Emotion and Affect

CHRISTIAN PLANTIN
Université Lyon 2, France

Classical approaches to emotion: Rhetoric vs. philosophy

Ancient rhetoric considers emotions as discourse products, and instruments of social action. Actually, the first articulated approach to emotions in social discourse is to be found in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (Book 2) where Aristotle takes a discursive, social, technical, functional, and amoral view on emotions. The *pathos* is a key tool to persuade (that is, to take advantage of) an audience of responsible citizens having the power to decide on issues of common interest. The pathos is specified as a set of opposed sociopolitical emotions, for example, "pity vs. indignation." Emotions are driven by a language expert, the rhetor, in a crucial and urgent social encounter where his or her proposals have to face an opponent holding a contradictory proposition embedded in an opposed emotion: For example, a discourse infused with *anger* or *hatred* will be countered by a *pacific* counterdiscourse *cooling down* the issues under discussion.

Philosophers take a quite different stance on the question of emotions. They structure emotion as a conceptual space on the basis of various lists of basic emotions. For instance, Hume differentiates direct and indirect passions: "Under the indirect passions I comprehend pride, humility, ambition, vanity, love, hatred, envy, pity, malice, generosity, with their dependents. And under the direct passions, desire, aversion, grief, joy, hope, fear, despair and security" (1739/2012). The philosophical discussions about emotion, reason, and judgment can be considered as the prolegomena of the contemporary debates on emotion and cognition. The various postulated structures of the human inner world serve as a basis for ethical or epistemological considerations on the fallacious powers of passions, lamenting their capacity to mislead the judgment, and maintaining that they should remain the humble servants of reason. Simultaneously, and somehow paradoxically, emotions are considered as the key determinant of action, as if action could only be carried out under a veil of emotion.

Defining "emotion," "feeling," "affect," "mood"

Since the end of the 19th century the classical lore about emotions as both a mental process and as a special kind of behavior has been integrated as a subfield of the science of psychology. Reciprocally, popular versions of and allusions to psychological concepts have entered the dictionary definitions of basic terms such as *emotion*, *feeling*, *moods*, and are now part of our common language and knowledge. Emotions are

The International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction, First Edition.
Karen Tracy (General Editor), Cornelia Ilie and Todd Sandel (Associate Editors).
© 2015 John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Published 2015 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
DOI: 10.1002/9781118611463/wbielsi079

seen as a subject-centered *syndrome* affecting an individual, the *experiencer*; a syndrome is a *complex* phenomenon, made up of several *integrated components*. The emotion syndrome is defined as a unified experience of a more or less intense, *pleasant/unpleasant*, state of *arousal*, distributed over four main components (after Scherer, 1984, p. 99):

- A *psychological,* subjective and conscious component.
- A *neurophysiological* component, involving bodily transformations, both internal and external, consciously or unconsciously affecting the experiencer.
- A *behavioral* component, having two facets: a transformation of the qualities of the voice, facial expressions, gestures and bodily postures of the experiencer; and a modification of his/her current action.
- An *appraisal*, or *cognitive* component, linking the emotion to a given environment.

To sum up in ordinary words, emotions are complex phenomena, including more or less intense pleasant or unpleasant states of mind, linked with a vision of the surrounding circumstances, involving bodily manifestations, and initiating specific forms of behavior and action.

In ordinary contemporary English, the word *emotion* belongs to a cluster of interrelated words, including passion, feeling, affect, moods, (cardinal) humor, sentiment. The task of describing the meanings and uses of these *words,* as well as the structure of the lexical semantic field they make up, falls upon the linguists, whereas the psychologists deal with the task of producing a coherent, scientifically well-grounded *conceptual* field of the neuropsychological class of phenomenon generally called *emotion*, *affect*, and so on.

By the end of the 20th century, new developments in neurophysiology have revitalized the study of emotions. To satisfy the emerging terminological needs, technical definitions have been given to ordinary words. For example, in the following passage, Damasio (2004) gives a new, technical, meaning to the common words *feeling* and *emotion*: "*feelings are the mental representations of the physiologic changes that occur during an emotion*. The essence of feelings of emotion is the mapping of the physiologic changes that occur during an emotion" (p. 52, italics in original). In ordinary language, *feeling* refers basically to a physical sensation experienced through the sense organ of touch, and to the "generalized bodily consciousness or sensation" (Merriam-Webster, art. *Feeling*). *Feeling* is more general than *emotion* or *affect*: One can have *a feeling of being cold*, referring not to an emotion but to a *sensation*. It could be argued that in the phrase "a *feeling of* sth," as in *a feeling of power*, *feeling* functions as a support noun generating affect terms from nonaffect terms.

Fully fledged emotion episodes, clearly identifiable as discrete emotions such as *disgust* or *anger* are not so frequent; most of our affective life is more fluent and indeterminate. Consequently, the term *affect* is used to refer to an emerging, unspecified state of pleasant/unpleasant arousal.

Like emotions, *moods* are positive or negative: One can be in a *good*, *happy*, *expansive* or *bad*, *irritable*, *depressed*, *hostile* mood. Moods differ from emotions by their source, their duration, and their state of consciousness. The *source* (object, eliciting factor) of the mood is not clear: Weather changes and odors, internal physiological modifications,

can influence the mood, consciously or subconsciously. *Mood episodes* are said to be of a longer duration and less intense than emotion episodes; they are not associated with specific facial expressions. During the emotion episode, the conscience is uniquely occupied by the emotion; *Moods* are less pervasive than emotions; people are relatively aware of their emotions, but less aware of their moods. Nonetheless, the differences between a prolonged emotion and a mood can be subtle and it is hard to tell *prolonged sadness* (emotion) from *depression* (mood).

The "mood-as-information" theorists discuss the relation between mood and motivation or involvement in action; good mood is associated with a will to try harder, or with a relaxed view of the current tasks ("all's well mentality").

Emotions are framed by language and cultures

The emotion experience, as defined in the preceding section, is certainly universal; all human beings, as well as animals and maybe all living beings, can be considered as experiencers. But what about the precise structure of this universal experience among humans? Is it universal in its forms as well as it is in its contents? Data drawn from the variety of cultures, as embodied in the lexicon and syntax of their languages, are relevant in the discussion.

Investigations on emotion talk can begin with the lexicon and the definition of what is an *emotion term*; in an English-speaking culture emotions are designated through nouns (*shame*), adjectives (*glad*), and verbs (*to cheer up*). To draw up a list of emotion nouns, one can first rely on various source lists proposed by psychologists, linguists, or philosophers, which correspond remarkably well. The more restrictive lists include *anger*, *disgust*, *fear*, *happiness*, *sadness*, *surprise*; larger ones include *amusement*, *anger*, *contempt*, *contentment*, *disgust*, *embarrassment*, *excitement*, *fear*, *guilt*, *pride in achievement*, *relief*, *sadness/distress*, *satisfaction*, *sensory pleasure*, *shame* (Ekman, 1999). The number of emotion terms is not limited to a finite set of less than a score of words. First, a word defined through a covering term such as *emotion*, *affect*, *feeling*, *mood* is an emotion term; for example, *shame* is defined as a "painful emotion" (Merriam-Webster, art. *shame*). Second, all *(quasi-)synonyms* and *antonyms* of an emotion term have at least an affective orientation; generally speaking, a term has an *affective orientation* if it can be defined through a more basic emotion term; for example, *cheerful* is defined as "1. being in good spirits; merry. See Synonyms at *glad*" (The Free Dictionary, art. *cheerful*). Moreover, according to the above definition the semantic content of an emotion term must be understood as an aggregate, putting subtly the emphasis either on the gestural-postural, the cognitive, or the psychological component: For example, *droopy* stresses the postural component of *sad*; *perplexed* stresses the cognitive component of *confused*. Some words have just an affective coloring, for example, *de-* words have a negative orientation (privation, separation). This affective coloring is a precious resource to give affective orientation to discourse.

The lexical field of emotion terms can be structured according to various dimensions. The hypernym-hyponym relation allows for a *tree-structure representation* of the

affective lexicon; for example, *anger* can be considered as the hypernym of a class of emotion terms ranging from *irritation* to *rage*.

Emotions can also be designated by verbs, and a large number of verbs having a primary nonpsychological meaning can also function as emotion verbs, for example, *embarrass*. Syntactic analysis studies how the basic semantic emotion roles, *experiencer* and *situation,* combine with the position of the grammatical *subject* or *object* of an emotion verb. For example, the sentence "*Peter hates being late*" corresponds to the structure "*Experiencer*" (Subject) + *emotion verb* + *situation* (Object); "*Paul amuses Mary*" reverses the syntactic positions of the experiencer and the source of the emotion. Verbs like *amuse* admit of *human* and *nonhuman* subject/sources; with a human subject, the sentence receives a dual interpretation according to the subject's intention: "*Paul amuses Mary*" intentionally or not.

The *endogenic/exogenic* dimension of emotion verbs relates to the source of the emotion. In *exogenic* emotion verbs (*to rejoice at*) emotion has a determined source or cause; in *endogenic* emotion verbs (*to sadden*) no precise cause is assigned to emotion. This opposition can be connected with the dispositional dimension of moods.

According to the "cognitive theory of metaphor," metaphoricity structures our ordinary ways of talking and thinking about emotions; that is, in an emotion sentence the syntactical link connecting an emotion term with its source and its experiencer can be metaphorical. For example, in English, anger is conceptualized along the line "*anger is the heat of a fluid in a container*" (Lakoff, 1987, p. 383), as testified by sentences such as, "*anger boils with flight delays*" and "*I get anger bursts for no reason.*" Under another metaphoric line, anger is worded as "*an opponent*," as in sentences like "*you have to struggle with your anger.*"

The lexicon and syntax of emotion terms are the building blocks and cement of overt emotion talk; it can be argued that their study is also basic for a better understanding of emotions as cultural constructs. As shown by anthropologico-linguistic studies, the most basic notions of emotion used in a given culture are language shaped. The problem runs as follows. Consider the fact that the English word *anger* is a translation of the words *colère* (French, a language spoken in Europe) and *liget* (Ilongo, a language spoken in the Philippines), etc. Three questions follow:

- Do these three words refer to a unique emotion, that is, same sources, same pleasure/displeasure sensation, same intensity, same bodily reactions, same ensuing behavior and actions? Are the Germans *angry* when they are *zornig* or *wütend*?
- Assuming that the set of words translated as *anger* defines a broad common, universal field of experience, how can we know that this experience is aptly designated as *anger* and not as *liget*, for example?
- Psychologists consider anger as a basic, universal emotion; should we assume that the English language is predestinated to express unambiguously scientific concepts in the field of emotion?

A triple "yes" would imply some ethnoanglocentrism. A safeguard against such prejudice might be to look at how emotion experiences are worded and syntactically expressed in different cultures-and-language; as Wierzbicka puts it, "one of the most

fruitful and empirically sound ways to investigate 'emotions' in social context is to investigate their codification in linguistic signs and other semiotic phenomena" (Enfield & Wierzbicka, 2002, p. 2).

Emotion as a communicative action: *Emotional* vs. *emotive* discourse

This section follows a line originating in Darwin, arguing that the supposedly *subject-centered expression* of emotions is actually a *partner-oriented* semiotic device. The manifestations of emotions have a sociocommunicative function. A reference definition of the expressive function of language is to be found in Jakobson (1987): "The so-called emotive or 'expressive' function, focused on the addresser, aims a direct expression of the speaker's attitude toward what he is speaking about. It tends to produce an impression of a certain emotion, *whether true or feigned*; therefore, the term 'emotive', launched and advocated by Marty, has proved to be preferable to 'emotional'. The purely emotive stratum in language is presented by the interjections" (p. 66) and most clearly by *primary* interjections. *Primary interjections* have the form of onomatopoeia, and are commonly defined as "a cry or inarticulate utterance (as alas! ouch! phooey! ugh!) expressing an emotion" (Merriam-Webster, *Interjection*). *Secondary interjections* correspond to the exclamatory use of a word or an expression (*shit!*).

The onomatopoeia model of interjections runs as follows. When a door bangs, it produces the sound *bang!*; when a person feels pains, she produces the sound *ouch!*; similarly, the sound *argh!* is considered, so to say, as the "natural cry" elicited by a specific zone of affect covering "annoyance, dismay, embarrassment, frustration" (Wiktionary, *Argh*). The main argument in favor of this special, not quite linguistic, status of interjection is their special phonetic configuration. This view accounts for the difference between *I'm embarrassed* and *ouch!* by distinguishing two modes of expression of emotion, the *discursive* mode and the *eruptive* mode of expression of emotion.

The onomatopoeia model has its limits. First, interjections are amenable to general linguistic considerations; they belong to the more general linguistic category of *discourse markers*. Second, since emotions include a perceptual-cognitive component exclamation words do cognitive work as well; markers of surprise such as *oh*, *ah*, *well* analyze the occurring event as being disruptive, that is, contrary to the expectations and relevant for the purposes of the experiencer. Finally, contra Jakobson, one has to acknowledge the fact that emotions and moods pervade discourse at all levels.

The problem of interjections is a special case of the pragmatic opposition between *emotional expression* and *emotive communication*. Emotional expression is a private phenomenon, an unpredictable, uncontrollable, unintentional, coming out of true emotion, breaking up the intended discourse. In emotive communication, emotion is a public phenomenon, a discursive construct, strategically displayed in order to influence or manipulate the interlocutor's behavior and the current course of action; emotive discourse can be misleading or deceitful (Caffi & Janney, 1994, p. 348). The decisive criteria to tell emotional expression from emotive communication appears to be contextual: If the emotion manifestation is not produced in the absence of other members of the com-

pany, then it has certainly a communicative function, a social value, and the semiotic status of a sign. This apparently meaningful opposition remains challenging to apply because emotive communication exploits and mimics emotional expression; there is no linguistic marker of "true" emotion; linguists are in the same situation as participants, they have only access to emotive language, which actually includes emotional language.

Social production and management of emotion

Due to their indeterminacy and waxy nature, emotions appear to be socially malleable. Universalist, biologically grounded theories of emotion have to account for the fact that the manifestations of emotions vary across cultures, according to different systems of *display rules*. Sociological approaches to emotions question the individual nature of emotion, arguing that emotions are *socially shared*, and, most critically, that they are constructed through social norms, or *feeling rules*; they can mutate under social pressure, through *emotion work*.

The notion of *display rule* is used in the Ekman hypothesis in combination with the universality claim to account for the variations of emotion expression through languages and cultures. Ekman, Sorenson, and Friesen (1969) define display rules "as procedures learned early in life for the management of affect displays and include deintensifying, intensifying, neutralizing, or masking an affect display. These rules prescribe what to do about the display of each affect in different social settings; they vary with the social role and demographic characteristics, and should vary across cultures" (p. 87). Display rules map a supposed deep universal emotional biological structure into various surface expressions of emotions; socialization comes second.

According to the individual-psychological perspective emotions originate in the individual and are subsequently *socially shared*. The expression *social sharing of emotion*, a form of *emotion work*, was coined by Rimé to point out the fact that significant emotional events are generally abundantly commented upon by their experiencers. Emotional experience, from traumatic experience to more everyday feelings, is seen as destabilizing for the individual, along essential dimensions of his or her identity, such as sensations, perceptions of the world, and cognitive and belief systems. Consequently, one may feel at risk under an emotional shock, and search for help, engaging in a kind of informal "talking cure" initially with intimate partners. Emotions need articulation, and, particularly in the case of traumatic experiences, the process of assimilation may take a long time (Rimé et al., 1998).

Hochschild (1979) defines *emotion work* as "the act of trying to change in degree or quality an emotion or feeling" (p. 561); emotion work adapts "what I do feel" to "what I should feel" (Hochschild, 1983/2003, pp. 56–57). Recategorizing is an efficient tool of emotion work—attending a funeral is associated with depressive feelings—if the ceremony can be reshaped as a professional obligation, these depressive feelings can be transformed into an apparently more manageable slightly bored mood.

Feeling rules are norms or scripts that "guide emotion work by establishing the sense of entitlement or obligations that govern emotional exchange" (Hochschild, 1983/2003,

pp. 56 – 57). Feeling rules are social conventions, establishing what one should feel under given circumstances. Two levels of feeling rules can be distinguished, *cultural* rules, valid in the community at large, such as rules determining what one should feel at a funeral or at a wedding; and *occupational* rules aimed at adapting the *deep feelings* of the individual to the various workplace necessities, not just his or her *external emotional actions* (Hochschild 1983/2003).

Display rules are not to be confused with feeling rules: Display rules, given the universality claim, presuppose the stability of the underlying emotion and alter only its external manifestations, whereas feeling rules can alter the very nature of the spontaneous emotion — note that, under the James-Lange hypothesis ("*we feel sorry because we cry*"), if the external manifestations are modified, the inner feelings should transform to fit the new manifestations.

Emotion as an interactive coexperience

According to the most radical thesis, emotions — at least some of them — are social products. The original meaning of the word *emotion*, when it appeared in English in the second half of the 16th century, was "social unrest, social protest" (Online etymology dictionary, art. "Emotion"). Thus, based on this etymology, *emotion* basically refers to a collective phenomenon, and its application to the inner mental state of an individual is a *secondary*, figurative, use.

The functional vision of emotions as realizing or strengthening group cohesion is one of the first and most important contributions of Durkheim's (1915/1971) sociology of the study of emotions. Mourning rituals are achieved through animated ritual acts, collectively performed by the participants, such as prostrating on the body of the dead person, wailing, weeping, lamenting, kissing each other. Mourning is considered as a specific, inherently collective emotion originating in such collective expression, and distinct from the individual emotion of sadness, originating in a personal loss.

The study of emotion in naturally occurring interactions is a relatively new topic in the field of emotion studies (Ruusuvuori, 2013). The interactional perspective connects easily with research on animal and human empathy. It takes a critical stance toward classical "snapshot methods" used to characterize basic emotions. It coordinates and organizes well-known facts from various subfields of emotion studies. It brings in new objects and analytical insights on the basis of a vision of emotions as throughout "social action."

Based on the concept of *empathy*, neuropsychology and ethology have developed a trend of studies on emotion experience as interactional from the outset. Studies on animal emotions start from the observation that "emotional and motivational states often manifest themselves in behavior specifically directed at a certain partner" (de Waal, 2004, p. 383) and argue that the study of emotion as a social capacity has been unduly "overlooked by a science traditionally focused on individual rather than interindividual capacities" (p. 383). The basically other-related nature of emotion has its roots in the

mechanisms of *affective resonance*, *empathy*, and *sympathy*. Affective resonance is the capacity to share the emotion of the other. Empathy and sympathy goes beyond mere affective resonance insofar as they include cognitive filters; for instance, cooriented anger, induced by a partner's anger toward an object, is a case of empathy; pity felt as a reaction to a partner's distress is a case of sympathy. Sympathy is not identification, but understanding and positioning toward the other; the emotion displayed by the second-level experiencer is not identical with, but complementary to the emotion of the other. These notions connect easily with the notions of involvement, alignment, or affiliation familiar in interaction analysis.

Interaction studies advocate a holistic approach to emotions, which means that they take, implicitly or explicitly, a *critical stance* toward analytical methods. Emotions and affect have been mainly studied subcomponent by subcomponent in order to determine their unique characteristics. For example, studies of the facial expression of emotions use a "snapshot methodology," which mistakes a cross-section of the emotion episode with the whole emotion experience. The focus put on the individual's face leaves undocumented the communicative, empathetic, or antagonistic aspect of emotion. Interaction studies address emotion as an ongoing process, involving partners in a common experience; videotapes, not pictures à la Ekman, provide the basic data through which one can observe "live" emotions.

Emotions should be considered as complex phenomenon, emerging from heterogeneous components. The emotional quality of a shriek cannot be established on the sole basis of its phonetic qualities any more than the emotion associated with a facial expression can be unambiguously attached to a specific structure of tense or relaxed muscles of the face. The emotional interpretation is highly context dependent; participants to the emotion episode make global, multifactor inferences to emotion, exploiting all the resources of verbal and nonverbal communication as well as all possible contextual cues.

Advocating a holistic approach to emotion, interaction studies address emotion as a multimodal phenomenon. The emotive performance is enacted through the correlated behaviors of the participants, gestures, body postures, quality of voices, choice of words, structure of the interventions, management of turns at speech, transformation of current actions, and relational work in general. The analytic problem is to account for the coordination of this set of heterogeneous emotive features as they develop in time and vary in intensity. Interaction analysis, its objects and methods, seem to have the capacity to integrate in a coherent perspective insights coming from various traditional fields of studies on emotion in a coherent whole.

Naturally occurring interactions offers the unique possibility to study *emotion episodes* in all their facets. Emotion is defined as a more or less intense episode of pleasure/displeasure: that is, as a foreground event, emerging as a surprise from a background state, less tense, relatively nonemotional, or having the quality of a mood. An event is a dynamic temporal process, having a beginning, a middle, and an end. Each of these moments is relevant in emotion analysis, for instance, the foreground/background distinction is empirically relevant, as shown by emotion narratives (reports of emotion episodes) that regularly contain a report of the background "regular" state preceding and contrasting with the arousal characterizing the emotion episode.

Emotions have sources, verbal or nonverbal. In interactive emotion episodes, sources are fully available to the analyst. One can observe how, for instance, sources are interactionally managed and redefined in relation to the subsequent emotion, as an essential part of the emotion work tending to justify and control emotion, or to object to an emotion.

Interaction studies radicalize the definition of emotion as "social" phenomenon. In an earlier section, emotion was considered not really as "social" but simply as "socialized," through a two-step process. First, an event impacts an individual, who subsequently develops a covert, inner state, fully qualifying as an emotion. Then, under the pressure of social factors, this first-stage inner emotion is controlled and processed into overt, public manifestations: The individual communicates, shares his or her emotion. Emotions emerging in interaction are not only shared but also reconstructed and redefined, step by step, by (dis-)alignment and (dis)affiliation.

Interaction studies approach emotions as basically collaborative products. First, individuals live their everyday life in groups, emotional events impact individuals as members of groups, and the subsequent emotions are constructed and articulated on the spot by subgroups of participants depending on their respective visions and descriptions of reality, their roles and expectations. Second, emotions may have their sources in interaction, as derived from a preceding verbal intervention or relational event, for example, the so-called "expressive speech act" of complaining refers to a complex interaction (Heinemann & Traverso, 2009), just like thanking, welcoming, congratulating, apologizing, deploring, regretting, commiserating. By definition, a *refusal* is followed by a display of *disappointment* by the recipient, and possibly by *anger*; bad news and good news are transmitted and received with displays of affect. Third, some interaction genres include built-in affects, for example, intimate talk with best friends, or doctor–patient interactions, or any conciliation encounters (see the studies in Heinemann & Traverso, 2009). Interaction studies pave the way for a better understanding of "small intensity," everyday, emotions.

Conclusions

The study of emotion is a case of complexity encompassing the total human being: body and soul. From neurosciences to humanities, all disciplines have their own visions of the worlds of affect and emotion, their preferred data, their methods, their own established conclusions, and perspectives. Language and communication studies dealing with emotions depart from the vision of emotions as natural occurrences, in favor of an approach to emotions as semiotic constructs, language and culture dependent that either focus on well-defined emotions or on the status of "emotional speech" at large. Interactions studies redefine emotions as "in progress," collectively and sometimes contradictorily experienced. More than simply being a new specialized trend in emotion studies they appear to be in a privileged place, where the interplay of those various dimensions and modes of the emotional experience can be fruitfully studied.

SEE ALSO: Appraisal Theory; Complaints; Compliments; Discourse Markers; Emergency Telephone Discourse; Evaluative Language; Facial Expressions; Footing; Hate Speech; Humor in Discourse; Identity Construction; Laughter

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Christian Plantin is professor emeritus of language sciences at Lyon 2 University, France. His research interests are language studies, language in interactions, argumentation, emotion. He has published *Les Bonnes Raisons des Émotions* [The Good Reasons of Emotions] (2011) and coedited *Les Émotions dans les Interactions* [Emotions in Interactions] (2000). His *Dictionnaire de l'Argumentation—Une Introduction Notionnelle aux Études d'Argumentation* [Dictionary of Argumentation Terms—A Concept-Based Approach to Argumentation Studies] is in press.