STUDIA WARMIŃSKIE 62 (2025) ISSN 0137-6624 DOI: 10.31648/sw.11970

Mariia Abysova¹

Department of Political Science, Sociology and Philosophy State University "Kyiv Aviation Institute"

Serhii Ordenov ²
Department of Humanities
Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music

Methodological Strategies for the Philosophical Reception of Communication Processes in the Post-truth Era

[Strategie metodologiczne recepcji filozoficznej procesów komunikacyjnych w epoce postprawdy]

Streszczenie: W niniejszym artykule autorzy podjęli w aspekcie filozoficznym analizę komunikacji w epoce postprawdy, rozumianej jako zjawisko wynikające z przemian strukturalnych wywołanych przez kapitalizm cyfrowy. W tym kontekście komunikacja staje się coraz bardziej oderwana od swojej epistemicznej funkcji poszukiwania prawdy, przyjmując zamiast tego rolę mechanizmu behawioralnego, rezonansu afektywnego lub symulacji wymiany dyskursywnej. Celem badania jest konceptualizacja metodologicznych strategii odbioru tych przemian. W artykule wyróżniono i omówiono trzy główne grupy strategii – normatywne, krytyczno-analityczne oraz postnormatywne – odnoszące się do epistemologicznych, ontologicznych i antropologicznych ograniczeń współczesnej komunikacji. Choć klasyczne modele wciąż dostarczają wglądów analitycznych, argumentuje się, że muszą one zostać rozszerzone tak, aby uwzględniały fragmentaryzację środowiska komunikacyjnego, algorytmiczną strukturę języka oraz ewoluujący status podmiotu. Zaproponowana typologia ma znaczenie heurystyczne dla zrozumienia warunków, w jakich możliwe pozostaje odpowiedzialne praktykowanie komunikacji, gdy interakcja nie może już opierać się na stabilnym fundamencie prawdy.

Summary: The article presents a philosophical analysis of communication in the post-truth era, understood as a phenomenon emerging from structural transformations induced by digital capitalism. In this context, communication becomes increasingly

¹ Mariia Abysova, Department of Political Science, Sociology and Philosophy, State University "Kyiv Aviation Institute", ave. Huzara Lubomyra, 1, 03058 Kyiv, Ukraine, maria.abysova@gmail.com, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8471-3045.

² Serhii Ordenov, Department of Humanities, Ukrainian National Tchaikovsky Academy of Music, ave. Architect Gorodetsky, 1-3/11, 01001 Kyiv, Ukraine, ss_ordenov@ukr.net, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2572-8300.

detached from its epistemic function in the pursuit of truth, assuming instead the role of a mechanism for behavioural influence, affective resonance, or the simulation of discursive exchange. The aim of the study is to conceptualise methodological strategies for the reception of these transformations. The paper identifies and examines three main groups of strategies – normative, critical-analytical, and post-normative – regarding the epistemological, ontological, and anthropological limitations of contemporary communication. While classical models continue to offer analytical insights, it is argued that they must be expanded to address the fragmentation of the communicative environment, the algorithmic structuring of language, and the evolving status of the subject. The typology proposed here is of heuristic significance for understanding the conditions under which responsible communicative practice remains possible when interaction can no longer rely on a stable foundation of truth.

Słowa kluczowe: postprawda, komunikacja, dekonstrukcja, strategie postnormatywne, kapitalizm cyfrowy.

Keywords: post-truth, communication, deconstruction, post-normative strategies, digital capitalism.

Introduction

Contemporary society can be described as a post-truth society, where communication serves not truth but influence and emotional impact. Public space is saturated with charged content, simulated meanings, and fragmented narratives that replace argumentation. In this environment, "[...] where fabrications are more important than objective facts, rational arguments, or solid evidence" (Sardar Z., 2019, p. 2), communication becomes a simulation of dialogue, circulating information without a shared horizon of meaning. The post-truth condition does not deny truth or responsibility but questions their very possibility within a reality shaped by distrust and hyperreality. At this juncture, philosophical reflection must not only diagnose communicative erosion but articulate the conditions under which meaningful interaction remains possible (Yakushik V., 2025). This requires analyzing strategies that distinguish between manipulative and responsible speech acts, thus enabling dialogue amid discursive transformation.

The aim of the study is to conceptualise methodological strategies regarding the reception of communication in the post-truth era, highlighting their internal differentiation and philosophical premises.

To achieve the research goal, the following tasks are defined:

- to examine how changing conceptions of truth, language, and subject under post-truth conditions influence the philosophical understanding of communication;
- to determine how the post-truth context actualizes the necessity for a typological differentiation of methodological strategies of communication reception;

- to characterize the principal methodological strategies of communication reception in their normative, critical, and deconstructive configurations;
- to outline the heuristic potential of post-normative methodological strategies as a response to the challenges posed by the posttruth condition.

The research methodology combines critical reconstruction of normative theories, deconstruction of power-laden discourses, and hermeneutic-phenomenological interpretation of speech as an ethical event in the post-truth context.

The philosophical reception of communication in the post-truth era involves methodological strategies that either uphold the normative model of intersubjective understanding or radically challenge its foundations. The methodological framework of this study lies within this tension between normativity and deconstruction. Yet beyond reconstructing classical models or exposing power-laden mechanisms, it becomes necessary to seek alternative approaches that address fragmentation, multiplicity, and affective dynamics. Increasingly, attention shifts to strategies that move beyond both normative ideals and radical critique.

Philosophical foundations for understanding communication in the post-truth era

The term "post-truth", coined by Serbian-American playwright Steve Tesich in 1992 (Tesich S., 1992, p. 12–14), gained widespread prominence after the political events of 2016, when Oxford Dictionaries named it the word of the year (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016), reflecting a reality in which emotions and personal beliefs increasingly outweigh facts. This shift stems not only from cultural factors but also from the structural logic of digital capitalism, which transforms communication into a mechanism of behavioural prediction. Algorithmic systems prioritize attention management over truth, immersing users in fragmented, personalized media environments that simulate dialogue and shape behaviour according to market interests.

Under surveillance capitalism, communication generates a "behavioural surplus" – user data exploited not for service improvement, but for predicting and shaping behaviour through "instrumentarian power" (Zuboff Sh., 2019, p. 164–185, 218–238). This logic defines the condition of "post-normal times", marked by: "[...] the 3Cs: complexity, contradictions and chaos" (Sardar Z., 2010, p. 7). In such an environment, individuals become disoriented, as statements and opinions acquire the appearance of truth and knowledge. Post-truth, therefore, represents the

empirical realization of post-structuralist insights into the instability of meaning, the dispersion of subjectivity, and the simulation of discourse under power. Digital capitalism, through algorithmic governance, materializes these tendencies and reshapes communication (Levchenko D., 2024). To conceptualize this communicative condition, we identify three analytical limitations: epistemological, ontological, and anthropological.

The epistemological limitation of communication in the post-truth era manifests as a crisis of trust in the very possibility of knowledge, no longer guided by truth criteria or rational justification. In the digital environment, statements are filtered not by cognitive value but by algorithmic and affective resonance: speech functions as a behavioural trigger rather than a representation of reality. This epistemic crisis was anticipated by postmodern and poststructuralist thought. It includes the collapse of metanarratives as "[...] totalizing stories about history and the goals of humanity that underpin and legitimize knowledge and cultural practices" (Lyotard J.-F., 1984, p. xxiv, xx, 34–37), and the rejection of universal truth foundations in favor of pragmatic pluralism, where truth is a linguistic convention shaped within communities: "Truth cannot be out there – cannot exist independently of the human mind – because sentences cannot so exist, or be out there" (Rorty R., 1989, p. 5). In this view, communication becomes less a medium of truth than a practice of coexistence.

These diagnoses from postmodern and poststructuralist critique are echoed in contemporary analytical assessments. It is noted that exponential technological growth and promises of singularity fail to resolve global challenges, instead reinforcing algorithmic control and deepening the gap between knowledge and understanding (von Weizsäcker E. U. and Wijkman A., 2018, p. 47–48). In this context, the Club of Rome offers a striking epistemological insight: humanity is drowning in data, yet starving for meaning.

The loss of trust in truth entails the erosion of responsibility: without truth, there is no obligation to account for one's words, no criteria of linguistic ethics, no semantic orientation. If fact and objective reality no longer serve as measures of truth, then human will take their place, turning the self into an absolute creative source of meaning. Yet in the digital environment, this will is mediated by technological systems: knowledge gains legitimacy not through truth, but through algorithmic visibility. In such a system, consensus arises not from objectivity, but as a contingent effect of local information flows.

The ontological limitation refers to the loss of a shared ontological horizon as the basis for communication. In classical thought, communication presupposed not only a common language but also shared experience, presence, and existential grounding. In the post-truth era, this unity dis-

integrates, giving way to multiple incommensurable ontological regimes in which events and utterances acquire radically different statuses. This rupture is captured in the idea of community not as a collective project based on shared ideas or political will, but as being-in-common marked by discontinuity, interruption, and irreducible distance. Communication does not establish unity or consensus, but reveals the incompleteness and multiplicity of the communal. Emerging from shared exposure to finitude rather than coherence, communication unfolds in ontological desynchronization: each subject speaks from a singular locus of being, without any guarantee of convergence: "Community does not sublate the finitude it exposes. Community itself, in sum, is nothing but this exposition. It is the community of finite beings, and as such it is itself a finite community" (Nancy J.-L., 1991, p. 26–27).

In this logic, Jacques Derrida introduces the notion of différance as a simultaneous difference and deferral through which meaning arises not from presence, but from the interplay of traces pointing to absence. Language, therefore, constantly defers being. This is reinforced by "iterability": the repeatability of signs across contexts, enabling reinterpretation rather than fixed meaning. Communication, for Derrida, is not a transparent medium of truth but a system of self-referential deferrals (Derrida, 1982).

While Jacques Derrida shows that communication lacks the guarantee of presence, Jean Baudrillard goes further: he captures the collapse of the very scene of being in which such communication could take place. Reality is replaced by the *simulacrum*, a sign with no referent that nonetheless operates as authenticity. This defines the condition of "hyperreality": "It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal" (Baudrillard J., 1994, p. 1). In such a context, communication no longer rests on a shared ontological basis. Rather than exchanging meanings, disparate experiential regimes intersect without convergence. The resulting fragmentation of being renders communication unstable and incomplete.

The anthropological limitation of communication in the post-truth era concerns the transformation of the human subject, who, within algorithmically governed digital environments, is no longer an autonomous producer of meaning but a reactive node in networked exchanges. Messages circulate with fragmented authorship, while language, shaped by technical systems and emotionally calibrated platforms, ceases to express selfhood and instead serves functional optimization.

Michel Foucault shows that the subject is not the originator of discourse but its product, a temporary position formed by historically shifting discursive practices that define who may speak, what may be said, and

under what conditions (Foucault M., 2002, p. 60). This logic is radicalized by digital technologies, where algorithms and platforms govern visibility and resonance. As a result, the subject functions as an affective node for attention capture; no longer a speaker, but a vector of circulation measured by reaction, like, or repost (Castells M., 2009).

This discursive destabilization of the subject is mirrored in its cultural and behavioral transformations. The postmodern individual becomes fragmented, narcissistic, and impression-oriented, acting as a "director of impressions" (Lipovetsky G., 1983). Communication thus shifts from meaning-making to stylized surface play, where emptiness signals not lack but a new mode of being. These transformations extend beyond discourse into the bioanthropological domain: under technogenic, pharmacological, and informational pressures, the human being is reshaped somatically and cognitively (Drotianko L. and others, 2023).

In post-truth conditions, the anthropological limitation of communication lies in the erosion of the humanist subject as an understanding, responsive being. Dialogue gives way to emotional outbursts, feedback loops, and the conversion of attention into clicks, identity into reaction.

Focused not on truth but on controlling attention and behaviour through algorithms, platforms, and affective stimuli, digital capitalism reshapes the conditions of communication. As a result, knowledge loses validity, experience fragments into incommensurable realities, and the subject becomes a reactive node in the network. This raises a crucial question: is communication still possible as a space of shared meaning, trust, and responsibility? This challenge opens the way for normative strategies aimed at defending the principles of rational dialogue.

Normative-oriented methodological strategies for the reception of communication in the post-truth era

In the philosophical view of communication, normative methodological strategies treat communication not merely as information transfer, but as a foundation for morality and democratic coexistence.

In Jürgen Habermas's philosophy, communicative action differs from instrumental and strategic forms: the former seeks mutual understanding, while the latter pursue goals or influence behaviour. Discourse, as its highest form, enables participants to reach agreement through argumentation, restoring understanding when it falters (Habermas, 1996, p. 84–90). Such consensus is possible only if certain norms and procedures are upheld, which J. Habermas refers to as the conditions of the "ideal speech situation" (Sitnichenko L.A., 1996, p. 38). This ideal is institutionalized in deliberative democracy, where legal norms derive legitimacy through

public reasoning. The model carries critical and emancipatory potential, identifying communicative distortions, building trust, and sustaining the public sphere. In response to institutional distrust in the digital era, this approach affirms that trust can be rebuilt only through transparent, inclusive, and reasoned decision-making.

Along with the principles of cognitivism, universalism, and formalism, J. Habermas defines justice and solidarity as core elements of discourse ethics. Rooted in intersubjectivity, this ethics transcends the limits of the contractual model by affirming that autonomy is realized through mutual recognition within a shared "life-world". Equal rights and the recognition of human dignity are thus embedded in the structure of interpersonal relations (Habermas J., 1986, p. 16–37). Today, sustaining this ethical framework depends on scientific civic responsibility and moral discernment, supported by critical thinking and educational engagement (Svyrydenko D. and others, 2024, p. 97–99, 101–102).

In contrast to J. Habermas, Karl-Otto Apel emphasizes the transcendental-pragmatic foundations of discourse rather than its procedural aspects. He describes "a priori communication" as the relational and ethical basis of experience, grounded in an inherent orientation toward mutual understanding and openness. This understanding is both empirical and normative, implying responsibility toward an unlimited circle of interlocutors (Sitnichenko L.A., 1996, p. 7–24). Intersubjectivity forms the basis of a "universal communicative community", which K.-O. Apel identifies with humanity as a whole.

K.-O. Apel links communicative rationality to discourse ethics as a commitment to achieving consensus within a solidarity-based community that recognizes internal contradictions (Apel K.-O., 1996, p. 49). Ethically relevant problems must be addressed through open "value discourse". The very act of communication carries an "a priori moral norm" – respect for the Other, arising from the capacity for speech. Responsibility, like communication, is a priori: communicative and ethical competence develops through socialization and enables access to truth through reflection.

In the post-truth era, where communication often lacks authorship and ethical intent, responsibility remains crucial. Rooted in respect for the Other, including future generations, it separates genuine communication from its simulacrum. Normative frameworks like those of J. Habermas and K.-O. Apel help expose manipulation, defend the public sphere, and maintain trust. Yet amid populism and fragmented discourse, responsibility must take the form of collective engagement across key domains. Humanities and philosophy are called to uphold truth and rethink normative foundations beyond technical competence.

Critical and analytical strategies of communication reception in the post-truth era

In the post-truth era, the structural shifts in communication undermine normative models based on consensus and mutual understanding. Semantic interaction gives way to emotional impact, visual simulation, and algorithmically shaped discourse. In response, critical-analytical strategies, including affective and media-ecological approaches, seek to reveal how these new forms of influence restructure experience and meaning.

The affective turn, which gained momentum in the humanities around the turn of the 21st century, challenged the dominance of meaning-centered analysis by shifting focus from semantic interpretation to embodied intensity and felt experience. The psychological model of affect is contrasted with a philosophical view that conceptualizes affect as an intensive force. This perspective, most notably developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, understands affect not as an inner emotion, but as a dynamic "variation in intensity" (as force) that arises when bodies encounter or come into contact (Deleuze G. and Guattari F., 1994, p. 164).

This concept was further developed through the notion of affect's autonomy and the emergence of non-representational theory. Affect, understood as "intensity", is distinguished from emotion in that it is pre-subjective, polysemic, and not bound to a specific object (Massumi B., 1995, p. 88). In contrast, emotion is: "Emotion is qualified intensity, the conventional, consensual point of insertion of intensity into semantically and semiotically formed progressions, into narrativizable action-reaction circuits, into function and meaning" (Massumi B., 2002, p. 28). Affect thus is a mode of pre-reflective "knowing" that shapes perception, action, and analysis. Its fundamental feature is that it precedes conscious awareness; it is pre-cognitive. Affective forces may prompt action or movement, yet they remain beyond full control, even when individuals or technologies attempt to capture or regulate them. This conception aligns with non-representational theory, where affect is viewed as a bodily mode of thought enacted through interaction rather than abstract cognition (Thrift N., 2008, p. 175).

Affective communication shifts focus from meaning or intention to the body's capacity to affect and be affected. Media technologies intensify this dynamic, enabling collective affective states to circulate and produce tangible economic and political effects, often outpacing formal deliberative processes. In this context, affect functions as infrastructure, integral to late capitalism alongside material production (Massumi B., 1995, p. 106).

These dynamics require a revised analytical lens. Rather than assessing communication through rational or normative criteria, affective strategies highlight zones where meaning dissolves and embodied intensities take shape. This calls for an ecological perspective that considers not only message content, but also sensory environments, technological systems, and habituated rhythms that structure experience.

Classic studies in media ecology from Marshall McLuhan (McLuhan M., 1994) to Neil Postman (Postman N., 1985), Jay David Bolter (Bolter J.D., Grusin R., 2000), and Jaron Lanier (Lanier J., 2010.) demonstrate that media technologies reshape perception, cognition, and social relations. Media are not neutral channels for conveying information; they create environments in which the technical form determines how messages appear, how they are received, and what meanings they can carry. Media ecology, therefore, is more than an interdisciplinary lens: it offers a philosophical critique of how media configure the very conditions of communication.

In post-truth conditions, trust is no longer grounded in content or verification, but in emotional activation. Virality supplants verifiability, while credibility is measured by reactions. This info-ecological shift is especially evident in scientific discourse, where meaning arises not before communication but through algorithmically mediated interaction (Abysova M. and others, 2025, p. 81–84).

Critical-analytical strategies mark a shift from consensus and rational norms to bodily impulses and technological environments that precede articulation. This raises a question: can any shared horizon still sustain communication? Post-normative strategies attempt to address this very challenge.

Post-normative strategies for the reception of communication in the post-truth environment

Post-normative strategies avoid both universalism and radical negation, focusing instead on relational conditions for responsible communication. Post-normative strategies can be analyzed on three levels: fundamental (hermeneutic and phenomenological), theoretical (pluralist), and applied (pragmatic-functional).

The hermeneutic and phenomenological ethics of responsibility and the boundaries of speech become central to understanding communication in the post-truth era. Contemporary phenomenologists directly address the symptoms of linguistic fatigue and communicative crisis: "Speech no longer saves; it exhausts. It does not support; it provokes anxiety" (Nancy J.-L., 2007, p. 7). Nancy identifies a rupture between speech and the presence of being-heard, suggesting that contemporary language exposes the fragili-

ty and tension of the communicative events, and the erosion of the ethical function. Affects, microgestures, emotional silence, and embodied presence reveal the weariness of language and undermine confidence in its function as a universal mediator (Waldenfels B., 2007). The logos-centric model gives way to a plurality of embodied-affective expressions that cannot be stably coded but nonetheless determine the quality of communicative interaction.

Phenomenology thus captures the ruptures in communication where speech no longer orients but provokes anxiety or resistance. It attends to what precedes language (affective reactions, bodily signals, presence) revealing a horizon where the crisis becomes ontological. Rather than resolving it through argument, this approach listens to pre-semantic layers that expose vulnerability and the inarticulacy of encountering the Other.

Hermeneutics holds that meaning is not pre-given but emerges through interpretation within specific historical and existential contexts. A key question is whether a hermeneutic ethics of responsibility can function amid fragmented and simulated communication. Classical dialogue theories assumed ideal conditions: rational subjects open to mutual listening and oriented toward truth. In contrast, the phenomenological-hermeneutic approach offers another horizon of ethical thought. Responsibility arises not from verbal exchange but from exposure to the Other, the face that calls forth a response even before language (Levinas E., 1998). This impulse is not reflective, but a trace inscribed in subjectivity, even in silence. The Other addresses not a speaking subject, but one already accused without fault. Even when trust breaks and "the Said" becomes impossible, the ethical appeal persists as "the Saying" is a non-discursive act of witness. Responsibility is not chosen but constitutes subjectivity itself: ethics as "Otherwise than Being", a primordial trace of the Other within (Levinas E., 1998).

In the post-truth era, phenomenological-hermeneutic ethics prioritizes pre-semantic experience and a fragile, caring responsiveness to the Other over rational consensus.

Pluralist-democratic strategies instead affirm the value of dialogue, while acknowledging its incompleteness, asymmetry and conflictual nature. These strategies combine democratic theory, inclusive ethics and feminist critiques of discourse. A central theoretical contribution is Chantal Mouffe's concept of "agonistic democracy" (Mouffe Ch., 2000), which reconceptualizes conflict as an inherent part of democratic life. According to Ch. Mouffe, society consists of irreconcilable identities, interests and values. Therefore, the goal is not to eliminate antagonism, but to transform it into "agonism", understood as a form of legitimate civil opposition (Mouffe Ch., 2000).

Democratic dialogue in multicultural societies requires combining normative orientation with openness to diversity. One proposed approach, "deliberative universalization", holds that universal norms are not pre-given but emerge through processes of translation, adaptation, and critical reflection (Benhabib S., 2002). This allows for sustaining universality without enforcing uniformity.

At the same time, attention is drawn to the importance of recognizing diverse communicative forms. Traditional rationalist models often exclude voices that do not fit dominant discursive norms. Alternative strategies legitimize narrative, emotional, and affective expression as integral to public discourse (Young I., 2000), stressing the inclusion of excluded experiences in democratic communication.

Among postnormative strategies, there are pragmatic-functional strategies that redirect attention from truth claims toward the contextual coordination of meaning. One key example is the theory of "Coordinated Management of Meaning", which reconceptualizes communication as joint meaning-making (Pearce W.B. and Cronen V., 2011). Rooted in pragmatism, social constructionism, and ethnomethodology, the theory posits that each communicative act unfolds within layered contexts (episodes, relationships, culture, identity) where meaning emerges through coordination rather than agreement.

The theory of Coordinated Management of Meaning's core insight is that speech constructs social realities, which carry ethical and political implications by defining who may speak, which topics are legitimized, and what remains taboo. In post-truth conditions, where facts fragment into incompatible narratives, the theory helps explain how different communities sustain distinct meaning-worlds. Credibility arises not from factual accuracy but from alignment. In this view, reality becomes an outcome of communicative practice rather than objective correspondence.

Postnormative methodological strategies thereby cultivate analytical sensitivity to the fractured, unequal, yet still ethically significant space of communication.

Conclusions

In the post-truth era, communication undergoes a radical shift: the destabilization of truth, fragmentation of identity, and erosion of reality challenge its epistemological, ontological, and anthropological foundations. These transformations call for methodological rethinking that is the core concern of this study.

As a result of the study, three main groups of methodological strategies for the reception of communication in the post-truth environment were differentiated.

Normative-oriented strategies uphold the possibility of rational understanding and public dialogue based on argumentation, reciprocal recognition, and communicative responsibility. While they remain an ethical and democratic ideal, they face post-truth challenges to communicative rationality, deliberative democracy, and the ethical foundations of discourse.

Critical-analytical strategies reveal how affective intensities and media infrastructures reshape communication prior to conscious meaning-making. Emotional mobilization and algorithmic architectures fragment discourse, replace truth with resonance, and transform dialogue into reactive interaction. These strategies expose how manipulation and virality operate within pre-reflective environments, challenging the assumptions of neutrality and transparency.

Post-normative strategies recognize the plurality of perspectives, structural asymmetries, and communicative vulnerabilities in contemporary discourse. They emphasize ethical responsiveness beyond consensus, through hermeneutic interpretation, phenomenological attention to embodied experience, and the inclusion of marginalized voices within democratic deliberation.

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