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Part 3: **Epistemologies of discourse – and beyond**

Patrick Charaudeau

Chapter 10
A socio-communicational model of discourse (between communication situation and individuation strategies)

Abstract: The author identifies three questions to pose to a discipline interested in discourse, namely (1) the limits within which it can be effective as a result of the theoretical positions of the analyst, (2) the link that exists between the speech act and the inseparable activity extraneous to language which enables it to be interpreted, and (3) the interpretation to be given to the analysis. In the text that follows, he proposes to examine the second point in greater depth.

Keywords: communication contract, situation of communication, discursive instructions, identity of the speaker, discursive strategies

1 Presentation of the problems

In my view, a discourse discipline is confronted with three types of problem: (1) defining the field of study, in accordance with the objectives declared to be those of the analysis, which can be perceived through the theoretical presuppositions and methodological instrumentation that have been made known; (2) that of the relationship between what might be called the interior and exterior of language, between the speech act[1] proffered and what is outside language – which is perhaps language if one refers to what Lacan says of the unconscious – but which is not verbalized at the very instant of its utterance, not identifiable in the forms of what has been uttered, but is necessary to the interpretation of this; (3) and finally, the problem of interpretation, that is to say of the meaning given to the results of our analyses. This resides in the question of knowing by what process the texts and their discourse are interpreted when one is in the position of the analyzing subject: what is the interpretative practice and what is its possible theorization?

1 In this exposition, *speech act* – sometimes known as *communication act* – will be used in the generic sense of speech production act, and not as in the theory of speech acts.

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It is not possible here to deal with all these questions, which each merit a study of their own; I shall therefore focus on the second problem – that of the relationship between the speech act and its exteriority – and will only allude to the two others.

2 Determining the field of study

When reading studies claiming to be discourse analyses,[2] a wide diversity of approach becomes apparent: some are focused on discursive markers (either grammatical or lexical) and others on modes of organization of the discourse (narrative, argumentative); some adhere to an utterance grammar while others relate to argumentative rhetoric, and still others study language rituals as an interactional device; and some, finally, seek to describe the systems of ideas (ideologies) contained in discourse.

One might attempt to group these various trends around major research problematics. A problematic is not a theory but a place of general questioning which gathers together a series of given propositions that are seen as provisionally (or hypothetically) true,[3] according to certain parameters. In a sense, it defines an epistemological positioning within the discipline.

The problematics will be defined here according to three parameters: the nature of the *object of study* constructed by each of these problematics; the way in which the *subject of the discourse* is seen as regards his or her activity as the producer of speech acts; and, consequently, the type of corpus that has to be assembled in order to undertake the analysis, which, at the same time, is presumed to correspond to the memory of the subject of discourse. We have thus arrived at three basic problematics, each of which corresponds to a type of approach to discourse analysis.

2.1 A cognitive and categorizing problematic

The *object* of study is considered as a series of *discursive devices* whose existence and mode of organization within any discursive production (text or random utterances) need to be identified. It is a problematic that has been developed in the

2 I base these remarks on Charaudeau/Maingueneau (2002).

3 It should be remembered that, for Kant, a problematic is a "proposition that expresses a simple possibility".

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tradition of linguistic pragmatics for which Austin, Searle, and Ducrot are noted: speech acts, presuppositions, and so on; studies relating to interplays of coherence and cohesion in text organization also correspond to this, as too does the work of certain psycho-cognitivists of language who seek to determine "down" or "up" movements of discursive realization of patterns, scripts or scenarios, in order to describe the mode of production or comprehension of texts; and studies focusing on the use of certain words in discourse (connectors, modalities, etc.). From all these cases, there have emerged instrumental categories of analysis that serve to identify or produce discursive configurations.

The *subject* concerned by the determination of such an object will be called *cognitive* insofar as the only factor taken into account is his or her ability to produce or identify discursive articulation operations: anaphoric or cataphoric relations, coordinate or subordinate conjunctions, coherent conditions of repetition, progression and non-contradiction, rules of argumentation, and so on.

The *corpus* constructed in the context of such a problematic has no need to be finalized in accordance with a particular communication situation. From this viewpoint, it might be called *random*, and limited only by the linguistic contexts in which these devices appear.

2.2 A communicational and descriptive problematic

The *object* of study here is empirical, or more precisely it is determined by the observation (more or less naïve) of manifestations in the phenomenal world. Acts of communication can thus be determined according to a certain number of variables: the *identity* of the partners in the exchange, the actional *purpose* (aim) of the situation in which they find themselves, and the *material circumstances* of the communication. Consequently, the object of study emerging from this empirical analysis can be structured into *ideal types* of communication enabling diverse typologies to be established, known as discourses, texts, genres, or communicative situations, but which all presuppose a theorization of these *ideal types* of communication.[4]

The *subject*, here, is linked to this empirical analysis of communicative exchanges, but is also constructed and theorized according to the way in which these exchanges are constructed and theorized. The subject is therefore a subject of communication defined by their psychological and social identity, by a com-

4 On the notions of *Idealtypus* (Weber) or *type idéal* (Durkheim), see Coenen-Huther (2003). (All subsequent translations from other works are by Rosemary Rodwell, the translator of this article, unless stated otherwise.)

portment that is finalized both by the constraints he or she experiences if they wish to interpose themselves into the exchange (from this point of view they are a "that") and by their own intentions vis-à-vis the other (from this point of view they are an "I"). Various theorizations of this subject are possible, but whatever they may be, the subject is considered to be in a relation of inter-subjectivity with regard to the other of language (alterity principle).

The *corpus*, too, is affected by this empirical view of the object of study. It is generally composed of texts that are grouped according to whether they belong to a particular type of communicative situation: advertising, journalistic, administrative texts; school textbooks and political agendas, as well as various conversational texts (telephone conversations, requests for information, interviews, discussions, debates, etc.).

2.3 A problematic known as representational and interpretative

The *object* of study of this problematic is defined through the hypotheses of socio-discursive representations that are presumed to be dominant at a given moment in the history of a society (they are therefore socio-historical) and are thought to characterize a particular social group. In this they are interpretative, since a hypothesis is required, from the outset, on what "social positionings" are in relation to "discursive practices" and the "types of subjects" that relate to them. The difficulty with this problematic lies precisely in the fact that it is necessary to make these hypotheses and that, in order to do so, one must rely upon extremely diverse discursive manifestations – ones that are not always explicit, and may even be diffuse or vague. This poses the problem of how to assemble the corpus.

From this perspective, the *subject* also raises a problem, which has often been discussed. Because the subject initiates the discursive practices that construct representations, he or she may be considered an *active* subject. But because these practices are shared by others in the social group, and they recur in that group in the form of representations of value systems which overdetermine it, it could be said that this subject is *passive* and is diluted in the group consciousness. This has led to two positions defended by various analysts:

– One is radical, and grants this subject no other existence than that of an "illusion", since he or she is held to be entirely overdetermined by what Pêcheux calls the 'pre-constructed' of 'discursive formations' (Pêcheux 1975, passim):[5]

5 "Pré-construits", "formations discursives"; see also Amossy in this book, ch. 12.

the subject is not an "I" but a "that" (ideological or unconscious) which speaks through them;
– The other is less generalized, which is not to deny that the subject may be overdetermined, but rather than considering them an illusion, this position creates a positive view of the subject, saying that they are all partly the bearers of discourses that overdetermine them (often without their knowledge), but at the same time they seek to position themselves in relation to these discourses. It might therefore be said that these subjects are in some way "responsible" (of course this needs to be in inverted commas) for their representations. This is a position that I will call sociological, which is defended in France by certain sociologists who work on analyzing representations of public space in the media (L. Quéré), and has an affinity with the viewpoint of constructivist sociology as conceived by Bourdieu.

The *corpus*, therefore, varies in accordance with one or the other position. However, both positions have a common problem: the social representations – for this is what they are – that are formed by these discourses run across situations and genres, and can thus only be identified transversally, making it particularly difficult to build the corpus. It should nevertheless be pointed out that the corpus is sometimes formed from a series of archival texts, chosen for their emblematic value of dominant discourse, and sometimes from a series of symptomatic signs (verbal or iconic) symbolically representing value systems (racism, immigration, women in publicity, use of certain formulae in the media, and so on).

These three problematics define the *field of discourse*. It is a field that can be ploughed in different ways, but with a common purpose: to discover how social interactions are structured through language and, by doing this, to see how social relations are organized and social links established. It means that insofar as this is achieved by and through language as the geometrical center of social organization, discourse analysis as a discipline sets itself apart from others (sociology, social psychology, anthropology, etc.) while still being linked to these.

3 Connection between the speech act and its environment

It must be said that the meaning of a speech act (or communication) does not reside solely in its verbal manifestation nor only in the explicit meaning contained in the utterance produced (a meaning that is verifiable by recourse to the dictionary or to a language grammar). If we limited ourselves to this meaning only, we

would always fall short of the meaning of the speech act, if indeed we wish to consider this as an act of psychological and social exchange. This exchange is always made in accordance with a certain concern, namely the concern for significance. Speech acts are always interpreted on the basis of the utterances produced and in relation to a concern, or at least the concern that is presumed to be that of the exchange, and which corresponds to the question: "what does he want to say to me?". This leads us to perceive what is unsaid, that is to say the hidden, implicit meaning; this does not appear in the simple combination of words that make up the utterance, which we ourselves have constructed by *inference*. What is an inference? It is a mental process by which a subject relates what is said explicitly to something else that is in its environment – an elsewhere, something outside language which is nevertheless relevant to the construction of this implicit: hence the hypothesis that the speaker, on their side, creates their utterance to accord with a certain concern, by distributing in the speech act meanings that are both explicit and implicit according to the inferential possibilities that they attribute to their interlocutor.

In other words, the words and utterances produced do not in themselves have meaning; they can only be interpreted in relation to an "elsewhere" that is more or less overdetermining, a place of conditioning that must be shared by the partners in the exchange: all speech acts are produced and interpreted in accordance with the conditions that govern their production and interpretation. In order for the utterance "he is thirty years of age" to mean that the person being spoken of is "too old", both the locutor and interlocutor need to know that they are talking of a football player; in other words, they need to share a certain knowledge which is one of the requirements of the communication act.[6] The question is how to deal with this issue of linguistic environment in terms of relevance in relation to the speech acts produced.

For this, we need both a theory of "discourse subject" and a theory of the "communication situation": of discourse subject because this is what is at the center of the process in which the speech act is produced and interpreted, and it is partly conditioned by the communication situation; and communication situation because it is this that structures the relevant language environment. This dual theory must be exclusively linguistic – neither sociological nor psycho-sociological – which does not prevent elements of a sociological and/or psychological order being included.

A model will therefore be proposed which distinguishes *three places of relevance* for construction of meaning; at the same time, this means that the subject

6 It is "the theory of mutual knowledge" defended by Sperber/Wilson (1986).

will be defined according to a dual *social and discursive identity*; that the conditions of production and interpretation will be determined in terms of *effects*; and that a position will be adopted on the *subject's mode of existence* in the midst of these places of constraint.

3.1 The place of production

This is the place of a social practice in which the subject producing the communication act is situated. But it is a communicative social practice, which is therefore structured according to the conditions relating to what we shall call a *communication situation*. This communication situation has a particular structure that will be explained below, but we can already say that it is the place where the issue of the communicative exchange is defined, which permits an answer to the question: "What is the purpose dictated by this situation?". That being the case, the speaker (in the generic sense)[7] who is in this situation is *overdetermined* by the status and roles assigned to them by that situation. In each communication situation the subject defines themselves through the *social identity* that the situation dictates to them.

But this social identity has to be considered in relation to its relevance to the communication act, for this is what establishes the speaker's legitimacy, that is to say it is what enables the speaker to answer the question: "What authorizes me to speak?". For example, such a person's status as a doctor is irrelevant if they go and knocks on their neighbor's door to ask for a piece of bread. In this scenario, it is the person's social identity as a neighbor that is relevant to the situation in which a favor is being asked; it is this identity that authorizes them to make such a request. On the other hand, it is their role as a doctor that will be relevant in the situation of a medical consultation, and will authorize them to ask their patient: "Are you sleeping well?". Conversely, it is obvious that this utterance cannot be made by a passer-by who stops another passer-by in the street, because the situation in which information is requested by one stranger from another stranger does not authorize it.

If we are interested in analyzing different types of discourse, it will be necessary to question the social identity of the subject at the origin of each of them. In a press discourse, for example, what are the relevant features of social identity

7 The "speaker" in the generic sense is the person who produces the speech act in whatever form it may be – oral, written and in whatever locutive relationship it may be, interlocutive or monolocutive. I also name it "communicating subject" in contrast to "enunciating subject". For these designations of the speaker, see Charaudeau/Maingueneau (2002), under the entry *Sujet parlant*.

that relate to the text being produced: are we dealing with a journalist from the newspaper, a correspondent or special envoy, or is it an occasional columnist, a person unrelated to the newspaper, etc.? If it is a political discourse, does it involve an electoral candidate, an elected representative, a minister, a head of state, a member of the majority or a member of the opposition?

If we base the speech act on a principle of influence and regulation of social interactions, due to the problem that the alterity principle poses to all speakers (sharing with the other/being different from the other), its concern could be defined as relating to the effects to be produced upon the other and, on the part of this other, a concern to perceive these effects: effects of causing to act, making known, making believe, and so on. However, since the speaker cannot be sure that these effects are also perceived by the interlocutor, we shall name them *intended effects*. Of course, it is desirable that these effects should be perceived by the interlocutor since they are a condition of the success of the verbal exchange; but, as we shall see, the interlocutor has their word to say in any verbal interaction. In any event, the place where conditions of production exist will be defined as a place where the data of the communication situation are amassed, which partly overdetermine the identities of the subjects present and the purpose of the interaction in terms of intended effects.

3.2 The place of interpretation

This is also the place of a social practice in which the subject receives the communication act and has to interpret it. This activity is dependent, at least in part, on the same conditions as those of production insofar as the subject in this situation is the partner in an act of communication whose concern they must recognize: "What is the purpose dictated by this situation?", "what social identity does it assign to the speaker?", "what social identity does it assign to me, the interlocutor?"; this is the condition for attempting to reconstruct the meaning proposed by the speech act received.

However, this interlocutor subject[8] is a social actor with his or her own autonomy as far as interpretation is concerned; they devote themselves to this activity in accordance with their own social identity, the social identity of the speaker as they perceive it, the intentions they attribute to the speaker, their own knowledge of the world, and their own beliefs. From this perspective, it might be said that the speaker does not totally control the interlocutor; the former might be

8 I will call this person the "interpretant subject".

able to imagine what the latter is, but cannot be sure that the interlocutor will interpret their speech act as they envisage it. This is because the interlocutor in turn constructs a meaning; they are not a simple recipient whose activity consists in decoding the message emitted by the speaker, as in the traditional pattern of communication: they are an *interpretant who constructs meaning*.

It signifies that this place is one where effects of meaning belonging to the interlocutor are realized, which is what enables us to speak here of *effects produced*. And we must accept that intended effects and the effects produced do not necessarily coincide. Of course, non-coincidence, even distortion between these effects varies according to the characteristics that the situation assigns to each of the partners in the communicative exchange. One might think that in a face-to-face conversation, the interactors are more able to adjust what they say to the reactions of the other, to rectify them and therefore to bring intended effects and the effects produced closer together (of course, this depends on the degree of knowledge and familiarity that characterizes their relationship, as well as their psychological state). But in all cases of communication where the interpreting subject is plural, represented by a group, a public, or an audience, there is a strong possibility that these two types of effects will coincide only slightly. This is the case with political discourse, information media discourse, publicity discourse, and, to a lesser extent, didactic discourse. The more heterogeneous and ill-defined the public, the less coincidence there will be.

I will define the place of interpretation conditions as a place where the specific data of the interpretant subject are assembled, and revealed by the effects produced, which are then added to the conditions of the communication situation.

3.3 The place of construction of the text

First and foremost, let us be clear that what we call *text* refers to all speech production configured in a visual or verbal fashion or by any other signifying semiological system: it results from the speech act in its semiological manifestation, whether this is open or closed, oral or written, long or short, continuous as in a written production or fragmented in a succession of speakers' turns as in a conversation.

We are therefore now in the place where a text is constructed from data imposed by the place of production. Its organization depends on the way in which certain categories of discourse are chosen and arranged in a combination of argumentative, narrative, or descriptive structures at the service of a certain theme regarding the world, which is to say a certain construction of meaning.

But here, the subjects implied by the text are not those of the place of production or of interpretation. They are, as Barthes says with regard to the narrative of

"speech beings",[9] beings who exist only by and through the linguistic event. Thus we are dealing on the one hand with an *enunciating subject*, the one who emerges from the verbal utterance; and on the other with an *addressee*,[10] the one who is implied by the text itself. They are defined in terms of *discursive identity.*

Both the enunciator and the recipient are constructed by the speaker. It is the speaker who through their speech act forms a discursive image of themselves (a kind of ethos), and an ideal image of the person they think they are addressing. Although, as we have seen, the speaker does not control their interlocutor, they do on the other hand control the recipient who depends entirely on the speaker. Of course, the speaker can be mistaken in their calculation because they produce their utterance according to what they know of the interlocutor and create an image of that person which matches their own taste, but it may turn out that the interlocutor does not correspond to this ideal image. In this way, misunderstandings, misconstructions, false interpretations, or quite simply other interpretations are made.

The meaning of a text does not depend solely on the intention of the person who produces it; all is not settled in advance because of the speaker's status, as Bourdieu appeared to say.[11] The discursive identities of the protagonists in the speech act also construct meaning which then, in return, proceeds to confirm or modify the speaker's intention with regard to the interpretant subject. In the same way as in a narrative, people will not confuse *author* with *narrator* on the one hand, or mistake the *reader constructed* by the narrative (the "lector in fabula" of whom Umberto Eco speaks)[12] for the *effective reader* on the other hand, since, in both cases, the latter provide a certain image of the former. Similarly, and more generally, the speaker will not be confused with the enunciator, nor the recipient with the interpretant, since one constructs images of the other and vice versa. It can therefore be seen that, from the point of view of meaning, a text is the bearer both of the effects intended by the speaker and the effects produced by the interpretant; it is filled with this sum of effects of meaning that are so many *possible effects*. Every text is the result of a co-construction of meaning effectuated by the two partners in the communication act.

This explains why we might consider a text to be both *closed* and *open*. It is closed around the interpretation made by a particular type of interpretant subject; its meaning is the result of an interpersonal encounter between the two partners in the exchange. It is open if one considers the diverse interpretations

9 See Barthes (1966).

10 See Charaudeau/Maingueneau (2002), under the entry *Sujet parlant*/'Speaker'.

11 See Bourdieu (1982).

12 See Eco (1979).

given it by different types of interpretant subject, and the interpretant subject can vary over time (we do not read Molière as Molière's contemporaries did); over space (we do not read a novel by García Márquez as a Columbian reader would and, in France, the warmongering declarations of George W. Bush were not read in the way the average American would have read them); according to age bracket (a child does not read television advertisements in the same way as an adult); according to gender (women will consider an advertisement sexist whereas men will consider it sexy); according to *social class* (there are those who like popular television programmes of the talk-show type, games, or reality shows like Love Island, and those who detest them); and also according to the type of link that exists between this and the speaker (not everyone experiences the same emotions when seeing images of an air disaster, at least not those who have a close relative in the aeroplane).

The text may therefore be considered in two ways:

- From the viewpoint of its linguistic configuration, as a constructed materiality becoming the object of the verbal interaction, but at the same time consistent with an intentional aim, in accordance with the "intentionality postulate" defined by Searle. This intentionality postulate does not indicate what the speaker's communicative intent might be, but the fact that all speech acts are based on an intention, on what enables us to say that the act has a meaning,[13] without the particularities of this meaning being envisaged;
- From the point of view of its content, as a text "full of meanings", meanings which depend on those provided by the situation, the speaker, and the interpretant subject, all at the same time. We can therefore say that every text has multiple meanings, plural meanings, encompassing a series of "possible meanings" as the result of various encounters which each give rise to a specific co-construction.[14] In this respect it is open, but it is an opening with a succession of closures. It is sufficient to recall the multiple interpretations occasioned by the expression "fracture sociale" ('social fracture'), used by Jacques Chirac during the 1995 presidential campaign: for some this was an *appropriation* while for others it was a *winner*, for still others a *hope*, and so on.

13 This notion of Searle's is very often misinterpreted; see Searle (1983).

14 To echo what Roger Odin (2006) has pointed out, I would say that a camera that rolls freely without being placed anywhere, because people have forgotten to unplug it, does not participate in the premise of intentionality and cannot produce a text. But it is enough for sequences recorded by this camera to be taken and put in a television report or feature film for them to acquire a meaning (postulate of intentionality) and they become "inflated" with meaning by virtue of the encounter between the director's intention and that of the spectator.

AU: The cross references to figures, tables and equations are highlighted for the author/editor to check and confirm its correct placement. These highlights will be removed in the next stage. Please make changes if necessary.

This hypothesis of places of relevance (see Diagram 1) highlights several things:

– The meaning of a text involves both process and structure. It is a process because of the fact that there is a co-construction between the occurrences of production and interpretation, a construction that varies according to the variation in the relationship between these two occurrences; it is structural due to the closure presupposed by the encounter between a part of the speaker's planned meaning and the construction of meaning by a *particular recipient-interpretant*. And, undoubtedly, we all need to believe that our interpretation of a text is the right one, just as we all need to believe that a text does not remain fixed in a single interpretation.
– The subject of the discourse is not Singular. Supposing that he or she is constructed according to a principle of alterity, they split in a variety of ways. They split according to the roles they play with regard to the speech act itself: sometimes they are a communicating subject, sometimes an interpreting subject. But every speaker knows that while they are the producer of the speech act, they are also an interlocutor because they cannot help imagining what the interpretative activity of their interlocutor might be; the interlocutor, for their part, knows that at the same time as interpreting, they are also the producer because they cannot help imagining the productive activity of the speaker. Furthermore, the linguistic subject splits according to their nature as a psycho-social being (social identity) and as a speaking being (discursive identity). Thus, the speaker, through the enunciator's discursive staging, proceeds to make a selection from the multiple filiations of which this is composed, and the interlocutor, through their interpreting activity, starts to create their own discursive scenario.

PRODUCTION	TEXT	RECEPTION
Place of production conditions	Place of text construction	Place of interpretation
Social identity →	← **Discursive identity** →	← **Social identity**
of the	of the	of the
Speaker	Enunciator Recipient	Recipient-Interpretant
in the social practice	in the discursive organization(categories of discourse)	in the social practice
(status, roles)		
Intended effects →	Possible effects	← **Effects produced**

↑ ↑ ↑

----------Co-construction of meaning----------

Diagram 1: The three places of relevance.

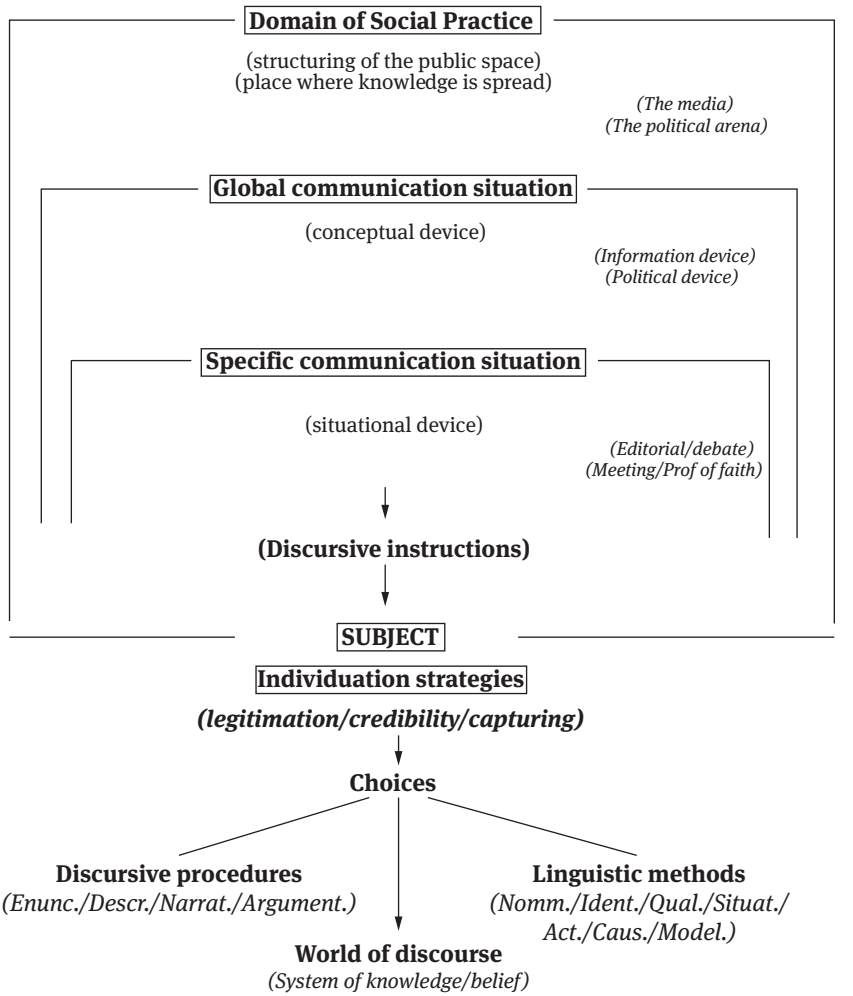


Diagram 2: The communication situation.

– Finally, these three places, defined in relation to their relevance to speech acts, at the same time establish a possible link between different disciplines (sociology, ethnography, anthropology, social psychology, etc.) that are interested in the places of production and reception. But interdisciplinarity is not a simple gathering of several disciplines, or of their concepts or results. It is not by bringing together various results relating to the same object (in fact is it the same object?), nor by citing particular concepts or theories here or there, that this ambition can be satisfied. In order to achieve interdisciplinar-

ity, there needs to be a geometrical center, a place from which other concepts and other results are questioned. In my case, for example, it is from the place of discourse analysis that concepts and results from other disciplines will be reconsidered; but one might imagine that the same stance would be taken by sociology, social psychology, and other disciplines, each of them becoming the geometrical place of this questioning. This is what I call *focused* interdisciplinarity. I consider this to be the necessary condition for the human and social sciences to enter into dialogue. But it also requires the will to achieve it.

4 The communication situation

In all acts of human communication, there are therefore conditions of production and conditions of reception that partly overdetermine the act of producing meaning by each of these subjects. And for a certain mutual comprehension between these two subjects to be possible, we might make the assumption that they have to share some of these conditions: the speaker must be aware of them (this awareness may be unconscious), and the interpretant subject must be able to recognize them. We will name this shared part "communication situation": it represents all the unuttered situational conditions that partly determine the meaning of the speech act and make this a contractual exchange between the two parties concerned. This communication situation constitutes a place of constraint for the production and interpretation of utterances, thereby giving advance instructions to the producing and interpretant subjects for the construction/interpretation of meaning.

One might think that this is trivial since, in most writing, there are so many references to the need to resort to context in order to interpret the meaning of an utterance. But it is not sufficient simply to say this. One cannot make do with simply referring to it from time to time, on the occasion of this or that interpretation. We have to show how this situation is structured, how it imposes its constraints, and how, itself, it becomes a place where meaning is constructed.

4.1 "Spheres of practice" (SP)

Spheres of practice are the place where social interactions are produced, organized into sectors of social activity defined by a set of finalized practices. They result from an interplay which regulates the power relations developed there, and introduce a division of the social space as the symbolic place of an ordered

activity by social actors for a purpose implying rules of interaction. In Bourdieu's terms we might speak of "fields" of social practice.

Each SP results from an apportioning of the social space:[15] the political (and not politics), the legal (and not justice), the religious (and not religion), the media (and not one medium in particular), the economic (and not this or that commercial act), the educational (and not this or that form of education), and so on.

The sphere of practice[16] belongs to no discipline exclusively, and therefore possibly belongs to all of them. It is the empirical place of organization for the phenomenal world, which can be made into an object of study by each discipline: sociology, social psychology, anthropology, history, discourse analysis, and so on. But at the same time, by virtue of being recognized as a field of practices, it is the place where different disciplines can meet and share some of their concepts. For example, there are social actors in this sphere of practice who belong in relational contexts, but without any of these yet being determined. It will be up to each discipline to define them as "subjects", "action situations", and "rules of conduct".

4.2 The "global communication situation" (GCS)

The *global communication situation* is a prime place for constructing the sphere of social practices in a sphere of communicational interaction. We are therefore now in the field of communication acts. This situation is defined conceptually by the number of communication instances that are present: this legitimates their role and status, the types of relationship established between them, the discursive purpose intended, and the thematic domain relating to it, all organized according to a system that will itself be called conceptual because it does not prejudge the specific nature of these constituents.

For example, the global communication situation in politics is characterized by four instances: the "political" instance, the "adversarial" instance, the "citizen" instance, and the "mediation" instance;[17] the *discursive intention* is "an incitement to share an idea for a project and for social action"; the macro-thematic domain deals with a "social ideal". The GCS of publicity, on the other hand, brings

15 I shall name this with the aid of the definite article *the*, to indicate that it remains a vague object that has not yet become an object of study.

16 It appears to correspond with what Dominique Maingueneau calls the "global scene" (in: Charaudeau/Maingueneau, 2002), under the entry *Scène d'énonciation*/'Utterance scene') and what Van Dijk (1999) calls the "domain".

17 See Charaudeau (2014).

together a "publicity" instance and a "consumer" instance (it is its own mediation instance), a discursive intent "to encourage ownership of a consumer product", and a macro-thematic domain "of individual ideality". As for the global communication situation of the news media, this brings together an "information" instance, a "public" instance (it is also its own mediation instance), a discursive intention to "communicate and comment on world events" and a thematic domain of "events occurring in the immediate public arena",[18] which explains the collusion that can occur between political discourse and the news media discourse.

The global communication situation[19] is therefore the place where social actors in the practical sphere are constructed in *communication instances*,[20] where the interplay of regulation is constructed into *discursive intentions* and the world of knowledge concerned with it into a *macro-thematic* domain. Although in the SP there is a blurred division between the political, the legal, the educational, the media, etc., in the GCS we are dealing with the conceptual devices of political, legal, educational, and media communication. But here, the concrete communication situation is not yet specified.

4.3 The "specific communication situation" (SCS)

The *specific communication situation* is a second place of structuring the sphere of practice where the physical conditions of linguistic staging are determined, and the terms of the global communication situation specified. Although, in this latter, we were dealing with globally defined communication instances, here we are concerned with subjects participating in the exchange, who have a social identity and very precise communicational roles. The same can be said of the exchange's intention and of the thematic domain, which are specified according to the "material circumstances" in which the latter takes place. Thus, the conceptual device of the GCS is transformed into a signifying *material device*. It is a kind of "mediologization"[21] of the conceptual device. This concerns both the materiality of the semiological system (written, phonetic, iconic, visual, gestural, etc.), and that of the medium of transmission (paper, audio-oral, audio-visual, electronic, etc.).

18 See Charaudeau (1997).

19 Also named "generic scene" by Maingueneau (cf. Charaudeau/Maingueneau 2002).

20 Van Dijk (1999) speaks here of "global participants".

21 See Debray (1994).

This place[22] is one where communication situations are typified as variants of the GCS. For example, one might say that a political candidate for election who is male belongs to a specific "electoral candidature" situation by having assumed the identity of electoral candidate and appealing to electors; he is led to produce a discourse that charms and persuades in the diverse sub-situations represented by political meetings, leaflets stating his political position, declarations made to the staff of large companies, etc., each time with a change of discursive register. But this same politician, once elected, becomes part of other SCSs, depending on whether he is addressing his fellow citizens during televised party political broadcasts, journalists at press conferences, ministers at Cabinet meetings, and so on. The discourses produced in each of these particular situations will obviously be different.

If, therefore, the GCS is the place of conceptual devices, the SCS is the place of material communication devices as so many sub-sets of the former: specific situations involving "candidacy", "meetings", "press conferences", "parliamentary questions", etc., as sub-sets of the "political" conceptual device; specific situations of "class", "school textbook", "teaching syllabuses and instructions", etc., as sub-sets of the "educational" conceptual device; specific situations of "radio news bulletin", "television news", "newspaper headline", press "editorial" or "report", etc., as sub-sets of the "media information" conceptual device.

Of course, linguistic interactions are always carried out in specific situations. There is no global situation that does not take shape in a specific situation, but I would also suggest that there is no specific situation that does not depend on a global situation. This distinction does not claim to be ontological (although it might claim to be so) but it at least has an operative virtue enabling two types of question to be answered: what is a genre? And how does a genre change?

The question of discourse genres is too vast to be dealt with here, but part of the answer might lie in the fact that genre is not determined by the formal characteristics of the discourse – as is often said – but rather by the situation that sets up the conditions for producing it: a discourse is political, promotional, administrative, religious, legal, media-related, and so on, primarily because of its production conditions: genre is first and foremost *situational*. The nature of the discursive features corresponding to it remains to be seen, which is why I propose to make a distinction between situational genre and discursive genre.

At the same time, this distinction enables us to understand the set of variants established within the same situational genre, since a specific situation produces

22 Called "scenography" by Maingueneau (cf. Charaudeau/Maingueneau 2002) and "scene" by Van Dijk (1999).

several variants as part of the same global situation. Thus, to the often-posed question of whether it is possible to speak of a political discourse or whether one should speak of different political discourses, the answer is that there are a number of specific situations of political discourse; and that these all comply with the conceptual device defined in relation to the global communication situation of politics: there are *several* political discourses within *the* political discourse. The same is true of all types of discourse.

Also at the same time, this distinction enables us to understand that SCSs are more unstable, that they may change or new ones may appear in accordance with shifts in the material circumstances of their devices, which may end up influencing the GCSs. This is the case with the appearance of internet technology, which created specific new conditions for information, and these had the effect of gradually modifying media devices. In the toing and froing between these two types of situation, changes in genre are thus produced over time. But this happens through the interventions of subjects staging their discourses, as we shall see in what follows.

In conclusion, we can say that global and specific communication situations form the framework that overdetermines linguist subjects (communicating subject and interpretant subject). This framework is itself made up of a set of constraints that are imposed upon the speaker by providing them with *discursive instructions* which they must take into account in their utterance. It is this set of constraints that I call *communication contract*[23] because it is the condition for establishing mutual understanding between the two partners in a speech act.

These instructions are said to be *discursive* because they determine linguistic behaviours without necessarily prejudging the specific linguistic forms that may be used: they are not linguistic or semiological instructions dictating which words or grammatical construction to use; or what image, script, colour, or gesture to employ – these are the speaker's choices. Instead, they are ways of organizing the discourse (descriptive, narrative, argumentative), its textual or paratextual composition, and the thematic selection and organization with which to shape speech. For example, the instructions given by the situation of a publicity poster tell the subject displaying it that they must, somehow or other, show the product and present or suggest its benefits to the public, in a thematic domain that concerns the problems an individual might encounter in their quest for wellbeing (youth, prestige, health, bodily appearance, satisfaction of exerting charm, etc.). But these instructions do not say whether the slogan must be configured in allocutive or delocutive form; if the product's qualities should be suggested through

23 See this same entry in Charaudeau/Maingueneau (2002).

a particular type of argument; or if the product should be iconically represented in a particular manner.

A communication situation will therefore not be confused with an utterance situation. The former brings together data that are external to the speech act, whereas the latter concerns the discursive arrangement of the speech act. As Bakhtin says and J.-P. Esquenazi has reminded us, it is the situation that shapes the utterance.

5 Positioning of the subject

I do not intend to develop this point unduly because my intention, in the context of this exposition, was to demonstrate the type of communication model through which one might attempt to articulate the speech act with an element outside language conditioning it, and to show this by defining three places of relevance together with a theory of the communication situation. But since both of these imply a joint theory of the subject of discourse, I am bound to follow this conception of the subject through to its end – a conception which says that the subject is both constrained by the particular facts of the communication situation and at the same time relatively free to position him- or herself in relation to it. I will therefore limit myself to outlining this second aspect.

It should be stated from the outset that the linguistic subject, as we have said, can only be conceived of if based on a principle of otherness which says that the Self can become aware of its existence only insofar as it recognizes the existence of another, who is both similar and different from the Self. To this might be added the paradox that the more this other resembles the Self, and even merges with them, the less the Self exists; and the more the other is differentiated from the Self, the more the Self exists, but in an antagonistic relationship which means that the other may present a threat to the Self. This means that an ambivalent relationship of attraction and rejection is established between the Self and the other and, in a verbal interaction, this becomes a relationship between I and You: sometimes in an I-You partnership which leads the subjects to make common cause, configured as a We, and sometimes to make a differentiation between I/You, leading the subjects into a process of individuation configured as an I, which is different from everything that is non-I.[24]

24 This perhaps relates to a comment by Bernard Stiegler on Gilbert Simondon, when he said something in the vein of "the I can only think of itself in relation to the We, assuming a collective history in which it recognizes a plurality" and "the I is a process of individuation that tends to become One (ideal of the Self), but is not One".

It is therefore as I-We that the subject becomes part of a communication situation and has to fulfil its instructions, and it is as I/non-I that the subject implements a linguistic process of *individuation*. The discursive staging demonstrates this dual tension between respect for the facts of the situation and differentiation within these facts. Having seen what the constraints of the communication situation were, how these were organized into different levels of embedding, and how they were converted into discursive instructions, we now face the problem of knowing how the subject is able to differentiate him- or herself.

Let us then assume that the subject, in the linguistic phenomenon, is both a subject of knowledge and a relational subject, without our really knowing the interactive relationship established between the two. The linguistic subject is therefore caught between two stools: whether to position themselves in relation to knowledge or in relation to the other.

With regard to knowledge, the subject is confronted by the issue of perception and the conceptual understanding of the world through the different thought systems that organize knowledge of the world. I propose to consider that these thought systems can be of two orders: the order of "cognizance" as objectivized knowledge, exterior to the subject, whether it comes from a widely shared experience (if I throw an object into the air, it falls down again) or from erudite knowledge (the law of gravity); the order of "belief" as subjectivized knowledge, interior to the subject, implying a polarized judgment of the world (it is good not to humiliate an enemy). The subject has to position themselves in relation to these different forms of knowledge by using the systems of recognition available to them and activating the belief systems that they carry within them. These systems are conveyed by the discourses that circulate in social communities and are just as much a part of collective memory as of each individual memory. Understanding these discourses is to plunge into an intertextuality such as that described by Bakhtin's dialogism.

With regard to the other, the subject is confronted with the question of the validity of the communicational exchange according to its constraints. I propose to consider that the subject acts by attempting to answer three types of question: (1) does the other perceive what authorizes me to speak (what legitimates me)? If not, I will have to try to legitimate myself in the other's eyes; (2) does the other believe me? If not, I will have to try to make myself credible; (3) does the other agree to enter into a relationship with me and are they ready to subscribe to my world of discourse? If not, I will have to try to be amiable towards them, to persuade and move them. In other words, the subject, in order to become individuated, has to implement strategies of *legitimation*, *credibility*, and *capturing* by means of a certain discursive staging.

Legitimation strategies are not to be confused with legitimacy which is granted in advance and attributed by the communication situation (see the instances and identities established by the GCSs and SCSs). These strategies are put in place when the speaker is not certain of the communication situation or when they think that it has not been sufficiently legitimized in their interlocutor's eyes. Depending on the case, the speaker may then insist on their own trustworthiness, their knowledge of a particular domain, their experience or filiation, as politicians often do when in an electoral campaign situation.

Credibility strategies are implemented when the speaker wishes to be believed. They can then construct an image of themselves, an ethos,[25] as a serious person who reasons calmly, is level-headed, knows how to weigh advantages and disadvantages, proves what they say, reports known facts, and so on. They then have to resort to all the power of persuasion of which they are capable.

Capturing strategies are implemented when the subject, because they are not in a position of authority over their interlocutor (in the opposite case, it would be sufficient for them to give orders), tries to ensure that the latter finds what they say interesting, shares their opinion, or adheres irrationally to their own feelings. In order to achieve this, they may resort to using a discourse that touches their interlocutor's emotions by creating affects in them (effects of pathos)[26] that give the subject the upper hand.

6 Conclusion

I will conclude by saying that this socio-communicational model[27] is a hypothesis about the functioning of the speech act and that breaking it down into its component parts enables its different aspects to be analyzed: the subject of the speech act has their identity split between the social and the discursive, but they are also constrained by situational factors; they then tend to become individuated by employing discursive strategies whose linguistic staging produces a text carrying possible effects of meaning, the results of a series of co-constructions of effects intended and effects produced (see Diagram 2).

25 On this question, see Charaudeau (2014).

26 On this question, see Charaudeau (2014).

27 I should say "socio-semio-communicational" to be precise, since it takes account of the significance of signs in the various semiological systems brought into play in order to carry out a speech act.

To end with I will clarify what has previously been sketched out, namely the back and forth interplay between the global communication situation, the specific situation, and individuation strategies.

The publicity discourse has changed from its beginnings, when the challenge was mainly to ensure the existence of a product, to the 1970s-1980s when the concern was to promote the product's qualities and benefits around a desire, a dream, or a fantasy; by the contemporary period it had evolved again so that, now, the staging of the advertisement itself predominates, independently of the product. It might be said that the general conditions of the publicity discourse, in its conceptual operation, are still the same but that what has changed, because of differentiation strategies, are the conditions of the specific communication device.

The information discourse has also changed and Bernard Miège has well described its different phases.[28] In the eighteenth century the aim of the press was to foster engagement between élites so that opinions could be shared; in the nineteenth century, a mass commercial press aimed to transmit information exalting the values of social progress; and in the twentieth century, the mass audio-visual media were caught in a financial trap that made them approach viewers with a concern to influence their emotions rather than their reason. And I myself have shown through a joint study of the conflict in the countries of the former Yugoslavia[29] that television develops a dual discourse, of dramatization with an excessive use of pathos on the one hand, and moral awareness on the other, with its calling out of political authorities. It will be said that capturing strategies have gradually become dominant in a communication contract that, ideally, should be "to inform". And one might add that, due to a rise in the power of televised media, current political discourse is wondering what discursive capturing strategies to use: this may well end up transforming the global communication situation in politics in such a way that the purpose is no longer to offer citizens an "ideal social plan" but identical images of both politicians and citizens.

28 See Miège (1995).

29 See Charaudeau/Croll/Fernandez/Lochard/Soulages (2001).

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