PISSN : 2571-9904 - EISSN : 2602-7763

The Deployment of Emotions in Interactive Structures Accompanying Facebook Posts

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Received: 10 /08 / 2026 **Accepted**: 16 /09 / 2026 **Published**:30 /09 / 2026

Abstract:
This study examines the phenomenon of employing emotional expressions within digital interactive structures accompanying the publication of Facebook news pages. The aim is to reveal the semiotic connotations and pragmatic functions of these expressions. In this article, we employed a semiotic approach to analyze a sample of interactive comments on news posts on channels, focusing on the relationship between textual sign (comments), iconic sign and reactions (imojis), which acquire new contextual connotations in this context. The study concluded that digital emotions act as guiding sign that contribute to the formation of emotional polarization and the establishment of virtual social affiliations. It also emphasises the interactive structures accompanying new posts are semiotic determinants that shape and politicize emotional expression in digital discourse.

Keywords:*emotions, Facebook pages, digital interactive structures, news channels, digital discourse.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary semiotic studies have adopted an open approach to wild range of research topics concerned with the production of meaning and the re-examination of discourses produced by individuals within their social environments. This includes the various communication processes they construct, which can be characterised as complex or ambiguity.This body of research has generated important research questions that seek to establish an approach drawing on both theoretical and applied traditions. This includes the content of media, particularly modern media and its various applications, such as social media platforms, and its relationship to reception the production of meaningor semiotic practice. This approach examines the recipient's position in the communicative process, a passive recipient of the message, but as someone who is profoundly influenced by it in a way that can be observed and analysed semiotically. This allows these interactions to be examined through coherent methodological perspectives. This approach contributes to the study of modes of perception and the analysis of passions, or the semiotics of passions and emotions, as established by semioticians such as Jacques Fontanille, Claude Zilberberg and Algirdas Greimas.

Digital media discourse has thus become a fertile ground for such inquiries within the framework of contemporary cognitive construction—a particularly within the field of semiotics—and the semiotics of passions and emotions is considered one of the latest trends in contemporary semiotic studies.Where traditional semiotic approaches—which focused on structure and function in discourse—have been superseded by the study of passions and emotions as a key component that lends discourse its humanity and interactivity; The Paris School of Semiotics contributed to this major shift by moving from the study of discourse to the study of passions and emotions. Social media platforms—particularly Facebook pages—are considered a central interactive space for the circulation of news and the formation of opinions, actions, and emotions .

These platforms have evolved from mere tools for conveying information into complex environments for social and emotional interaction. In this interactive space, interaction is not confined to text-based responses, but encompasses an integrated system of symbols, most notably digital Reactions and emojis, which are used in comments.

Many news channels, including Al-Arabiya, have sought to leverage the interactive digital spaces generated by communication media and the internet in general, shaped by the boundlessness of information and the widespread dissemination of news. This is especially pertinent given the lack of knowledge about their audience and its heterogeneity, which necessitates the use of various methods in the dissemination process. This includes the incorporation of emotions into the structure of the interactive discourse accompanying posts on Facebook news pages.

To gain a deeper understanding of the role of these interactive structures in reproducing meaning and shaping public opinion, it is necessary to focus on emotions and passions. This requires us to ask the following question: How have emotions been utilised in the interactive structures accompanying posts on Arabic-language Facebook news pages ?

Accordingly, this study aims to reveal how emotions and passions are employed in the interactive structures that accompany posts on Arabic-language facebook news pages , by conducting a semiotic analysis of a sample of interactive comments on selected facebook pages.

By focusing on emotional expression in digital news discourse, the study seek to contribute to a deeper understanding of how interactive structures reproduce meaning, shaping patterns of passional dimension and influence the flow of emotions and feelings.

Objectives of the study:

1. Identify the most frequently used emotional expressions in news comments.

2. Analyze the semiotic meanings of these expressions and their relationship to the accompanying textual discourse .

3. Examine how emotions are employed in interactive structures and to identify their effects,

such as guidance, expressions of belonging, sarcasm, and others.

4. Conduct a semiotic study of emotions and passions in relation to the most important discursive frameworks of digital discourse.

1. The Concept of the Semiotics of Emotions and Passions:

The semiotics of passions, developed by Algirdas Julien Greimas and Jacques Fontanille, is a vital extension of semiotic theory.ç It focuses on analysing bodily reactions and psychological states, as well as how emotional meaning functions within discourse .(GREIMAS & JACQUES, 2010, PP. 12-21)

This theory views emotions not merely as internal psychological states, but as semantic structures that can be analysed and deconstructed as affect transforms into feelings via a specific semantic pathway.

1.1 Definition of Emotions and Passions:

The term 'emotion' is derived from the Latin word 'emotum', the noun form of the Latin verb 'emovere', meaning 'to stir' or 'to move one's feelings'(Ihdan, Wahiba, & Nabila Boukhebza, 2021, p. 1208)

Emotions are described as beneficial to particular situation, manifesting as affective, cognitive and behavioural responses. Linguistically, emotions are expressed through word choice, tone of voice and exclamations, and other linguistic features.

In psychology, meanwhile, emotions are defined as an affective organisation and a relatively stable disposition consisting of several affective states centred on a specific subject. Emotions are therefore feeling-based inclinations centred on an idea or an object. They differ from affects in terms of their intensity, strength and duration. Emotions arise as a perception accompanied (Giron & Anton René, n.d, p. 5) by a rational factor related to the individual. Jerome Anton Rooney defines emotions as a way of life.

Emotions are characterised by their brief duration and their connection to the circumstances that trigger them. This makes them identifiable and definable as They are also the sum of adaptive responses that signal to the body. Generally, only a set of basic emotions exists, whereas Jacques Fontanille defined them as a state of mind that can be represented in the form of an affective and emotional lexicon. This includes emotional terms such as desire, love, and jealousy. We can also find other terms from the collective lexicon that denote emotion or an inclination towards something or someone. These include excitement, passion, sensation, and tension, which are derivatives of emotional terms and similar expressions.(Abada & Hicham, 2019, p. 22)

Therefore, emotion in discourse serves as an expression of sensation in relation to the audience. It is an intense physical sensation and emotional demention which can be represented through verbal cues. This representation enables us to move beyond pure sensation and clarify it. In other words, emotions are natural psychological and affective states, as well as an innate disposition that represents a tendency towards certain things over others, or a feeling that is distinct from other feelings. This disposition is characterised by stability and permanence, that it guides and determines behaviour without indicating a loss of emotional balance.

1.2 The Semiotic Definition of Emotions and Passions

In semiotic studies, the concept of 'passions' is linked to the psychological or emotional state experienced by the subject in relation to an object. For Grimas and Fontanille, a passion is a psychological state resulting from the subject's relationship with an object, manifested in discourse through a set of linguistic and semiotic indicators.(Belabed, Abdelhak, 2016, p. 11)

In semiotic studies, the concept of 'passions' refers to the totality of emotional and affective states expressed in discourse relating to the subject and its relationship with a object. Passions are defined as 'a set of psychological and emotional states that take shape within discourse, influencing its structure and directing its course'. In this sense, passions are not merely fleeting emotions, but deep semantic structures forming an essential part of the semantic texture of discourse.(Al-Mesfar, Asma,, 2023, p. 3)(Bertrand, Denis, 2000)

The semiotics of passions is characterised by its integration of psychological and semiotic dimensions in discourse studies. It views passions as both psychological and affective states and as semantic structures that influence discourse structure and trajectory. In this sense, semiotics of passions goes beyond the traditional psychological approach, which views passions as

individual psychological states, to a semiotic approach that regards them as collective semantic structures formed within discourse and subject to its laws.

The relationship between psychological and semantic dimensions in semiotics of passions is illustrated by the "passional schema" concept proposed by Greimas and Fontanille. This consists of five stages: awakening, preparation, emotional core, emotion, and post-emotion. It represents the path the self follows in its relationship with the subject through which passions manifest in discourse

1.3 The Origins and Development of the Semiotics of Passions :

The origins of the semiotics of passion are linked to the shift in narrative semiotics in the 1980s, when the focus shifted from structure and action to the emotional and affective dimensions of discourse. This shift is clearly exemplified in the book The Semiotics of Passions: From States of things to States of Mind (1991), written by Greimas and Fontanille, which is considered the primary reference in this fiel.(Bouzghaya, Raziq, , 2024, pp. 331–333)

Semiotics spread throughout Europe, America and Russia, evolving alongside linguistic and critical studies. Affective semiotics emerged in response to the limitations of traditional narrative semiotics, which focused on structure and action while neglecting the emotional and affective dimensions of discourse. Researchers realised that discourse is not limited to structure and action, but also includes an emotional and affective dimension that influences its structure and development.

The semiotics of emotions has evolved through several stages, beginning with the structuralist phase that focused on structure and action, followed by the narrative semiotics phase that focused on narrative and storytelling. The current phase focuses on the emotional and affective dimensions of discourse. Several prominent researchers have contributed to this field, including Greimas, Fontanille, Koki, Zilberberg and Henault.

1.4 Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Emotions:

Emotions have long posed scientific and methodological challenges in academic and cognitive studies. The marginalisation of emotions in scientific research and their confinement to the realms of philosophy, individual psychology ,and literature has led to a radical shift in interest in them. Recent studies, such as those in semiotics, have emphasised emotions as an important field of research. This shift is part of the "emotional turn", which has brought emotions back to the forefront of academic interest. Researchers have recognised that emotions are complex adaptive systems and social constructs shaped and managed according to specific functional contexts, rather than mere reactions.

Consequently, numerous studies and research projects focusing on approaches to the study of emotions and passions have emerged, the most notable of which are semiotic, biological and evolutionary, cognitive and evaluative, and sociological and cultural approaches(Bashar, Saida, 2010, pp. 35–38).

A. Biological and Evolutionary Approaches:

Biological and evolutionary approaches are the oldest and most influential in the study of emotions; they focus on their innate roots and their adaptive function in ensuring the survival of emotions as adaptive mechanism.(Ataallah, Meliza, 2019, pp. 17–23)

A.1. The James-Lange Theory: This theory, which was formulated by William James and Carl Lange in the late 19th century, is considered to be the starting point of emotional psychology. It posits that the physiological response precedes the emotional feeling, i.e. that we do not cry because we are sad, but rather feel sad because we are crying or because our bodies have exhibited physiological responses to sadness.

• **Basic hypothesis**: External stimulus → physiological response (e.g. increased heart rate and sweating) → perception and experience of emotion.

This theory was strongly criticised by Cannon-Bard, who pointed out that physiological responses may be similar across different emotions, such as fear and anger. They also argued that the distinction between physiological sensation and emotional feeling is not as clear-cut as the theory assumes.

A.2. Theory of Basic Emotions: Developed by Paul Ekman based on Charles Darwin's work on the expression of emotions, this theory is the one of the most influential approach in biological psychology. It posits the existence of a limited number of basic emotions, characterised by:(Al-Mesfar, Asma,, 2023, p. 4)

Universality: The existence of specific and distinctive facial expressions for each basic emotion, such as happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust and surprise, which are recognised across different cultures.

• **Biological mechanism:** Each basic emotion is linked to a distinct and a specific neuromuscular programme.

• **Adaptive function:** Each basic emotion serves a specific evolutionary function; for example, fear triggers the fight-or-flight response.

Table (1) : Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Emotions

The Theory	Main Hypothesis	The Chronological Sequence of Emotion
James Lange	The physiological response is the cause of the emotional feeling.	Stimulus ← Physiology ← Emotion
Cannon-Bard	The physiological response and the emotional feeling occur simultaneously.	Stimulus ← (Physiology + Emotion)
Paul Ekman	Basic emotions are innate and universal and have distinctive facial expressions.	Stimulus ← Neural Program ← Physiology/Expression/ Emotion

The source : Prepared by the researcher

B. Cognitive and Appraisal Approaches: Emotions as a Product of Cognition

Cognitive approaches focus on the role of cognition and appraisal in the emergence and differentiation of emotions. They reject the idea that emotions are merely physiological or biological responses, instead asserting that it is an individual's interpretation of a situation that determines the type of emotion experienced.

B.1. Schachter and Singer's Two-Factor Theory: This theory offered a resolution to the James–Lang–Canon–Bard debate by positing that emotion requires two fundamental factors(Shoman, Mohamed, 2021, p. 2):

1. Physiological arousal: A general state of physical activation.

2. Cognitive interpretation: The individual's interpretation of physiological arousal based on the surrounding context.

According to this theory, the same physiological arousal, such as an increased heart rate, can lead to different emotions, such as fear or excitement, depending on how the individual interprets the situation.

B2. Cognitive Evaluation Theory: Developed by Richard Lazarus, this is one of the most influential cognitive approach. This theory posits that emotions arise from an ongoing process in which individuals evaluate situations in relation to their goals and well-being.

***The primary appraisal :** involves assessing the situation in terms of its relevance to the individual's goals — is it harmful, beneficial or irrelevant?

***Secondary appraisal :** involves assessing the individual's ability to cope with the situation: do they have sufficient resources?

***Reappraisal :** involves evaluating the situation after the emotional response has occurred.

The distinction between emotions such as anger, anxiety and sadness does not stem from different biological programmes, but rather from different cognitive appraisals of the situation. For instance, anger arises from appraising a situation as harmful and caused by another person's mistake, whereas anxiety arises from appraising a situation as an uncertain threat.

B.3. Emotions, Cognition, and Moving Beyond the Dichotomy:

Recent research, particularly in the field of cognitive neuroscience, has emphasised the complex interaction between the mind and emotion. In his book Descartes' Error, Antonio Damasio demonstrated that emotions do not hinder rationality, but are in fact essential for sound decision-making. Emotions and passions serve as physical cues that direct attention and facilitate the rapid evaluation of options. This proves that the traditional dichotomy between mind and emotion is a false dichotomy.

2. Sociological and Cultural Approaches, Emotions as a Social Construction:

These approaches shift the study of emotions from an individual, biological and cognitive level to a social and cultural one. They view emotions as a social construction shaped and organised according to cultural norms.

2.1. Arlie Hochschild's Sociology of Emotions: Arlie Hochschild's work is widely regarded as the most influential in this field, particularly her concept of 'emotional labor', which is characterised by(Shakshak, Anas,, 2008, pp. 80–87) :

Feeling rules: These are the social norms that dictate when,where and how we should feel or express a particular emotion. They vary across cultures and social roles. For instance, the rules governing the expression of sadness at a funeral differ from those governing the expression of joy at a wedding.

• **Emotional labor:**This refers to the process of managing and expressing emotions in accordance with the requirements of a occupational role, particularly in service occupations such as flight attendant or customer service representative. This work requires individuals to feign or modify their internal feelings to align with the required external expression, which can lead to emotional alienation**.**

B.4. Symbolic Interactionism:

This approach focuses on emotions that arise and are understood through social interaction. An emotion is not merely an internal state, but an interactive process involving:

Naming emotions: Individuals learn to name and categorise their internal feelings through interaction with others and a shared language.

Emotions as mechanisms of social control: Emotions such as guilt or shame are used to control individuals' behaviour and ensure compliance with social norms.

B.5. The macrosociological approach: Represented by Jonathan Turner, this approach focuses on how emotions are linked to broader social structures such as class, power and inequality. It is divided into:

Emotions and Emotional Energy: Turner argues that successful social interactions generate positive emotional energy that strengthens social bonds.

Emotions and social status: The types of emotions that individuals experience are linked to their social status. Individuals with a higher social status tend to experience more positive emotions, such as pride, whereas those with a lower social status tend to experience more negative emotions, such as anger or frustration**.**

3. Definition of digital and interactive struc

Digital discourse is a central concept in contemporary media and communication studies. It refers to all structures, messages and content transmitted via traditional or digital communication media. This concept has developed significantly alongside technological and digital transformations that have altered the nature, forms, and tools of communication(Hochschild, Arlie Russell, 1983, pp. 7–36).

Digital structures have been defined as 'the totality of communicative practices that take place across various communication media and involve the production, circulation and consumption of meaning within a specific social ,and cultural context(Al-Mawsili, Asma, 2023, pp. 57–77.).

In this sense, the concept transcends the traditional concept of discourse structure as a linguistic text, encompassing a broader concept that includes all modern communicative practices carried out through various digital media. It is shaped by the digital media through which it is transmitted, being influenced by their characteristics and features.

Studying digital interactive structures is important for understanding the formation of meanings and connotations in various communication media and how these digital media influence the nature, form and content of discourse structure.

3.1 The Structure of Digital Discourse on Social Media Platforms:

In recent years, social media platforms have undergone significant development and have become an important space for the production, circulation and consumption of digital discourse. This has led to the emergence of new forms of digital discourse, which are characterised by features and traits that distinguish them from traditional discourse. The most notable features of digital discourse on social media platforms are(Shoman, Mohamed, 2021, p. 4):

1.High interactivity: Digital discourse on social media platforms enables direct and immediate interaction between senders and recipients, and between recipients themselves, through mechanisms such as commenting, liking and sharing.

2.Participatory: Digital discourse on social media platforms enables the audience to contribute to the creation and dissemination of content by reposting, editing and adding to it.

3.Immediacy: Digital discourse on social media platforms is characterised by immediacy and real-time interaction in terms of content production, distribution and consumption. This immediacy manifests in various forms, such as live streaming and real-time updates.

4.Multimedia: Digital discourse on these platforms combines various forms of expression, such as text, images, audio, video and animations. This multimedia approach opens up new possibilities for expression and communication.

5.Personalisation: It is characterised by a personal touch in all aspects of content production, sharing and consumption. Personalisation is evident in features such as profiles and personalised content.

These characteristics have given rise to new forms of digital discourse on social media platforms, including posts, tweets, stories, live streams and memes. These forms are characterised by their ability to express ideas, feelings and attitudes in innovative ways and to reach a wide, diverse audience.

Studying digital discourse on social media platforms is important for understanding the mechanisms through which meanings and significances are formed on these platforms and how they influence the nature, form and content of discourse. Digital discourse on social media platforms is a new space for producing, circulating and consuming meaning, shaped by the characteristics and features of these platforms and influenced by the social and cultural contexts in which it takes place.

3.2 Levels of Digital Discourse Structure:

Digital discourse has undergone significant transformations as a result of technological developments that have altered the nature, forms and tools of communication. These changes have given rise to new structures in digital discourse, characterised by features and traits that differ from those of traditional discourse. The most notable of these transformations are(Shoman, Mohamed, 2021, pp. 11–13.) :

A. The shift from linear to hypertext: The structure of digital discourse has shifted from the traditional linear form, which follows a specific, organised path, to a hypertextual form that enables recipients to navigate different parts of the discourse in their own way. This has led to new forms of discourse emerging, such as hypertext and hypermedia.

B. The Shift from Stability to Change: Digital discourse has shifted from a static form characterised by stability and permanence, to a dynamic form characterised by constant transformation and renewal. This shift has led to new forms of discourse emerging, such as dynamic content and ephemeral content.

C. The shift from monism to pluralism: The structure of digital discourse has shifted from a monistic form, which relies on a single medium of expression, to a pluralistic form that combines various media of expression as well as a multiplicity of concepts and meanings within a single discourse. These are interpreted and inferred, either directly or indirectly. Thia creates a more integrated form of digital discourse.

D. The shift from passivity to interactivity: Digital discourse has shifted from a passive form, in which the recipient's role is limited to reception and consumption, to an interactive form that allows recipients to participate in the production and dissemination of content. This shift has led to new forms of discourse emerging, such as interactive and participatory content.

E. The shift from centralisation to decentralisation: Digital discourse no longer relies on a centralised model in which a single source controls the production and dissemination of content. Instead, it has shifted towards a decentralised model which allows various sources to participate in the production and dissemination of content.

These shifts have led to new phenomena in media discourse, such as 'infotainment', which blends information and entertainment, 'memes', which express ideas, feelings, emotions and attitudes in satirical and creative ways, and 'viral content', which spreads rapidly across social media platforms.

These transformations necessitate a study of the structure of digital discourse to understand how meanings and significances are formed in the digital environment and how digital technology influences the nature, form, content and interaction of discourse. These transformation should focus on how interactive structures are formed in digital discourse as a result of its own structural transformation in response to social and cultural changes and interactions, thereby reflecting the complex interplay between technology (digitalisation), society and culture.

4. Operational Mechanisms of Interactive Structures on Facebook Pages:

In academic circles, Facebook pages are defined as 'virtual entities' representing brands, news organisations or public figures. They function as 'broadcasting platforms' enabling two-way interaction with the audience.

In communication and digital media studies, they are also defined as 'public profiles intended to communicate with a broad audience'. Unlike individual profiles, Facebook pages do not require mutual friendship, allowing users to 'Like' or 'Follow' to receive updates and enabling one-way content distribution or asynchronous interaction. These pages serve as a key tool for marketing, community building, disseminating information, social mobilisation and educational and academic purposes. They provide analytical capabilities for examining communication strategies in the digital environment through all the elements that constitute interactive structures. In this context, interaction is not merely a response, but a semiotic structure provided by the platform's technical system consisting of three main levels(Ahmed Ahmed, Othman, 2022, pp. 297–368.):

5.1Reactions

These are direct, iconic symbols that express specific emotional states and have an passional dimension. Such symbols include “Like”, “Love”, “Wow”, “Sad” and “Angry”…among others. In other words, they reduce emotion to fixed templates.

5.2 Comments

These are complex textual structures that allow for linguistic expression and are often accompanied by emojis. They constitute a complex semiotic structure (text + icon).

5.3 Shares

A communicative sign indicating the dissemination, endorsement or rejection of content. The most prominent mechanisms of interactive structures in the digital environment and on Facebook pages are:

*Selection and Filtering mechanism: The content presented in a discourse is selected and filtered according to specific criteria such as relevance, recency, proximity and newsworthiness. This mechanism is particularly evident in media discourse, where news stories and topics are selected for coverage based on these criteria.

* Framing mechanism: Content is framed within a specific framework that determines the angle from which the topic will be addressed and the aspects that will be emphasised or ignored. This mechanism is evident in various types of interactive structure where content is framed according to the discourse's objectives, audience and context.

*Narrative structure: Interactive discourse is constructed according to a specific narrative structure including a beginning, middle and end, as well as characters, events, conflict and resolution. This mechanism is particularly evident in media and entertainment discourse, where content is structured to capture and maintain the audience’s interest.

* Media Utilization mechanism: This mechanism utilises the characteristics, features and capabilities of the medium to reproduce the interactive structure through visual, audio, textual and other elements. This mechanism is evident in various types of digital discourse and serves to achieve its intended purpose.

* Mechanisms for audience interaction: Interactive structures allow the audience to interact through commenting, liking, sharing and other mechanisms. This is particularly evident in digital discourse, where content is designed to encourage interaction, enabling the audience to participate in producing meaning and assigning multiple significations and interpretations to it.

The mechanisms by which interactive structures function in the digital environment are characterised by their role in shaping and guiding discourse. They are the product of a complex interaction between various operating and production mechanisms, which in turn are shaped by social, cultural and technological contexts. This has led to opinions being expressed more openly and freely, and to emotions and feelings being more easily embodied in the structure of digital discourse. This has given rise to what are known as 'digital emotions', particularly on social media platforms and in the production, circulation and consumption of digital interactive structures on Facebook pages. These differ from the mechanisms of traditional media. These mechanisms have led to the emergence of new forms that contribute to the structure of digital discourse,including (Jones, 2017):

-Algorithmic mechanisms: Digital platforms and Facebook pages use complex algorithms to organise and display content based on criteria such as popularity, recency and relevance to the user. These mechanisms play a significant role in determining which content reaches the users, consequently shaping their awareness and perception.

- Interaction and engagement mechanisms: Digital platforms and Facebook pages enable users to interact with content through methods such as liking and commenting. This mechanism plays a significant role in determining the popularity and spread of content, and consequently in shaping public discourse.

- The hashtag mechanism: Digital platforms and Facebook pages enable users to link content to a specific topic or issue using hashtags, thereby making it part of a broader discourse. This mechanism plays an important role in organising and categorising content, as well as shaping discourse around specific issues and topics. Here, emotions and feelings take centre stage in digital discourse and are emphasised to ensure the intended message has impact and sustainability.

- Ephemeral content mechanism: Some digital platforms and Facebook pages allow users to post content that disappears after a limited time, such as Instagram and Facebook Stories. This mechanism encourages users to share moments from their daily lives and creates digital emotions and feelings, some of which are characterised by immediacy and transience, while others by permanence.

These mechanisms have led to new phenomena emerging in digital discourse on social media platforms and Facebook pages. Analysing the mechanisms at work in digital discourse on social media platforms is important for understanding how meanings and significances are formed on these platforms and how they influence the nature, form and content of discourse. Here, discourse is shaped as a product of the complex interplay of users' social and cultural practices.

5. Influence Strategies in Digital Discourse

Digital discourse relies on a range of strategies to influence audiences and achieve objectives. The specific strategies employed vary depending on the nature of the discourse, its objectives, its audience and its context. The most prominent of these are(Hamdi, Bouthaina,, 2022):

5.1The Persuasion Strategy The Persuasion Strategy

This strategy relies on presenting arguments, proofs and evidence to persuade an audience to adopt a particular viewpoint or take a specific stance. This strategy is particularly evident in political and media discourse, where various persuasive techniques are used to achieve the discourse's objectives.

5.2Emotional Appeal Strategy

This strategy focuses on evoking the recipient’s emotions and feelings through the use of emotional language, compelling images and emotionally stirring stories that emphasise the listener’s sense of identity. This strategy is evident in various types of digital discourse, where emotion is used as a powerful mechanism to convey meaning.

5.3Repetition Strategy

The discourse relies on repeating messages and content to embed them in the recipient’s mind and make them part of their consciousness. This strategy is particularly evident in advertising and promotional discourse, where messages and slogans are repeated to make an impact.

5.4Simplification Strategy

Discourse relies on simplifying complex issues and topics and presenting them in an easy-to-understand way. This strategy is particularly evident in the media and in education, where information and concepts are simplified to make them accessible.

5.5 Interaction Strategy

This strategy involves engaging the audience in the process of creating meaning through mechanisms such as commenting, liking and sharing. It is particularly evident in digital discourse, where content is designed to encourage interaction and allow the audience to participate in creating meaning.

Strategies for influencing digital discourse are characterised by interaction and integration; they work together to achieve the discourse's objectives and influence the recipient. As digital discourse is the product of a complex interaction between various social, cultural and technological contexts, it is necessary to employ a variety of strategies, the most important of which appeal to emotions, passions and feelings.

6. Manifestations of the passional (emotional) dimension in digital interactive structures:

The emotional and passionate dimensions of digital interactive structures are manifested through a set of elements and mechanisms designed to influence the passions and emotions of the recipient, and their response to the message. The specific manifestations of these dimensions depend on the nature and characteristics of the medium, as well as the objectives of the message, its audience and the context in which it is presented. The most prominent manifestations of this affective dimension include(Bent Ali, Amina, and Mohamed Ben Moussa,, 2022, pp. 1–37):

6.1The Use of passional language

Interactive structures rely on the use of language charged with emotions and feelings, through the use of emotional words, expressive phrases, rhetorical imagery, and other devices. These elements are particularly evident in media and advertising discourse, where language is used as a tool to stir the recipient’s passions and emotions.

6.2Use of Visual Elements

Digital interactive structures use visual elements such as images, graphics, colours, shapes and movement to evoke moods and emotions in the audience. This is particularly evident in media discourse and advertising, where visual elements are employed as tools to influence audiences and elicit emotional responses.

6.3Use of Audio Elements

Digital interactive structures rely on the use of audio elements to evoke moods and emotions in the audience through the use of sounds, music, sound effects, silence, and more. These aspects are particularly evident in radio and film, where audio elements are used as a tool to create a specific emotional atmosphere and elicit an emotional response from the audience.

6.4Use of Narrative

Digital interactive structures rely on the use of narrative to evoke audience feelings and emotions through stories, anecdotes and personal experiences. These elements are evident in various forms of digital discourse, where narrative is employed as a tool to capture the audience's attention and elicit their empathy and emotional engagement.

6.5The use of Interaction

Digital interactive structures are considered a form of mediated communication that utilizes interaction mechanisms to evoke the recipient's feelings and emotions through comments, likes, and shares. In the context of digital discourse, interaction is used as a tool to engage the recipient in the message and make them a part of it, particularly in Facebook posts in all their various forms(Kopf, Susanne, 2025, p. 25).

The passional dimensions of digital interactive structures, as a communicative and mediating message, are characterised by interaction and integration; working together to shape the recipient's response to the message and guide their behaviour. Digital interactive structures are made up of a variety of passional and emotional elements and mechanisms. These elements interact with one another, with the purpose of evoking certain moods and emotions in the recipient. The result is an influence on the response to the digital message.

7. The Methodology of Incorporating Digital Emotions into News Posts on Digital Media Platforms:

Digital emotions are defined as the expression of feelings and emotions through digital tools, with interactive structures constituting a specific communication system. The role of emojis in news comments is twofold: they allow readers to express their individual emotions, while also serving a rhetorical and discursive function, affirming a stance or expressing a sense of collective belonging. These symbols shift from being mere individual expressions to serving as indicators of the general mood or emotional polarization toward a specific news issue(Thurlow, C., & Mroczek, K. Eds,, 2011, pp. 27- 32).

7.1 The Use of passional language

To apply the semiology of passions to the interactive structures of Facebook news posts, a step-by-step analytical model was adopted that focuses on deconstructing the trajectory of passion (La passion) from affect (L'affect) to public expression (La manifestation) through the following steps:

Table (2) : Methodology for the Semiological Analysis of Passions and Emotions in Digital News Posts According to Greimas's Concept

Stage	Greimasian Concept	Application to Facebook Interactions
Initial Identification **(Affect)**	Fascination	**Identifying Provocative Posts:** Selecting posts that generated the highest proportion of negative reactions—anger or sadness—as evidence of a collective emotional state.
Explicit Uncoding **(Expression)**	Manifestation	**Deconstructing the interactive structure:** Isolating comments that contain emojis or reactions as public expressions of emotion.
Semantic Interpretation **(Passion)**	Passion **/infatuation**	**Analysis of the Relationship Between Text and Symbol:** Examining how emojis/reactions contribute to framing the meaning of the accompanying text, such as how a laughing emoji can convey sarcasm**.**
Affective Structure **(Organisation)**	Affective Programming	**Classification of Passions:** Classifying the dominant emotions—anger, sadness, and sarcasm—and identifying the emotional semiotic square that governs interactions on a news page, for example: anger versus satisfaction, sadness versus joy.
	Affective Programming	**Classification of Emotions:** Classifying dominant emotions ( ) such as anger, sadness, and sarcasm, and identifying the emotional semiotic square that governs interactions on a news page, for example: anger versus satisfaction, sadness versus joy.
Pragmatic Function **(Impact)**	Orientation	**Identification of Function:** To examine the role of emotion in shaping public opinion or exacerbating polarisation among interacting groups.

The source : Prepared by the researcher

7.2 Sample Collection and Analysis Procedures *:*

Sample Selection: Ten news posts were selected from each page of the following news channels: Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, and Sky News Arabia. The focus was on news posts that received more than 1,000 interactions and 100 comments.

a. Unit of Analysis: The unit of analysis is the composite interactive structure, i.e., the text comment + accompanying emoji + reaction to the comment.

b. Analytical Tools: Use of Greimas's semiological analysis table to deconstruct each interactive unit into: the signifier, text,the emoji, the emotion, the primary signified (literal meaning), and the secondary signified (contextual meaning/passion).

7.3 Semiotic Analysis of the Samples (An Applied Study on a Representative Sample)

To illustrate the mechanisms of emotional engagement in digital news posts, we focused on the distribution of emotional reactions in a representative sample from Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, and Sky News Arabia, as shown in the following table:

Table (3): Distribution of Emotional Markers in Digital News Posts

Affective Reaction	Primary Denotative Meaning
Angry Reaction	Rejection, condemnation, protest, sense of injustice.
Sad Reaction	Empathy, sorrow, disappointment, frustration.
Like Reaction	General agreement, support for the position, or simply a show of presence.
Love Reaction	Strong emotional support, solidarity, or admiration for the news item or post.
Haha Reaction	Sarcasm, mockery, or ridicule of the event or the parties involved.

The source: Prepared by the researcher

7.4 Analysis of Complex Interactive Structures*:*

Semiotic analysis involves deconstructing the relationship between the signifier (the emoji or emotional symbol) and the signified (the emotional/social meaning) in the context of the comment text :

A State of Anger and Protest: In a comment such as: "Allah is sufficient for us, and He is the best guardians against everyone who colluded on this decision," the religious text intertwines with the repetition of an angry emoji, transforming the meaning into a symbol of collective protest and an expression of helplessness in the face of political power; the emoji amplifies the intensity of the emotion and makes it visible and tangible within the interactive structure.

A Sense of Grief and Empathy: the comment "Our hearts are with you — when will this suffering end?" is an example of emotional solidarity, combining empathy with expressions of grief and the broken-heart emoji. These symbols serve as iconic markers that condense a lengthy discourse of empathy and contribute to building a virtual emotional community around the news story of the siege and subsequent war on the Gaza Strip.

The Case of Sarcasm and Irony: The comment, "The decision is just as I said — it's as if they did nothing," employs sarcasm to dismiss the decision's effectiveness, rather than indicating joy. The emoji evolves from its original meaning to a secondary one (sarcasm/bitterness) in the context of the news discourse, thus becoming a contextual signifier.

7.5The Main Functions of Affective Deployment in Interactive Structures

Emotions in interactional structures serve three main functions:

a. Expressive Function: It xpresses individual feelings toward the news (anger, sadness, joy).

b. Pragmatic Function: It guids interaction, where the “Reaction” serves as a pragmatic marker that determines the tone of the comment and influences others’ responses to it.

c.Social Function: It builds emotional polarization and defines collective belonging; a high number of angry reactions to a particular news item indicates an emotional consensus within the interacting group, thereby reinforcing the perceived social cohesion of opponents or supporters.

II. Results and discussion :

The study demonstrated that the interactive structures in Facebook news comments are complex semiotic structures, in which the textual sign intertwines with the iconic sign to generate new meanings that go beyond the literal meaning of the text. The sample drawn from Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, and Sky News Arabia pages revealed a clear predominance of negative reactions (anger and sadness), suggesting that news discourse on Facebook tends to elicit negative emotional responses from the audience, which serves as a mechanism to express rejection or deep empathy. Furthermore, emojis do not retain to their original

meanings; rather, pragmatic contextual meanings within the context of news discourse, underscoring the flexibility of digital symbols and their ability to adapt to social and political contexts.

These findings underscore the importance of applying a semiotic approach to the study of digital interaction, as the interactive features (reactions) provided by Facebook are not merely buttons for expression, but rather semiotic determinants that impose ready-made templates for emotional expression on users. This constraint leads to:

•Emotional reduction: A wide spectrum of human emotions is reduced to six iconic reactions, which facilitates the measurement and circulation of emotions but diminishes the depth of expression.

•The Politicization of Emotion: In the context of the news, emotions shift from being an individual expression to a political and social tool for framing issues; collective anger expressed digitally becomes a form of symbolic resistance or explicit support.

III. Conclusion:

This semiotic study concluded that the use of emotions in the interactive structures accompanying Facebook news page posts represents a complex semiotic phenomenon with profound implications. Digital emotions – whether in the form of reactions or emojis – function as iconic and rhetorical signs that contribute to the construction of meaning, guide interaction, and define social belonging in the virtual space. These interactive structures not only reflect emotions but also produce and regulate them within a specific news context.

Therefore, based on the findings of this study, we propose the following set of recommendations:

-Expanding the sample size: It is recommended that future studies include larger samples of comments in various news contexts (sports, arts, economics) to compare patterns of emotional engagement.

-Comparative analysis of platforms: A comparative study of the use of emotions on Facebook and other platforms such as Twitter/X or TikTok to understand the differences in the interactive structures provided by each platform and their impact on emotional discourse.

- A Study of the Relationship Between Emotion and Virality: An analysis of the relationship between the type and intensity of emotions expressed in comments and the virality of news posts—such as the number of shares—to uncover the role of emotion in distribution algorithms and content amplification

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