

## **ROLE OF EMOTIONS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF DISCOURSE ACCORDING TO THE SEMIOLOGICAL THEORY OF PATRICK CHARAUDEAU**

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### **Abstract:**

This article presents an in-depth analysis of the role of emotions in the construction of discourse, through the semiological theory of Patrick Charaudeau. He explores how emotions are not simply spontaneous reactions, but strategic tools that influence the way messages are perceived and interpreted by receivers. The author highlights the link between emotions and meaning, and shows how emotions are integrated into various types of discourse to guide individuals' actions, beliefs and behaviors.

**Keywords:** Emotions, Discourse, Semiological Theory, Patrick Charaudeau, Emotional manipulation, Reception, Meaning of the message, Advertising, Politics, Media.

### **Introduction**

Discourse, whether political, media or every day, is an essential vector of communication and transmission of meaning. It is not limited to the simple transmission of information, but also includes an affective dimension, influencing the reception and interpretation of the message by the audience. In this perspective, emotions play a crucial role in the construction and impact of discourse. According to Patrick Charaudeau's semiological theory, discourse is not only an act of rational communication, but it is also crossed by affects that guide and modify the perception of transmitters and receivers.

The central question of this article is therefore the following: how do emotions influence the construction of discourse according to Patrick Charaudeau's semiological theory? To answer this question, it will be necessary to examine how Charaudeau conceptualizes emotion in the discursive process, and how it becomes a strategic tool in the construction of meaning. Indeed, emotion is not reduced to a simple affective reaction; it is integrated into the very structure of discourse and plays a decisive role in its reception and understanding.

This article will be organized around several axes. First, we will present the theoretical framework proposed by Charaudeau and the way in which he understands emotion as a structuring factor of discourse. Then, we will analyze the role of emotions in the construction of discourse, emphasizing their effects on the form and content of the message. Finally, we will illustrate these concepts with concrete examples, in order to better understand the emotional mechanisms at work in public communication, advertising and other forms of discourse.

The semiology of discourse, according to Patrick Charaudeau, is distinguished by its systemic and dynamic approach to communication. From this perspective, discourse is not reduced to a simple chain of linguistic signs; it is rather a complex construction that involves relationships between transmitters, receivers, the message, and the context in which it is inscribed. Among the many elements that participate in the production and reception of discourse, emotions occupy an essential place, not only as objects of discourse, but also as factors structuring its dynamics and communicative effectiveness.

Patrick Charaudeau defines discourse as a set of signs that appear in a communication context. For him, discourse cannot be understood solely from the perspective of the transmission of objective content or information. It is above all an act of communication that is based on an interaction between a transmitter and a receiver, who are influenced by their social, cultural, and emotional context.

In this perspective, Charaudeau adopts a dynamic approach, where the meaning of the speech is constructed as it interacts with the receiver. The speech is therefore seen as an “action” that modifies the audience’s perception of reality. Thus, the message conveyed by the speech is not only informative or prescriptive, it is also a means of arousing emotions, influencing attitudes, and modifying behaviors.

In Charaudeau's theory, emotions are considered an essential element in the construction of discourse. Contrary to a conception of discourse where emotion

would be a simple by-product of communication, he sees them as active and structuring elements, which fully participate in the construction of meaning. Emotions, according to him, are mechanisms for regulating communicative exchanges. They influence the way in which the receiver interprets the message and, conversely, the way in which the sender constructs his discourse.

Emotions intervene at several levels of discourse: they act on the very content of the message (by influencing the choice of words, images, cultural references), but also on the form of the discourse (tone, structure, rhythm). For example, a speech that seeks to arouse empathy or fear must be formulated in such a way as to exploit the emotional codes specific to the target audience, while remaining faithful to a specific communication objective. Emotions are therefore not only internal reactions: they are socially coded and can be manipulated in the construction of the discourse.

Another fundamental dimension of emotion in Charaudeau's semiological theory is its role in the receiver's understanding and interpretation of discourse. Emotions are not simply a means of manipulating or persuading, they are also a vector for activating cognitive processes that allow the receiver to give meaning to the discourse. In other words, emotion influences the way in which the receiver will analyze the signs of the discourse, connect them together and integrate them into his own representations of the world.

Thus, emotions participate in the construction of an "intersubjectivity" between the transmitter and the receiver, by creating a common ground where the meaning of the discourse can emerge. This emotional interaction allows the audience to better understand the issues of the message, but also to interpret it according to their own experiences and emotional sensitivities. In addition, emotion can facilitate or hinder this interpretation depending on its adequacy with the context and the expectations of the receiver. Finally, it is worth highlighting the strategic role of emotions in the construction of discourse. Charaudeau highlights the potential of emotion as a tool for persuasion and manipulation. Emotions, when activated in a targeted manner, can reinforce the effectiveness of a message by influencing the perception and judgment of the recipients. This is notably what explains why political, advertising or media discourses frequently use emotions to reinforce their impact. Emotions are then instrumentalized to guide the audience's reactions: whether it is to arouse fear, indignation, solidarity, or enthusiasm, they serve as

levers to engage the receivers and lead them to adopt specific attitudes or behaviors. This echoes the strategic dimension of the speech, where the transmitter seeks not only to transmit a message, but also to arouse emotional reactions that guide the receiver's action.

Emotions play a key role in how a discourse is perceived and interpreted. According to Charaudeau, the reception of a message by the receiver is never a neutral or passive process. The interpretation of the discourse is always influenced by affective factors that are added to the rational elements of the message. Emotions are therefore at the heart of the understanding of the discourse, because they modify the way in which receivers connect the signs together and construct their own interpretation of the message. Let's take the example of a political speech that seeks to mobilize an audience on a current issue. According to Charaudeau, the reception of this speech by the audience does not only depend on the rational content of the message, but also on the emotions aroused by the tone of the speech, the gestures of the speaker, or the emotionally charged themes that are addressed (such as fear, anger or hope). Emotion thus becomes a factor of cognitive activation: it allows the receiver to process the message on a more personal and subjective level. Thus, a speech provoking fear of an imminent threat will be perceived in a more urgent and mobilizing way than a purely informative speech on the same subject.

Moreover, emotions influence not only the reception of the message, but also the way in which receivers construct the meaning of this message based on their own emotional experiences and representations of the world. In this sense, emotion becomes a tool for creating an intersubjectivity between the sender and the receiver, where the meaning of the discourse emerges from a dynamic interaction.

The media are also key players in using emotions to construct the meaning of discourse. Using narrative, visual, and auditory devices, the media seek to elicit specific emotions that will influence how events are perceived and understood by the public. Current events, in particular, are often presented in ways that provoke strong emotional reactions, whether it is fear related to a terrorist attack, sadness caused by a natural disaster, or outrage generated by political scandals.

Consider a report on an armed conflict. Images of human suffering, injured children, refugees or mass destruction are used to provoke an emotion of sadness and indignation, which creates pressure on the audience to react emotionally, for example by supporting humanitarian actions or adopting a particular political

position. According to Charaudeau, the media use emotions as powerful tools of manipulation to steer public opinion and ensure that the receiver adheres to a particular vision of reality. In this way, emotion becomes a means of managing collective perception and guiding social behavior, while participating in the construction of the meaning of the media message.

In conclusion, this article has explored the central role of emotions in the construction of discourse, through Patrick Charaudeau's semiological theory. We have seen that emotions, far from being simple spontaneous reactions, are key elements that structure and influence the meaning of messages. Whether in the political, media or advertising domain, emotions are used strategically to guide perceptions, manipulate public opinion and provoke actions. Understanding these emotional dynamics is essential to analyze and decode discourses in our increasingly mediatized society.

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