs among others, semantics must be a part of structural linguistics, in which there are *significant units* which is the each one of which is endowed with one meaning, and which form the first articulation, and the distinctive units, which are part of the form but do not have a direct meaning ('the sounds', or rather the phonemes), and which constitute the second articulation. Those previous concepts form the *double articulation.*

***Semiological sign:*** This is in relation to the linguistic sign. It is compounded of a signifier and a signified, but it differs from it at the level of its substances. Many semiological systems (objects, gestures, pictorial images) have a substance of expression whose essence is not to signify. As clothes, we use them to protect us but also we classified the people from what are they wearing. This is called sign-function. these objects are unavoidably realisations of a model, the speech of a language, the substances of a significant form, therefore has (probably) an anthropological value.

***The sign***: The signal is immediate and existential. The principal rivals of the sign are signal, index, icon, symbol, and allegory. Saussure said that signifier and a signified, i.e. an acoustic image and a concept compose the sign. In the other hand, the semiological sign is similar to the linguistic sign, is composed to signifier and signified, but differs in some aspects.

1. *Signifier and signified*

***The signified*** could define as a mental representation of the thing, but it is not the thing, it is being neither an act of consciousness, nor a real thing, but the signified can be simply juxtaposed with its signifier. 'pig', + 'female' = 'sow', 'horse' + 'male' = 'stallion').

***Semiological signifieds:*** Structural linguistics, that is to say a classification of the forms of the verbal signified.

***The signifier*** is connecting with the signified but the only difference is that it is transmit by words and the substance of the signifier always is material.

Also, Barthe analyzed the Louis Hjelmslev work, so he redistributed the Saussure’s terms in a more formal way; he distinguishes three planes ***the schema***, which is the language as pure form (Saussure called this as the langue); the schema is determined at the same time by speech, usage and norm, it is the *form*; ***the norm***, which is the language as material form, after it has been defined by some degree of social realization, but still independent of this realization (the norm determines usage and speech) and ***the usage***, which is the language as a set of habits prevailing in a given society (usage determines speech but is also determined by it). From the substance and the execution, emerges the norm-usage-speech group. Rises a new dichotomy called schema/usage, which replaces the couple language/speech.

According to the theory of Hjelmslev is impossible identify the language with the code and the speech whit the message because the conventions of the code are explicit, and those of the language implicit.

Hjelmslev considered two planes for a sign:



The ***form*** is what can be described exhaustively, simply and coherently (epistemological criteria) by linguistics without resorting to any extra-linguistic premise; the ***substance*** is the whole set of aspects of linguistic phenomena which cannot be described without resorting to extra-linguistic premises. For example:



* *Substance of expression*: phonetic, sound of a language
* *Form of expression*: paradigmatic and syntactic rules, one phonic, the other graphic.
* *Substance of content:* the emotional, ideological, or simply notional aspects of the signified, its 'positive' meaning.
* *Form of content*: it is the formal organisation of the signified between himself or herself through the absence or presence of a semantic mark. (sgfd---sgnfr).

Other theme it is about Saussure’s linguistic. The first term is *idiolect* that we can define as the language inasmuch as it is spoken by a single individual' (Martinet), or again 'the whole set of habits of a single individual at a given moment' (Ebeling). Jakobson said the language is always socialized, even at the individual level, for in speaking to somebody one always tries to speak more or less the other's language, especially as far as the vocabulary is concerned ('private property in the sphere of language does not exist'): so *the idiolect* would appear to be largely an illusion.

He defines *the idiolect* as *the language* of the aphasic *who does not understand other people* and does not receive a message conforming to his own verbal patterns; this language, then, would be a pure idiolect, the 'style' of a writer, although this is always pervaded by certain verbal patterns coming from tradition that is, from the community and we can openly broaden the notion, and define the idiolect as the language of a linguistic community, that is, of a group of persons who all interpret in the same way all linguistic statements. So, we can define the idiolect as an intermediate entity between speech and language.

Jakobson explains the duplex structures too. This duplex structures studies a special cases of code/message, language and speech reached according to Saussure and of Durkheim's conception a collective consciousness independent of its individual manifestations.

*Complex systems:* they are for example the mass-communications, are complex systems in which different substances are engaged. In cinema, television and advertising. The 'language' of each of these complex systems is original or only compounded of the subsidiary 'languages' which have there; we know the linguistic 'language', but not those images or the music.

For example Barthes explained this kind of semiotic systems:

1. *The garment system:*

Barthes explained the distinction between the language and speech as essential characteristics of linguistic analysis. So, in the case of some of these hypothetical systems will consider that some acts could belong to the category of the language and others to that of speech. According to the Saussures’ schema, a language without speech would be impossible. Also he said that the language of fashion does not emanate from the speaking mass, but from a group which makes the decisions and deliberately elaborates the code, and on the other hand, the inherent abstraction in any language, it is here materialized as written language: fashion clothes (as written about) are the language at the level of clothes communication and speech at the level of verbal communication. (Barthes, pag 8).

The language, in the garment system, is made by the oppositions of pieces, parts of garment and 'details', the variation of which entails a change in meaning (to wear a beret or a bowler hat does not have the same meaning) and by the rules which govern the association of the pieces among themselves, either on the length of the body or in depth. Speech, in the garment system, comprises all the phenomena of anomic fabrication (few are still left in our society) or of individual way of wearing (size of the garment, degree of cleanliness or wear, personal quirks, free association of pieces).

1. *The food system*

Here, he did a comparison between the food system and the language and speech; the food has a menu that corresponds to the necessities of an users group, depends of the time and the society. The alimentary language is used of a collective group or a purely individual speech. So we can say that the language depends of the use and community have a different menu or idiolect.

We have seen the complex and huge world of linguistic, language and speech, there are a lot of concepts that help us to understood and improve our semiotic knowledge.