

THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN THE CONSTITUTION AND EXPRESSION OF HUMAN AUTHENTICITY

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Abstract

This article examines the constitutive function of language in contemporary thought, highlighting its implications for the understanding of meaning and reality. The argumentative approach supports overcoming the instrumental conception of language, which is understood not merely as a means of expressing thought, but as a condition of possibility for the constitution of meaning and for relating to reality. Within theories of meaning, meaning is conceived as the result of the interaction between expressions, intentions, and logical structures, implying that access to the world is constitutively mediated by language. From a Heideggerian perspective, language appears as the "house of Being," namely the primordial space in which existence/Being is disclosed, within which the authenticity of Dasein is configured according to the manner in which it assumes its own existence through language, surpassing the level of inauthentic discourse (Gerede). By contrast, Ludwig Wittgenstein emphasizes the limits of descriptive language, arguing that ethical and existential dimensions cannot be propositionally formulated, but only "shown," thereby situating the problem of authenticity beyond the sphere of verifiable statements. The integration of these perspectives supports the idea that authenticity designates a form of conceptual relation to language, world, and meaning. In the context of contemporary informational society, this issue acquires new dimensions: language functions as an interface between the subject and algorithmic infrastructures, generating both unprecedented forms of mediation and heightened risks of alienation and erosion of authenticity. Consequently, authenticity is reinterpreted as a reflexive and critical practice of relating to language and information under conditions of proliferating meanings and expanding digital media environments.

Keywords: language, authenticity, meaning, linguistic mediation, ontology, existence

Rezumat

Acest articol examinează funcția constitutivă a limbajului în gândirea contemporană, subliniind rolul lui în înțelegerea sensului și a realității. Abordarea argumentativă susține depășirea concepției instrumentale a limbajului, care este înțeles nu doar ca un mijloc de exprimare a gândirii, ci ca o condiție de constituire a sensului și de relaționare cu realitatea. În cadrul teoriilor sensului, acesta este conceput ca rezultat al interacțiunii dintre expresii, intenții și structuri logice, ceea ce implică ideea că accesul la lume este mediat constitutiv de limbaj. Dintr-o perspectivă heideggeriană, limbajul apare drept „casa Ființei”, adică spațiul primordial în care existența este dezvăluită, în care autenticitatea Dasein-ului este configurată în funcție de modul în care își asumă propria existență prin limbaj, depășind nivelul discursului inautentic (Gerede). Prin contrast, Ludwig Wittgenstein subliniază limitele limbajului descriptiv, argumentând că dimensiunile etice și existențiale nu pot fi formulate propozițional, ci doar „semnalate”, situând astfel problema autenticității dincolo de sfera afirmațiilor verificabile.

Integrarea acestor perspective susține ideea că autenticitatea desemnează o formă de relaționare conceptuală cu limbajul, lumea și sensul. În contextul societății informaționale contemporane, această problemă capătă noi dimensiuni: limbajul funcționează ca o interfață între subiect și infrastructurile algoritmice, generând atât forme de mediere fără precedent, cât și riscuri sporite de alienare și erodare a autenticității. În consecință, autenticitatea este reinterpretată ca o practică reflexivă și critică de relaționare cu limbajul și informația în condiții de proliferare a sensurilor și extindere a mediilor digitale.

Cuvinte-cheie: limbă, autenticitate, sens, exprimare glotică, ontologie, existență

1. Introduction

In contemporary philosophy, especially within the analytic tradition, language has become a central object of reflection, marking what has been called the “linguistic turn”. The expression “linguistic turn” designates the philosophical orientation in which language is placed at the center of the theoretical investigation of contemporary philosophers. Thus, language analysis becomes the conceptual framework for approaching the traditional problems of knowledge, ontology, and logic. This orientation, illustrated by thinkers such as Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, has highlighted the necessity of a systematic analysis of language as the foundation for understanding reality and for clarifying philosophical problems. In this context, language is no longer conceived as a mere vehicle of thought, but as a structure within which meaning itself becomes possible.

The central concept of this direction is the “theory of meaning”, an idea that had been present in many debates at the beginning of the twentieth century. Bertrand Russell’s ambition to arrive at a “logically perfect language” deliberately distances itself from the very idea of the meaning of natural language, as did the logical constructivism of Rudolf Carnap. The positivists had offered a theory of meaning through the proposal of the verification principle (Grayling, 2022, p. 473). This approach aims either to clarify the way in which speakers intend and communicate meanings or to construct formal models capable of representing the structure of meaning in language. Thus, the idea takes shape that meaning is not an immediate given, but the result of complex relations among expressions, intentions, and logical structures. The contributions of Gottlob Frege, played an essential role in the development of the philosophy of language. Frege took up logic from a position not very different from the one in which Aristotle had left it and devised a syntax and semantics for propositional and predicate calculus. In the process of creating applications of this new system aimed at reducing arithmetic to logic, he developed ideas that proved important for the later philosophy of language, such as the concept of compositionality – the idea that the meaning of expressions is determined by their contribution to the meanings of larger linguistic units and the sense-reference distinction (Grayling, 2022, p. 474). The distinction between sense and reference, along with the principle of

compositionality, highlights the fact that the meaning of an expression depends on the way it contributes to the constitution of the meaning of the whole.

2. The Limits of Language and the Possibility of Authenticity: Between *Saying and Showing*

In the view of Ludwig Wittgenstein, the ideas formulated in “*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*” are essentially grounded in a fairly simple principle: both language and the world possess a formal structure, and this structure can be decomposed into its constituent parts. Ludwig Wittgenstein attempts to reveal both the structure of the world and that of language, and then to demonstrate the way in which they interact.

In Ludwig Wittgenstein’s “*Philosophical Investigations*”, the central idea is that language, rather than having a single fundamental essence, is a vast collection of different practices – what Wittgenstein calls “language games” – within which the meaning of expressions consists in the uses they are given in context (the “form of life”) that constitutes the framework of the language game. The way language functions “lies in plain view” (Wittgenstein, 2004, p. 158). Once attention is directed “where it ought to be,” it becomes evident that language does not constitute a homogeneous whole governed by a single logical form, but rather a field of diverse practices such as describing, reporting, informing, affirming or denying, formulating hypotheses, asking questions, telling stories or jokes, interpreting, greeting, cursing, recollecting, staging performances, thanking, warning, and so on. This multiplicity of practices is conceptualized by Wittgenstein through the notion of the “language game,” a term introduced to emphasize that speaking is not an autonomous mechanism, but “a part of an activity” and, more broadly, of a “form of life” (Wittgenstein, 2004, p. 104). Thus, by introducing the idea of language games, meaning is allowed to depend on practices and contexts of life. The metaphor of the “game” does not indicate frivolity, but serves a methodological function: it marks the fact that there is no single, invariable property common to all games (and, by analogy, to all uses of language). Consequently, what we call “language” must be understood as a network of diverse uses, connected by family resemblances, rather than as the expression of a single essence or a universal defining criterion.

Therefore, although language is indispensable for articulating the world, it does not fully encompass authentic experience. On the contrary, the limits of language indicate precisely the place where authenticity becomes possible as lived experience, not as statement. The famous Wittgensteinian principle – “Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent” (FIF, 2016, p. 251) – should not be interpreted as a normative prohibition of discourse, but rather as a methodological delimitation of the field of meaning. It functions as a principle of demarcation that protects the sphere of authenticity from the

risk of being reduced to discursive expression, thus maintaining the distinction between what can be linguistically articulated and what is constitutively resistant to language. In this sense, silence is not a “refusal” of meaning, but an ethics of conceptual prudence: a refusal to force experience into forms of expression for which it is not constituted. Thus, authenticity represents a dimension of existence that is confirmed more by what is shown in life than by what is declared in discourse.

Consequently, authenticity may be understood as a mode of “being-in-the-world” that is verified through the coherence of lived life, not through the adequacy of a description. It is not established through self-definitions (“I am authentic”), but through a form of concordance – difficult to thematise – between disposition, choice, responsibility, and commitment. It is precisely here that the distinction between saying and showing becomes relevant: certain dimensions of existence (value, ultimate meaning, one’s relation to oneself, the experience of limits) are not objects about which we formulate informative propositions, but realities that manifest themselves in the way we live, in the practical style of our relation to the world. Therefore, the criterion of authenticity is not semantic (the correctness of a statement), but existential (the mode of the realization of the self).

From this also follows a critical consequence regarding discourses about the self: the more intense authentic experience is, the less it tends to be fully “explainable”. Exhaustive explanation becomes suspect not because it is false, but because it transforms what is lived into an “object” of representation, thereby negating its character as an inner event. To say too much about authenticity risks degrading it into a rhetoric of authenticity – a discursive convention that imitates depth while substituting it with formulas.

Philosophy does not fix truths about authenticity; rather, it creates the conditions for the subject to arrive at an experiential understanding of their own existence. Thus, language becomes a medium of orientation, not of capturing essence.

3. Language, Being, and Identity: Foundations of Authenticity

Another essential direction in the problematics of authenticity highlights the idea that, if one’s relation to the world and to oneself is mediated by language, then the authenticity of the human being cannot be conceived outside the manner in which meanings are articulated, interpreted, and assumed through language. Consequently, the analysis of language becomes an ontological problem, connected to the way in which the human being expresses and constitutes its own authenticity. Yet this dimension of authenticity does not remain suspended within a pure interiority; rather, it necessarily articulates itself with the problematics of identity, understood as a form of stabilization and recognition of being in the world. In this way, the demand for identity originates in the very structure of real being. In early Western thought,

this problematic is formulated by Parmenides in the celebrated thesis: τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστὶν τε καὶ εἶναι — “for thinking and being are the same” (Heidegger, 1991, p. 11). This statement points toward an original common belonging: thinking and being have their place within a “Same” (τὸ αὐτὸ). Identity here is not a formal principle, but an ontological structure of belonging. Parmenides does not provide a conceptual clarification of this “Same”, but rather leaves open a fundamental enigma: in what sense are thinking and being one? Interpreted phenomenologically, this thesis suggests that every access to being is already mediated by a form of understanding, while every act of thinking is already situated within the horizon of being. In the context of the present inquiry, this intuition allows identity to be reinterpreted not as static identity, but as a relation of belonging among language, thought, and being.

In this line of thought, Heidegger’s reflection on identity emphasizes that identity is no longer conceived as a stable property, but rather as an event of reciprocal appropriation between human beings and being. What Heidegger calls *Ereignis* (the event of “appropriation” or “enowning”) is articulated together with the very essence of the speaking of language, understood as the originary space in which being allows itself to be spoken — the “house of being”. Within this dimension, the principle of identity implies a transformation of thinking: a “leap” toward its essential origin, opening the possibility of a more originary understanding of identity.

This repositioning entails a radical reconsideration of the relation between human beings and language. Language is not a product of the subject, but the originary instance that makes the subject possible. “Man speaks only insofar as he responds to language and submits to it” (Heidegger, 1994, pp. 14–15). In this sense, the human right to access the essence of things does not belong to the individual autonomously, but is granted through language: one may approach essence only insofar as one receives and respects this call.

The reduction of language to a mere means of expression or communication, even when formally rigorous, marks an inversion of the originary relation between human beings and speech. Even if correctness of expression is maintained in such usage, this does not restore an authentic relation to language, but instead diminishes it, transforming speech into a functional instrument, potentially becoming a means of influence or constraint (Heidegger, 1994, pp. 14–15).

From the perspective of the relation to being, language appears as an originary and privileged gift through which human beings are drawn toward the essence of things. Yet this proximity does not offer essence as an immediately available object; rather, it presupposes a form of correspondence — a listening to language. The privileged form of this correspondence is poetic speech, in which language opens itself toward that which has not yet been conceptually fixed. The more authentically poetic speech becomes, the more

it frees itself from the constraints of merely correct assertion and allows a more originary disclosure of being (Heidegger, 1994, pp. 14–15).

From this perspective, language is not reducible to the denotative function of merely designating things, but operates instead as an instance of disclosure, configuring the world as a horizon already permeated by meanings. In Martin Heidegger's terms, through "discourse" (Rede) the disclosedness (Erschlossenheit) of being toward the world is manifested, this disclosedness being inseparable from the preliminary structure of understanding (Vorverständnis) (Heidegger, 2003). Discourse makes possible the configuration of a world in which Dasein (human existence) is already involved, thereby confirming the derived character of language from the originary openness toward being. The distortion of this originary function leads to the manifestation of idle talk (Gerede), an inauthentic form of discourse in which language conceals rather than discloses being. In this context, the dominance of the "they" (das Man) leads to the leveling of meanings and the loss of existential self-assumption. Authenticity, by contrast, presupposes a recovery of discourse as an originary mode of disclosure, which entails a qualitative transformation in one's relation to language.

This transformation is correlated with fundamental experiences such as "anxiety" (Angst) and the anticipation of "death" (Sein-zum-Tode), experiences that displace human existence (Dasein) from inauthentic everydayness and confront it with its own finitude (Heidegger, 2003). In this sense, authentic language is not merely an expressive instrument, but a mode of existence: it expresses the way in which the subject assumes its own possibility of being.

Consequently, the examination of language does not exclusively concern the contents of statements, but also the way in which Dasein relates to being, alterity, and its own possibility of being authentic. Thus, the analysis of language simultaneously becomes an analysis of the modes through which our experience of reality is constituted, interpreted, and communicated. In Heidegger's view, this concerns the way language opens and structures our access to beings. Language is not a simple instrument for describing reality, but the place in which the world becomes intelligible for Dasein, that is, for the human being as "being-in-the-world".

4. Ontology and the Pragmatics of Language in the Constitution of Authenticity

The examination of language emerges simultaneously as an analysis of the way in which Being discloses itself (Heidegger) and as an investigation of the manner in which our forms of life structure meaning (Wittgenstein). Phenomenal reality is neither purely given nor purely constructed; rather, it is linguistically mediated, both as ontological disclosure and as pragmatic use (Heidegger, 2003; Wittgenstein, 2004).

Although Ludwig Wittgenstein does not explicitly thematize authenticity as an ontological problem, it may be inferred from his demand for concep-

tual clarity and for the adequacy of language use. Inauthenticity arises, within this framework, when language is detached from its context of use, thereby generating pseudo-problems or categorical confusions. Authenticity thus becomes a practice of rigor: to say only what can be said clearly and to recognize the limits of language (Wittgenstein, 2004).

Synthesizing the foregoing arguments, it may be asserted that authenticity and language stand in a relation of reciprocal articulation: there is no authenticity outside a mode of discursive articulation, and language is not a neutral medium, but rather a constitutive one for the subject's possibilities of being. Whereas for Heidegger authenticity entails the recovery of an ordinary relation to Being through language, for Wittgenstein it presupposes a discipline of language use oriented toward the elimination of distortions of meaning.

Consequently, authenticity cannot be reduced to a strictly interior dimension, but must also be understood as a problem of expression. The way we speak does not merely reflect our identity; it also contributes to its constitution. The critical examination of language thus becomes a condition of authentic becoming: to speak authentically implies, simultaneously, to be authentic.

By extending these two perspectives, Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy reveals both a fundamental convergence and a significant methodological difference. While for Heidegger language is "the house of Being" (*die Sprache ist das Haus des Seins*), that is, the privileged space of ontological manifestation (Heidegger, 1947/1995), for Wittgenstein language is conceptualized as practice, as a set of "language games" (*Sprachspiele*) grounded in "forms of life" (*Lebensformen*) (Wittgenstein, 2004). Consequently, the analysis of language acquires, in this latter perspective, a pragmatic character oriented toward the effective uses of expressions within specific contexts.

Thus, whereas in the Heideggerian paradigm language opens the world as the ontological horizon of meaning, in the Wittgensteinian paradigm it delimits the world as the totality of facts articulable within rules of use. The famous statement from the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* – "the limits of my language mean the limits of my world" (Wittgenstein, 2012) – indicates that the world is not only what exists, but also what can be signified.

5. Language as an Interface Between the Subject and Informational Reality

Within the perspective on language outlined in this paper, it is important to address the notion of information as a central element of the theoretical analysis. In this regard, recent scholarly literature identifies a line of reflection referred to as "informational Platonism," according to which information functions not merely as a cognitive instrument but is theorized as the ontological substrate of reality (Taylor, 2026). Whereas in traditional paradigms information was regarded as a derivative product of consciousness

and empirical interactions, recent technological developments – particularly global networked communication and the rise of artificial intelligence – suggest a paradigmatic shift: information appears as a constitutive structure of existence, organized in data networks that precede and condition human experience.

From this perspective, reality is no longer constituted by substantial objects in the classical sense, but by informational configurations organized in networks of relations, differences, and correlations. The problem of authenticity thereby acquires an additional dimension connected to the subject's structural vulnerability to processes of informational mediation. As Guy Debord anticipated in his work "The Society of the Spectacle": "The first phase of the domination of the economy over social life brought into the definition of all human realization an evident degradation of *being* into *having*" (Debord, 2011, p. 14). The spectacle is not merely an accumulation of images, but a relational structure in which reality is filtered, reorganized, and ultimately substituted by its own representations.

Within this theoretical context, the recovery of authenticity requires not only an existential reorientation (in the Heideggerian sense), but also a critical discipline in relation to information. This entails the transition from a passive reception of data flows to a reflexive evaluation of them according to criteria such as source, intentionality, and epistemic validity. Such a practice may be conceptualized as a form of "cognitive sovereignty," in which the subject not only participates in existing language games, but also interrogates and consciously reconfigures them.

This ontological repositioning of information may be brought into critical dialogue with both the Heideggerian analysis of the disclosure of Being and the Wittgensteinian perspective on the use of language. On the one hand, if language is "the house of Being" (Heidegger, 2003), then contemporary informational infrastructures tend to reconfigure the very architecture of this "dwelling", increasingly mediated by algorithmic processes. On the other hand, if meaning is determined by use within language games (Wittgenstein, 2004), then digital environments introduce new forms of life in which the rules of usage are opaque, dynamic, and often externalized to automated systems.

In other words, language is no longer the ultimate condition of possibility for meaning, but rather the medium through which preexisting informational forms are actualized. This reversal of perspective shifts the emphasis from the hermeneutics of language to the ontology of information: what is fundamental is no longer the way we speak about the world, but the way in which the world is already informationally structured.

From this perspective, the Heideggerian intuition of the "disclosure of Being" may be reinterpreted as a process of access to informational structures

that are not produced by the subject, but within which the subject is already situated. Analogously, the language games described by Wittgenstein may be understood as local forms of actualization of deeper informational configurations that transcend the level of contingent practices.

Authenticity thus presupposes not only existential self-assumption (in the Heideggerian sense) or clarity in the use of language (in the Wittgensteinian sense), but also the capacity to distinguish between informational structures that are passively internalized and those that are critically appropriated. It becomes a reflexive practice of navigating within networks of information, oriented toward the recovery of a form of autonomy in relation to processes of algorithmic mediation.

In general terms, it may be argued that, in the contemporary era, authenticity is inseparable from a form of "informational consciousness", through which the subject recognizes its structural conditioning and critically assumes its relation to it. Thus, the integration of the informational paradigm into the analysis of language leads to an extension of the initial thesis: authenticity is no longer merely a matter of relating to Being or of clarity in the use of language, but also one of critically navigating the informational ecosystems that structure meaning. In this expanded perspective, language becomes not only a medium of disclosure or use, but also an interface between the subject and the invisible architectures of data that shape contemporary reality.

6. Conclusions

The present analysis has shown that the problem of language, as configured within analytic philosophy, transcends the status of a mere semantic or logico-formal investigation, becoming a fundamental domain for understanding the constitution of reality and the authenticity of human existence. The "linguistic turn" in contemporary philosophy imposed a reconsideration of language not as a secondary instrument of thought, but as the primordial structure within which meaning, experience, and the relation to the world are articulated.

From this perspective, the contributions of Frege and Wittgenstein revealed the relational and contextual character of meaning, while Heideggerian reflection radicalized the problem of language by identifying it as the "house of Being", namely the primordial space of ontological disclosure. The correlation of these perspectives made it possible to demonstrate that language does not merely express reality, but actively constitutes it through its forms of articulation, use, and institution of meaning.

In this context, the concept of authenticity acquires a complex determination situated at the intersection of the ontological, linguistic, and pragmatic dimensions of existence. Authenticity can no longer be understood as a stable inner property of the subject, but rather as a mode of relating to language and to the structures of meaning that mediate access to the world. In Heideggerian terms, it presupposes overcoming the inauthentic forms of every-

day discourse, while from a Wittgensteinian perspective it implies a lucid and contextualized use of language, conscious of its constitutive limits.

The integration of the contemporary informational dimension has expanded this problematic by demonstrating that digital media and algorithmic infrastructures radically reconfigure the conditions for the production and circulation of meaning. In this context, language no longer functions exclusively as a medium of expression or disclosure, but becomes an interface between the subject and complex systems of information processing, generating new forms of mediation as well as new risks of discursive alienation. It follows that authenticity in contemporary society can no longer be conceived outside a critical analysis of language and of the informational regimes that structure experience. It presupposes a form of hermeneutic and epistemic vigilance oriented toward recognizing the mechanisms through which meaning is produced, filtered, and distributed. In this sense, authenticity becomes not only an existential category, but also a critical-reflexive one, dependent upon the subject's capacity to relate consciously to its own conditions of linguistic and informational constitution.

In conclusion, the present paper supports the idea that language represents both the condition of possibility of experiencing the world and the space within which the form of human authenticity is determined. In a contemporary context marked by the multiplication of media of meaning and the intensification of processes of technological mediation, the problem of authenticity becomes a fundamental issue of an expanded philosophy of language: namely, the question of how the human being may remain faithful to their own openness toward meaning within a horizon of informational proliferation and instability of significance.

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