# *Ready to Mouth*

# Language and Givenness in *Being and Time*

**Abstract**

Heidegger's conception of Speech (*Rede*) in *Being and Time* remains a source of scholarly confusion and disagreement. This paper explains one part of that conception: what it is for the existential ontological foundation of language to determine disclosedness equiprimordially. I formulate a set of interpretative constraints to help us think about what it means to be the existential ontological foundation of anything, show how some dominant explanations of Speech fail to meet those constraints, and employ the constraints productively to identify the existential ontological foundation of language with the constitutive factors of Speech in a way that renders Speech equiprimordial with the fundamental structures of disclosedness. Accordingly, I demonstrate that we can hold on to the linguistic character of Speech while regarding it as an internally consistent and unified phenomenon. A key part of the demonstration involves identifying a phenomenon, the *ready to mouth*, which is characteristic of non-discursively given beings but that must be described with reference to language.

**Keywords**

Speech, Language, Being and Time, Martin Heidegger, Disclosedness

## 1. Introduction

In *Being and Time* (henceforth cited and abbreviated BT) Heidegger calls attention to Speech (*Rede*), a phenomenon scholars continue to disagree about. One strand of the disagreement turns on a series of statements Heidegger italicizes while explaining it. He begins by saying that Speech is "*equiprimordial with understanding and attunement*" (GA 2, 161).[1] Roughly, this means that whatever Speech is it is irreducible to the basic conditions of our openness to ourselves and the world and that Speech itself bears some responsibility for the character of this openness. It follows that by knowing about Speech we can know about openness. And we proceed to learn that Speech is composed of four constitutive factors, among which are what

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[1] Direct quotations are from the J. Stambaugh translation. The pagination refers to the original, which is found in both of the English translations.

ordinary talk is "*about*", and "*what is spoken*" or said in it (GA 2, 162). Presumably, then, we are meant to conceive of Dasein's openness to the world in terms of language, somehow. However, Heidegger also defines Speech as "*the existential ontological foundation for language*" (GA 2, 161). And that makes it look as if Speech is *not* language. So, it can appear as if there is something inconsistent about Heidegger's account of Speech. And because it effectively strikes at a hot topic for philosophy, the role language plays in our experiential awareness of things, there is a vested interest.

But it has remained a problem to say exactly how these statements cohere and correspond to a single unified phenomenon. In this essay, I identify a phenomenon that answers to all of them, thereby showing how they go together. [2] Waxing Heideggerian, I call it *readiness to mouth*, hence the title. I begin by formulating a set of interpretative constraints that should bear on how we think about any phenomenological term Heidegger introduces. Next, I say what a reading of Speech must explain, and that some dominant explanations conflict with the interpretative constraints I set forth. I then employ the constraints productively to identify the existential ontological foundation of language with the constituents of Speech in a way that renders Speech equiprimordial with the fundamental structures of disclosedness. Accordingly, we can hold on to the aforementioned characterizations of Speech *and* regard it as an internally consistent and unified phenomenon.

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[2] I will not attempt to resolve the many debates that surround the scholarly interpretations of Speech. These typically proceed by moving from some of its characterizations to theses about meaning and reference (Carman, 2002; Lafont, 2002; Fultner, 2005), perception and conceptuality (Guignon, 1983 ch. 9; Blattner, 1999 ch. 1; Wrathall, 2010a, Švec, 2017), normativity (Carman, 2003 ch.3; Crowell, 2013 ch. 10), assertion and rationality (see Brandom, 1997; Haugeland, 2005; Okrent, 2017), externalism (Carman, 2000; Wrathall, 2010b; Lafont, 2005), and the nature of language (Wrathall, 2010b; Fultner, 2013; Dahlstrom, 2013; Absher, 2016; Inkpin, 2016). What I am to say, if true, is likely to bear on many of these debates, and while I hope to make available some resources to further them I will not be pursuing those sorts of consequences here.

## 2. Interpretative Constraints

Speech is defined as the existential ontological foundation for language, so let us begin by getting clear about what it means to be an existential ontological foundation for anything.[3] In that regard, consider the following take on Heidegger's methodology by Mark Okrent.

> For Heidegger, phenomenology is the method for uncovering the necessary conditions on intentional directedness towards entities of different ontological types […] one can understand *Zuhandensein*, or what it is to be a tool, only if one understands how it is possible to intend something *as* a tool […] and one can understand the being of Dasein only if one can grasp what is involved in intending Dasein *as* Dasein." (Okrent, 2017 p. 25).

We can restate Okrent's point here, which I take to be fairly uncontroversial, by specifying something akin to an *ontological tenet* of Heidegger's early phenomenology (T1 below). I will put what I think is a clarifying gloss on two such tenets. The gloss drops Okrent's stress on intentionality, as Heidegger himself did by the time of writing the final draft of BT, and recasts the celebrated distinction between *beings* and their *modes of being* in terms of a more, for my purposes, helpful distinction between the *given* and the *how of its givenness*; the "givenness of its manner of being" (GA 2, 16).

> T1    To say what it is for a being to be of an ontological *kind* we must identify the conditions that are constitutive for its being given as the kind of being it is.

In BT, Heidegger famously distinguishes between three ontological kinds of beings: a useful kind of being (proper to beings that are understood in terms of goals and practices), a contextually invariant kind of being (proper to beings understood independently of goals and

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[3] The exposition of Speech in BT is brief and convoluted. Because of this I think current scholarly disagreements surrounding the concept of Speech has much to gain from an explicit clarification of premises. In this section I identify two criteria that ought to constrain our interpretation of phenomenological terms. As I do not take them to be obviously controversial, I do not defend them as such. I hope they strike readers as plausible, and that the conclusions they yield on the part of my analysis will add to that plausibility. If they should not, they serve anyway to sharpen points of scholarly disagreement.

practices)[4], and *Dasein,* the human kind of being.[5] In accordance with T1, distinct modes of givenness, called *Zuhandensein*, *Vorhandensein*, and *In-der-Welt-Sein* respectively correspond to these kinds, and each is conditioned differently.

Dasein takes on a methodological priority for Heidegger's investigation because its kind of being is distinctive in being such that it is given to itself by way of a self-interpretation that involves other beings. (cf. GA 2, 312). It is "the being whose nature it is to meet with all other beings" (GA 2, 14). And, because the ontological kinds identified by Heidegger are to be understood in terms of how they are given or met with, it is from the very encounter with things that their constitutive conditions can be, as Heidegger says, "*wrested*" (GA 2, 36). From this, we can specify a second ontological tenet.

> T2      We can get at the conditions under which something *can* be given as the kind of
> being it is via the unthematic grasp we enjoy of its being of that kind.

Consequentially, Heidegger's phenomenology investigates what there is by looking at what is given to access that which is constitutive for things being given as they are.[6] In doing so, it treats the given as a *phenomenon*. Heidegger defines a phenomenon as a distinctive way of encountering something in which what is encountered *shows itself from itself* (cf. GA 2, 31). The task of phenomenology follows: "To let what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself." (GA 2, 34). In my preferred diction, this becomes: 'to let what is given be seen from itself in the very way it is given'. Importantly, then, it is not the given, but its givenness that Heidegger's phenomenology takes "thematically as its object." (GA 2, 37). And because givenness pertains to a phenomenon, its constitutive conditions partake in the *phenomenal constituency* of something given. Throughout this essay, 'constituency' always

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[4] See McManus, 2012 ch. 3 for an excellent discussion.

[5] See Haugeland, 2013 for a proposal to extend the notion of Dasein beyond the scope of human of beings. See Carman, 2014 for criticism.

[6] See Cerbone (1999) for an account of Heidegger's conception of constitution.

means 'phenomenal constituency'. Because phenomena admit of descriptions, we can say that to partake in the phenomenal constituency of something given is to be something on which the content of a description of its givenness can turn.[7]

The tenets go together like this. We can say (or achieve a thematic grasp of) what it is for something to be the kind of being it is by bringing what is constitutive for its being given as of its kind to self-showing from our unthematic grasp of its being of that kind. Phenomenology, so construed, is a means to say something that would otherwise remain unsaid about something that would otherwise remain unthought. (see esp. GA 2, 35). To do so, "the structures of being [the conditions constitutive of the givenness of beings] in the mode of phenomenon, must first be wrested from the objects of phenomenology." (GA 2, 36). The conditions of givenness can be so wrought only because we encounter beings in the manner of their givenness (their how of being given). This is to say that beings show themselves under certain conditions, but that we typically do not grasp these conditions conceptually. To achieve such a grasp, beings must first "show themselves in the way of access that genuinely belong to them." (GA 2, 37). Only by getting at beings in the way of access belonging to them, in their how of being given, can what constitutes their being given in that way, the conditions of their givenness, be put to words and come to self-showing, provided that they are well described.

We can now formulate a first criterion by which our interpretations of phenomenological terms ought to be constrained. I will call it the *methodological constraint* (abbr. MC).

> MC    A phenomenological term conceptualizes a phenomenal constituent discernable as a condition of the givenness of a being.

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[7] We must take care not to conflate phenomenal constituency with what philosophers of perception often refer to as the *phenomenal character* of an experience. Phenomenal character pertains to how something looks, e.g. looking F (green or ancient) or looking like F (like uncle George). Phenomenal constituency pertains to how something is given, or shows up; e.g. in terms of such as goals or practices when *Zuhandensein,* or in terms of contextually independent properties when *Vorhandensein.*

A phenomenon, qua thematic object of the phenomenological investigation, is available to be investigated only as a member of the phenomenal constituency of a being that shows itself. Consequentially, our interpretations of the phenomenological concepts found in BT must not fail to pick out a phenomenal constituent in terms that make plain how it conditions the givenness of a given.

We can formulate a second criterion that ought to constrain our interpretations of phenomenological terms by looking at how the ontological tenets inform Heidegger's investigation into the being he prioritizes, Dasein. Dasein is from the very beginning conceived of as a being that is *given to itself* in concern for its being. Dasein is "distinguished by the fact that in its being this being is concerned *about* its very being." (GA 2, 12; Heidegger's emphasis). The ontological tenets say how to thematically apprehend this being in its being, accordingly. First, with T1, we must seek to conceptualize the conditions under which Dasein is given to itself, the constituents of its self-concern. And to do so, with T2, we need to engage the phenomena whereby Dasein is given to itself in concern for itself.

As it turns out, BT initially proceeds as an investigation into the givenness of beings other than Dasein. The logic behind this move is that Heidegger locates the phenomena he requires per T2 in what he calls Dasein's *everydayness*.[8] For the most part, Dasein is given to itself "inauthentically" through meeting with beings other than itself in its day-to-day dealings.[9] The givenness of beings other than Dasein is thus conceived of "in correlation with the basic constitution of Dasein". (GA 20, 209). Once the experientially given entities that are *not* Dasein

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[8] "[F]rom the phenomenal state of the everydayness of Dasein itself it becomes evident that not only the others but remarkably 'one oneself' is there in what one attends to everyday." (GA 20, 241).

[9] This is more clearly expressed in the original. Heidegger's term for 'inauthentic' (*Uneigentlich*) literally signifies something that is not of or proper to oneself.

have been conceived of in terms of their givenness, the conditions of their givenness are subject to an interpretation through which constituents of Dasein's *way of being* is further singled out. An upshot is that Dasein's constitution conditions how entities other than Dasein are given.

Now, because Dasein is conceptualized in terms of the conditions under which it is given, its basic constitution – its *way of being* – refers to these conditions in their interrelation and unity. Note that it is one thing to single out such a condition, and another to determine it in its relationships to other conditions. Heidegger's approach is hermeneutic. In part, this means that elements of Dasein's constitution are being re-examined and reinterpreted in terms of each other with regards to their unity throughout the development of BT. In all this, it is important not to lose track of the fact that what is subject to interpretation are conditions of givenness, so that in each case givens are considered in their givenness. To describe a condition of givenness is *necessarily* to say something about a given in its way of being given, something that shows itself just as it shows itself.

Heidegger consistently employs phenomenological concepts that make his descriptions of *what* is given turn on Dasein's way of being (its constitution), and thus on *that* it is given. When the content of a description turns on Dasein's way of being, Heidegger calls that which the phenomenological concepts signify *existentials*. Accordingly, the role of *existential concepts* is to make the content of a description turn on some way Dasein is. With this in mind, we can specify a second criterion. Call it the *ontological constraint* (abbr. OC).

> OC    An existential concept singles out some way Dasein is that conditions the givenness of what it encounters.

My way of reading Speech is formulated in accordance with MC and OC. I show how conditions of linguistic givenness can be discerned from linguistic phenomena, and how these single out a way Dasein is that conditions the givenness of the beings it meets with. This brings

together the existential ontological character of Speech with its manner of being linguistically qualified in Heidegger's discussion. The exact nature and relationship between these aspects is a source of scholarly confusion. The next section restates two exegetical approaches to BT that Taylor Carman has called the pragmatic and the linguistic models (2003). These offer contrasting takes on Speech. I worry that readings of a pragmatic stripe typically meet the ontological constraint by underemphasizing Speech's relationship to language, while readings of a linguistic stripe fail to meet it by overemphasizing that relationship. The case is the opposite with the methodological constraint. Readings of a linguistic stripe typically meet it by recognizing the central place of language in Heidegger's existential analytic, while the pragmatic readings fail on that count.

## 3. What Needs Explaining

In BT, Heidegger properly discusses language for the first and last time in a chapter that describes the openness to itself and the world that Dasein *is*. That chapter proceeds as a description of the *existential structures of disclosedness*. Here, disclosedness means "to be open'" (GA 2, 75). To avoid some of the reifying bias invited by talk of structures, I prefer to put it such that to describe a structure of disclosedness is to specify how openness is shaped. We may then say that the existential structures of disclosedness are individuations of Dasein's way of being that shape the openness that is constitutive for it. Further, because Dasein's way of being conditions givenness, a shaping of openness is a conditioning of givenness. I mention this here because Heidegger says about the structures of disclosedness that they are "equiprimordially determined by Speech" (GA 2, 133). And any good interpretation of Speech must explain what it is for the existential foundation of language to *equiprimordially*[10]

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[10] For something to be equprimordial is for it to be irreducible to and jointly constitutive with that which it is equiprimordially alongside (cf. GA 2, 131).

determine the structure of disclosedness.

We require an explanation here because Heidegger qualifies Speech in terms of language itself. The problem turns on the following. On one hand, Speech is a phenomenological term that refers to an existential structure. Again, to be an existential structure is in part to condition how *something* is given. However, by determining *disclosedness* equiprimordially Speech conditions how *anything* is given. And on the other hand, Heidegger qualifies Speech in terms of the following four "constitutive factors" (GA 2, 163).

        S1      The about which of the talk (*das Woruber der Rede).*

        S2      The said as such (*das Geredete als solches*).

        S3      Communicative sharing (*Mitteilung*).

        S4      Making (oneself) known (*Bekundung*).

A close connection between Speech and language is clearly implied. But BT equivocates in telling us about the linguistic and disclosive aspects of Speech, and Heidegger is never explicit about how the two go together. What are we, for instance, to make of the connection between "*das Geredete als solches*" and disclosedness? Are experiences conceptual episodes? Is openness somehow shaped by what we say? Is Dasein semantically structured? Concerning these and related questions, mutually exclusive answers are offered by what I, building on Carman (2003) will call *austerely linguistic* and *austerely pragmatic* readings.[11] These are "austere" in that they either *necessarily* entail or *necessarily* reject *linguistic constitutionalism*, the idea that our experience of the world and ourselves is determined in some sense by linguistic or language-like content of some sort.[12] The reading I advocate is neutral about this. I claim that the truth of linguistic constitutionalism is *not* something that Speech settles for us *tout*

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[11] Our distinctions differ in important ways. Carman distances himself from the pragmatic model in his discussion, but he is an austerely pragmatic reader by my count.

[12] See Absher, 2016 for a critical discussion of constitutionalism and its relation to Carman's linguistic and pragmatic models.

*court.* But the reading I present contrasts with austere readings in interesting ways, so I present them in brief for comparison.

We can distinguish readings of Speech by the respective tasks their subscribers engage in when explaining it. An austerely linguistic reading, as I count one, conceives of the constitutive factors in terms of language-like *content* such as linguistic meanings, a semantic structure, or some conceptual space or framework.[13] Per this reading, the equivocation between linguistic and disclosive aspects of Speech yields a tension: As linguistically qualified by the constitutive factors Speech denotes some sort of linguistic content. As a determinant of the structure of disclosedness, Speech individuates the way Dasein is. The task of austerely linguistic readers is therefore to bring these together without introducing unnecessary incoherence into BT's existential analytic. Specifically, their task is (a) to say what language-like content Speech denotes; and (b) to explain how that content determines disclosedness. Regarding (a) various candidates have been suggested.[14] I worry that any candidate for (a) fails OC and that (b) therefore poses the wrong sort of problem: bringing out the transcendental status of what cannot be transcendental in the relevant *existential* sense.

According to OC, something counts as an existential structure only if it constitutes a *way* Dasein is. But language-like content is a matter of *what* there is. Speech, being an existential, is not the

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[13] What-content is synonymous with the left side of the given-givenness distinction. A structure is a piece of what-content insofar as it has specifiable structural properties.

[14] Some examples. Guignon pictures Speech as the "publicly accessible realm of expressions of the intelligible world". (1983: 116); Lafont, 2002 construes the relationship between Speech and language as a difference between what is implicitly expressible and explicitly expressed; Fultner thinks of it as a "living dynamic thing" (2013: 217); Dahlstrom, 2013 draws a distinction between "existential" and "linguistic" meanings, the former of which is proper to Speech; Inkpin thinks we are "encouraged to assume an underlying semantic structure common to both linguistic and non-linguistic acts that would presumably form a proper object of a theory of meaning" (2016: 36); and Švec proposes that Speech "encompasses a whole range of ways in which we use language to communicate including everything that we convey when sharing meaning". (2017 p. 216). I do not mean to uncharitably bind the authors or their views to an austere linguistic reading. The point is that these remarks read as austerely linguistic, and are misleading as far as explaining Speech goes.

sort of thing that should have, or add, what Heidegger calls 'what-content.'[15] Put differently,

the problem is that specifying linguistic content of some sort does not succeed in bringing about

an appraisal of how something is given. At best, specifying linguistic content would amount to

rightly asserting some of what is given, the propositional or otherwise conceptual structure of

experience, etc. But, however one would spell this out it would not, by Heidegger's count,

amount to saying anything about givenness and its phenomenal conditions. In his words "From

the *what* I never experience anything about the sense and the manner of the *that*" (GA 29, 151;

my emphasis). If Speech could be translated into some of what there is – whether a semantic or

propositional structure, a toolbox of words, linguistic meanings, or language in its entirety –

then it could not itself function to bring about an appraisal of the way such or something else is

given. The austere linguistic reader is by my count someone who tries to describe Speech by

specifying some of what there is. That gets it backwards. There may be nothing wrong with

typing content according to some such specification, but it is wrong to think that so typing some

content is thus typing Speech.

By contrast, austerely pragmatic readings[16] are typically motivated by the belief that Division

1 of BT has identified a non-linguistic pragmatic and primary kind of intentional agency that is

sophisticated enough to perform duties often attributed to cognition and reason. A remarkable

fact about division one is that a wealth of terms often associated with language such as

'reference', 'understanding', 'intelligibility', 'sign', and 'signification' are introduced in a

context devoid of linguistic considerations (see esp. BT §17). A choice point for any reading

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[15] Heidegger is explicit about this in an early version of BT. "This designation 'Dasein' for the distinctive entity so named does not signify a what. This entity is not distinguished by its what, like a chair in contrast to a house. Rather, this designation in its own way expresses the way to be. It is a very specific expression of being which is here chosen for an entity, whereas at first we (normally) always name an entity in terms of its what-content and leave its specific being undetermined, because we hold it to be self-evident. (2009: 153)".

[16] Subscribers include Okrent, 1988; Dreyfus, 1991; Blattner, 1999; Carman, 2003; Wrathall, 2010a; Haugeland, 2013. See Golob, 2015 and Švec, 2017 for recent criticisms of this kind of approach. See Okrent, 2017 for a recent defense. See Hatab, 2018 for a non-austere reconceptualization of the pragmatic terms.

of Speech is whether it is willing to displace some of the later linguistic considerations in favor of the previous exposition. Doing so secures coherence but leaves something wanting concerning the constitutive factors.[17] The immediate challenge Heidegger's exposition of Speech presents for the austerely pragmatic reader is to explain (away) the linguistic part of the equivocation. Specifically, their tasks are (a) to describe the constitution of Speech and its constitutive role *without reference to language*; and (b) explain how this role can existentially found language.

Austerely pragmatic readings are committed to (a) because Speech determines the structure of disclosedness, and if disclosedness is described in terms of language then, straightforwardly, givenness as such cannot be wholly accounted for in a non-linguistic manner. That puts these readings into conflict with MC. By MC, the ontological foundation of language must show itself as a constituent of the linguistic phenomena from which it has been discerned. If the ontological foundation of language existentially determines disclosedness primordially, it follows that language can tell us something about givenness as such.

Austere pragmatic readers can avoid this objection by demonstrating that language does not enjoy special privilege as far as discerning Speech goes. They would have to show that the constitutive factors that make up Speech jointly condition the givenness of something that is not language, but that language itself trades on. The idea would then be that language serves as (but) an *exemplary case* (Schear, 2007) fit to foster descriptions of phenomena that are particularly perspicuous in, but not exclusive to, it. There is precedent for that sort of exemplary case in Heidegger's discussion of signs (see esp. GA 2, 77) so this is not implausible. However,

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[17] Some examples are William Blattner admitting complications in grasping the communicative function of Speech (s3) without reference to linguistic communication (1999:72); Carman declining as "obviously misleading" an invitation to imagine a "prelinguistic set of conditions precisely anticipating the semantic and pragmatic structures of language" (2003: 227); and Okrent taking issue with the way (s2) makes it seem as if a given phenomenon is "necessarily linguistic", calling this an illusion (2017: 38).

it leaves 'the about which of *the talk*' and 'the *said* as such' accounted for in a non-linguistic manner, which makes Heidegger's choice of terms poor, and the account itself missing. To rectify this, various accounts have been suggested.[18] I will not discuss them here[19], but note that these accounts are viable candidates only if Speech does not condition for anything specific to language: if Speech conditions for something specific to language it follows from MC that Speech is a constituent of some linguistic phenomena, and must be described *with* reference to language. In the next section, I claim that Speech conditions for something specific to language, and I argue that Heidegger's characterizations of Speech cohere under the assumption that it does.

My reading is formulated in accordance with MC and OC. I construe Speech as an individuation of Dasein's being without elucidating that way in terms of language-like content. Instead, I explain Speech in terms of *how* beings are given to Dasein. My central claims are that what is intelligibly given to Dasein is given as recognizably available to constitute the content of a discursive utterance and that the constitutive factors of Speech are party to its being given in that way. Because I explain Speech in terms of language but without reference to linguistic content, my reading contrasts with austere readings.

## 4. Discursive Givenness

I have mentioned two things that an exegetical exposition of Speech must explain. Firstly, we want an explanation of what it is for the existential ontological foundation of language to primordially determine disclosedness. Secondly, we want this explanation to make sense of the

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[18] These accounts translate Speech into some non-linguistic phenomenon. Some candidates are "differentiatory comportment" (Blattner, 1999: 75); "demonstrative practices" (Carman, 2003: 225);c "acts of interpretation" (Okrent, 2017: 27); and "the structure of gathering or collecting references in coherent context" (Wrathall, 2010a: 132).

[19] See Inkpin, 2017 for a recent critique.

equivocation between the disclosive and linguistic aspects of Speech. I rely on the interpretative criteria I introduced earlier to give satisfying answers. The latter should pose no difficulty for us provided that we can employ OC to explain the equivocation as issuing naturally from the work that the existential-ontological terms of BT are meant to do: On one hand, as ontological terms, they single out phenomenal constituents of the given by conceptualizing the conditions of its givenness. On the other, as existential terms, they come together in specific ways – delineated by Heidegger's existential analytic – to individuate Dasein's way of being. With that in mind, I take on the first task. I solve it by employing MC to explain how a specification of *givenness as such* can be discerned from language as a phenomenon.

Andrew Inkpin has recently suggested that Heidegger's treatment of Speech attempts to balance two desiderata (2016, 36). The first is to hold on to a sense in which language is continuous with meaningful activities in general. I call this the *continuity desideratum*. Generally, for language to be continuous with meaningful activities is for discursive intelligibility to be similar in important ways to pragmatic intelligibility. The second desideratum is to acknowledge and account for something specific to language that sets it apart from other meaningful activities. Call this the *specificity desideratum*. I think Inkpin is right to insist on both desiderata, and that their interrelation is key to understanding how Speech determines disclosedness. But before we home in on exactly how they inform Heidegger's concept of Speech, we must think straight about what a *phenomenological desideratum* is. The ontological tenets introduced earlier help us do so.

Following T1, an ontological account of a being must conceive of it in terms of the phenomenal conditions under which it is given. Per T2, the conditions under which it is given can be wrought from its being given as so conditioned. Between them, the tenets inform us about how to determine something phenomenologically by conceptualizing it in terms of its manner of

showing itself. Thus, to bear on a *phenomenological conception of language* the relevant desiderata must translate into some way beings show themselves in their how of being given. Accordingly, they would refer to those ways in which the discursively given shows itself as continuous with and specific beyond what is given anyway. If specificity and continuity were genuine desiderata for Heidegger's phenomenology of language, then he would have let the discursively given show itself in its way of being specific *and* continuous with what is given anyway to discern the conditions of their being given thus, and he would have conceptualized language accordingly.[20] I will show that the text supports both specificity and continuity as genuine desiderata, supposing my take on what it is to be that.

## 4.1. The specificity desideratum

Because Speech determines the fundamental structures of disclosedness, so do the constitutive factors (S1-S4). These, we saw, referred to language directly, and I take this to reflect the specificity desideratum. On that take, the constitutive factors single out the phenomenal conditions of specifically discursive givenness. So, we should be able to say something about what Speech's determination of disclosedness consists of by specifying how the constitutive factors condition linguistic givenness. There follows, therefore, a brief explication of the first three constitutive factors *as conditions of linguistic givenness*.[21]

**S1**. Heidegger stresses that *what* is discursively given, in so far as the discourse is understood, are beings (cf. GA 2, 164). The words themselves withdraw, as it were, in favor of what they

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[20] Looking at things this way has one immediately beneficial consequence. It explains why Heidegger says that Speech *is* language (see GA 2, 32, 167). If Speech is made up of the conditions of linguistic givenness, and language is conceptualized or understood in terms of the conditions of linguistic givenness, then Speech is language conceived of as discursive givenness. But more precisely, Speech is language understood existentially.

[21] I leave out S4 here because it is tied up with Heidegger's conception of moods and their relation to Dasein's self-givenness, and this is complex in ways I cannot begin to account for here. See Golob, 2017 for a particularly illustrative discussion of Heidegger's conception of moods and emotions in BT.

convey. What is discursively given then is not sounds and signs, and a phenomenally sound characterization of the content of discourse cannot proceed by addressing the representational properties of such. This is not because sounds and signs cannot be understood to have representational properties, but because these do not make out the phenomenal content of the discourse. The *phenomenal* content of discourse, in so far as the discourse is understood, turns directly on what the discourse is about.

> Any interpretation that inserts something else here as what one has in mind in a statement that merely represents falsifies the phenomenal state of affairs about which a statement is made. (GA 2, 217-18).

This is so regardless of whether one is visually acquainted with the object of the talk. To talk about the moon in a windowless room is to talk about the moon itself, not a visualization or picture of it. Yet this by itself issues no guarantee that the moon shows itself in the talk as being the way it really is. Discursive givenness is conditioned by the about-which of the talk only in the sense that an about-which of the talk figures as a phenomenal constituent of the content of that talk. The way the moon is is not yet in question. However, because the discursively given is given by way of an about which showing itself in it, discoursing trades on there being something given to the speaker *at the outset* that can so show itself: "In order for something to be a possible about-which for an assertion it must *already* be somehow given for the assertion as unveiled and accessible." (GA 24, 208). And it is part of its being "unveiled and accessible" that it is understood to be in some way.

**S2.** Heidegger discusses Speech in BT only after he has described the conditions of what is given at the outset. He ends up with a holistic type of givenness whereby innerworldly beings are given as standing in practically significant relationships to each other and Dasein. [22] What

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[22] This is most explicitly spelled out in BT §17. See Sheehan, 2018 for a clarifying paraphrastic translation of this section.

is sayable is, for the most part, some such standing; a way things are, where their being so is of practical significance. For sayings to trade on what is given at the outset is then for the intelligibility of a discursive utterance to be indexed to a, primarily practical, context.[23] Discursive givenness is conditioned by what is said to the extent that the discursively given is phenomenally constituted by things being made out to be in some way. One's awareness, when a listener or a speaker, turns on some way things are made out to be (so of some way things are, or else some way for things to be). Importantly, the ways things are made out to be is not restricted to what a predicative assertion such as (a2) below says. Indeed, we can imagine a context where what is said in (a1), (a2), and (a3) is equivalent. What is said in (a2) would then be captured more "precisely" by (a3), and more efficiently by (a1).

   (a1) 'Too heavy…'
   (a2) 'The hammer is heavy.'
   (a3) 'This hammer is too heavy for me, hand me the other hammer.'

**S3**. Following S1 and S2, comprehending interlocutors strike up a relationship directly with some way things are by their being said to be in that way. In so doing they enter into a *shared* relationship with some way things are. S3 conditions discursive givenness in the sense that what is discursively given is given as something interlocutors shares in an understanding of. To be the recipient of something discursively given is to take part in, or at least being invited to take part in, a public, or potentially public, "seeing" of some way things are explicitly made out to be. Heidegger stresses that the discursively given is co-apprehended *with*, not passed to and fro (cf. GA 2, 162). Listening to a speaker is not being admitted into a private world, but being together with the speaker in a shared world articulated by what is said about things.

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[23] In my view, Heidegger's convoluted explication of the articulatory function of Speech on p. 161 in BT is an attempt to illuminate how this works.

We can see here that the constitutive factors in each case correspond to some easily recognizable facts about how language works. It just seems true that in everyday linguistic performance something is being said, about something, to someone (if but to oneself or no one in particular), by someone (the omitted S4). I submit that the constitutive factors reflect the specificity desideratum in that each is derived from the quintessentially linguistic phenomena that underpin these easily recognizable facts. It is not just that linguistic acts are about things, etc. For if we *ask about the phenomenal constitution* of what linguistic acts deliver, then it seems true of the very constitution of the deliverances that something out there (on the far side of the talk, as it were) shows up as being that which the talk is concerned with (S1), that it shows up intelligibly as of a way things are made out to be (S2), and that in so doing it shows up as something comprehending interlocutors share in a recognition of. It is by so asking, and then discerning, that Heidegger formulates the constitutive factors of Speech, and in this way, they reflect the specificity desideratum on my conception of what it is to be a phenomenological desideratum.

Straightforwardly, austere pragmatic readers bent on construing Speech without reference to linguistic phenomena cannot accept the above rendition of the constitutive factors. To be the intentional object of some action is not for an about which to constitute the phenomenal content *of talk* or show itself in being in some way as per something *said*, nor does my simply acting on something in the presence of onlookers appear to involve a second communicative act of inviting others to partake in recognizing some way things are.[24] The problem is not just that austerely pragmatic accounts of the constitutive factors seem unsatisfactory, but that by subscribing to such an account we also leave discursive givenness unaccounted for. Beyond trading on what is uncovered practically prior to any discoursing about it, discursive givenness

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[24] See Blattner, 1999, Carman, 2003 ch. 5 and Okrent, 2017 for austerely pragmatic construal's of S3. See Carman, 2003 ch. 5 and Inkpin, 2017 for criticisms.

is conditioned *also* by how discursive utterances afford awareness of this.[25] As Heidegger says in an early version of BT, the structures of disclosedness (attunement and understanding*)* "are necessary structures for the essential structure of language itself, but they are not yet sufficient." (GA 20, 262). Next, I argue that the continuity desideratum is reflected in how the "sufficient" structures of language (S1-S4) participate in Speech's determination of disclosedness.

## *4.2. The continuity desideratum*

Because discoursing, qua S1, depends on what is already there, given at the outset, there is a straightforward sense in which linguistic givenness is continuous with non-linguistic givenness. But we got this already from specificity with no residual continuity left to count as a desideratum on its own. For continuity to be a desideratum in the sense I envisage it, the opposite must be the case and what is there at the outset must show itself as being continuous, somehow, with the discursively given. If so, then discursive givenness would assert itself over givenness as such and determine what is given anyway. This forges an exegetically interesting connection between language and disclosedness. The relevant sort of continuity, which I will just denote 'C' can be defined as follows.

> C    Condition of non-discursive givenness constitutively dependent on S1-S4 discernible from a phenomenal datum that exceeds specificity.

C is important to us because we can seize on it to explain why and in which sense Speech conditions givenness as such. I argue that C is both philosophically and exegetically warranted by first taking note of a phenomenon that reflects continuity as a desideratum for phenomenology, then explaining how it is operative in Heidegger's conception of Speech.

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[25] Austere pragmatic readers may of course reject my construal, but, as I said, that puts them at odds with MC. If they should want to reject MC too, our disagreement lies elsewhere.

**C**. Without further ado, the phenomenal datum that reflects the continuity desideratum is that what shows up to us in our everyday experiences of ourselves and the world shows up as something we can talk about. In Heideggerian terms, it shows up as *ready to mouth*: fit for being put to words.[26] For this to be a phenomenal datum in the relevant sense, as per the thematic object of Heidegger's phenomenology, is for such fitness to be true, not of some feature of what appears, but of its very appearing as it does. So the reality of the ready to mouth does not hinge on *what appears*, as long as what appears is intelligible as something – as when one would know what to do with it or what it is a case of – and it does not matter to whom it appears, as long as it appears to a speaker – where what it is to be a speaker must be thought about in terms of the phenomenological conception of language outlined above.

Importantly, then, in being a phenomenon in the relevant sense, the ready to mouth does not depend on the various contingencies concerning one's *capacity* to speak. It does not matter if one can only speak about things falsely (as when mistaken), or vaguely (as when uncertain), or inconsistently (as when confused), or just barely (as when sleepy), or unintelligibly (as when excessively inebriated), or only to oneself in thought (as when one's tongue is cut off). So, for instance, to be at a loss for words is *not* to experience something unfit for being talked about but to be unable to make good on the fitness there is. And what in a psychological sense looks to resist expression will nevertheless constitute the 'about which' of any failed attempt at expressing it.

With this in mind, we can construe an argument for continuity being a desideratum for phenomenology.

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[26] The easily recognizable fact underpinned by this datum is that undergoing an experience is, inter alia, being provided with something to speak about.

***The argument for continuity as a desideratum for phenomenology from readiness to mouth.***

> P1     Continuity is a desideratum for phenomenology if the givenness of non-discursive givens *cannot* be described in exclusively non-linguistic terms.
>
> P2     Beings are ready to mouth.
>
> P3     Describing readiness to mouth is describing the givenness of non-discursive givens in terms of language.

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> Continuity is a desideratum for phenomenology.

The premise most likely to come under attack here is P2. The most pressing objection I anticipate comes from what Schear has called the consensus view of Heidegger's account of judgment in BT. In his words, this view holds that "all and only present-at-hand entities are possible topics of judgment." (Schear, 2007: 3). If one subscribes to this view, one might think it follows that only the subset of beings that are present at hand entities can be ready to mouth and that ready to hand entities and possibly Dasein are excluded. In that case, the givenness of non-discursive givens could be fully describable without reference to language, and continuity would not be a desideratum as envisaged.

Now, there are good reasons to think that the (then) consensus view is wrong (for these, see Schear, 2007; McManus. 2012 ch. 3; Golob, 2015; and Inkpin, 2017) but even if it is right it does not threaten P2: Readiness to mouth is not coextensive with being the possible topic of a judgment in the sense required to count against it. For, on the consensus view, Heidegger's analysis of the statement in BT shows how presence at hand originates *with* a statement that enacts a modification in the structure of interpretation (cf. GA 2, 158), so merely being ready to hand cannot bar a being from *becoming* the about-which of a statement whereby it becomes present at hand. Otherwise, a gap is introduced between these two modes of being and it becomes hard to see how the statement can let one take "aim at something objectively present

*in* what is ready to hand" (GA 2, 158; my emphasis) at all. Hence, readiness to mouth can be true of what is ready to hand even if it is *necessarily* not ready to hand once it is put to words.

The same point also counts against a related objection that stems from influential Dreyfusian considerations about skilled coping with the environment and expert *flow*. According to Dreyfus, achieving a conceptual grasp of things disrupts flow (see Dreyfus, 2013 for a recent statement of this point). Because readiness to mouth involves reference to language, one might think that it is constitutively dependent on a conceptual grasp of things. And while this is right, it is right in the sense that being ready to mouth means something like being *suited for conceptuality to take hold* or being *conceptually graspable*. But it does *not* mean something like being *conceptual* or *conceptually articulated*. That something ready to hand is suited for conceptuality to take hold seems presupposed and not precluded by the very idea of flow being disruptable, somehow, by conceptuality.

Moving on, from the phenomenal datum that beings are ready to mouth we should be able to single out, as is the due course for Heideggerian phenomenology, the condition of givenness, C, that accounts for the continuity between the discursively and non-discursively given that the ready to mouth involves. Because C involves intrinsic reference to language and the relevant conception of language is formulated in terms of the conditions specific to linguistic givenness, C is constitutively dependent upon S1-S4: For beings to be ready to mouth is for them to be possible about which's of sayings that communicate and make known. Speech, then, is partly constitutive for C. And because being partly constitutive for C is being a phenomenal co-constituent of what is given "at the outset", firstly and for the most part, this locates Speech in its equiprimordially disclosive aspect.

The point of critical importance here is this. Because S1-S4 is partly constitutive of C, then if C obtains it follows that what is given at the outset is conditioned by S1-S4, which means that

*language informs a description of givenness as such*. In that case, disclosedness must be understood *with* reference to language. In turn, it would be exactly right to say that the existential ontological foundation for language, or Speech, determines disclosedness equiprimordially, irreducibly alongside something else, in that something discernible from specifically linguistic phenomena turns out to condition the givenness of what is given anyway and non-discursively.

Additionally, MC and OC are satisfied. MC is satisfied in that we arrive at both continuity and specificity by discerning Speech from linguistic phenomena. And because Speech, so discerned, conditions both non-discursive and discursive givenness, all that remains to satisfy OC is to establish that an individuation of Dasein's way of being corresponds to this conditioning. This we can do easily. Speech individuates Dasein's way of being as the way of being of a speaker – "that creature whose being is essentially determined by its ability to speak" (GA 2, 25) –, someone for whom there is something to say (S2), and whose way of being is such that what it encounters is intelligibly given as something it can speak about (C/S1), share in an understanding of (S3), and express itself in terms of (S4).

We have arrived, then, at an explanation of what needed explaining, one that is faithful to the methodology of BT, and which identifies a philosophically interesting phenomenon in its own right, readiness to mouth.

## 5. In Favour of C

The relevant question now is whether C informed Heidegger's conception of Speech. I admit that this cannot be ascertained on purely exegetical grounds. But I can offer two arguments in support of the likelihood that it did. These hold independently of the ontological tenets and interpretative constraints I have proposed. The first argument purports to show that Heidegger

recognized something that closely resembles C, the second that C follows from his conception of Dasein.

The first argument turns on a remark Heidegger makes about the relationship between assertion and interpretation. He says that what is understood *as* something can be asserted "only because it is before one as something expressible [*Ausprechbares vorliegt*]" (SZ: 149). This can be turned into an exegetical argument for the ready to mouth, as follows.

***The argument for C from the possibility of giving expression to interpretations.***

> P1    Seeing is constituted by the *as*-structure of interpretation.
>
> P2    What the as-structure makes recognizable is before one as something expressible.
>
> P3    What is expressible can be put to words.

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> The seeing of beings is a seeing of what is ready for being put to words.

The argument seems strong. To deny P1 one must deny that ordinary seeing is constituted by the 'as-structure'. Dreyfus (1991) does so in an attempt to link interpretation to the *un-ready to hand*. But Heidegger seems adamant: "The fact that the explicitness of a statement can be lacking in simple looking, does not justify us in denying every articulate interpretation and thus the as-structure, to this simple seeing". (GA 2, 149). If Dreyfus is right, then we should expect Heidegger to link simple seeing to the un-ready to hand, but this never happens. To deny P2 one must detach expressibility from interpretation in general, but the remark about expressibility is part of Heidegger's exposition of interpretation in general so this is a non-starter. To deny P3 one must detach language from expressibility. Austerely pragmatic readings of the constitutive factors of Speech have made available resources by which to do so (Okrent,

2017 might be particularly relevant in this regard). But in this context, Heidegger's term is '*Aussprechbar*', which translates into 'speakable', so one does not get to do this for free.

A second argument follows from Heidegger's recognition that Dasein is essentially a speaker, defined by its ability to talk about what it experiences, coupled with the constitution of Dasein as determining its experiences.

### *The argument for C from the constitution of a speaking being*

P1      The possibility of speaking about things is constitutive for Dasein.

P2      Dasein's constitution determines the ways things are given to it.

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What is given to Dasein is given in terms of its being able to speak about it.

The argument says that Dasein is such that we can speak about things so therefore things are encountered in terms of our being able to. If beings are encountered in terms of our being able to speak about them, C is satisfied. P1 is supported by Heidegger's conception of Dasein in BT as "that creature whose being is *essentially* determined by its ability to speak" (GA 2, 25; my emphasis). Compare his subsequent (1931) reinterpretation of the rational animal as "the living being who lives in such a way that his life, as a way to be, is defined in an originary way by his command of language." (GA 33, 128/109), and his antecedent (1925) conception of language as Dasein: "Language itself has Dasein's kind of being." (GA 20, 270). One cannot simply dismiss these claims, so the best chance of rejecting P1 is qualifying them somehow. But note that Heidegger is talking about language here, not Speech, so the austerely pragmatic qualifications of Speech are not available. P2 follows from Heidegger's way of doing phenomenology. Therefore, one must be careful in trying to refute it: If Dasein's essential constitution does not determine its experiences then its structures cannot be "read off in what is given." (GA 20, 40). But then phenomenology becomes impossible. To defeat P2 one must

therefore demonstrate that Dasein's constitution does not determine its experiences *all the time*. But then the conclusion of the argument follows whenever it does determine them, which presumably would be *zunächst und zumeist*.

While these arguments do not establish for certain that Heidegger's conception of Speech reflects C, they jointly make a strong case that it *should*. And because C affords a neat explanation of exactly how the disclosive and linguistic aspects of Speech cohere in a way that is consistent with both the phenomenological method of BT and the pragmatic account of intelligibility developed before the introduction of Speech, that case is strengthened considerably.

## 6. Conclusion

I have sought to explain an essential part of Heidegger's account of Speech: how the linguistic and disclosive aspects of Speech go together. But the scope of this paper has been limited. I have not addressed the relationship between Speech and Heidegger's conception of phenomenology (BT §7b), nor said how Speech ties up with the phenomena of idle speech (BT §35), conscience (BT §56), reticence (BT §60), and temporality (BT §68d).[27] Hence, my analysis does not resemble anything like a comprehensive exposition of Speech and the role it plays in the BT project. Rather, I have provided what I take to be necessary, and as of yet incomplete, groundwork for fully appreciating that role. If I am right, *Heidegger derived and was exactly right to derive a constituent of disclosedness from specifically linguistic phenomena.* This has important implications for our understanding of the relationship between Dasein, language, and phenomenology. For one, it allows us to think about Speech in terms of

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[27] See Wrathall, 2010; Crowell, 2013 ch.10; Batho, 2018; and Anton, 2002 for respective expositions of these matters.

language, as discursive givenness, without endorsing linguistic constitutivism.[28] This, in turn, lets us think about Heidegger's discussion of Speech as an attempt to conceptualize language phenomenologically in terms of Dasein. For another, it allows us to forge a bridge between Heidegger's earlier and later thinking about the relationship between language and disclosedness. Language shifts from the periphery to take center stage in Heidegger's later thinking of being, but if language already informed his account of openness, and vice versa, that shift might not signal as radical a change of view as is often supposed.[29]

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[28] Accordingly, we can hold on to a conception of Speech as a linguistic phenomenon while neither affirming linguistic idealism as Cristina Lafont (2000) has argued we must (although her point generalizes beyond language, see McManus, 2015 for a critical discussion), nor rejecting the "primacy of practice" as William Blattner (2007) argues we must not.

[29] A highly informative but austerely pragmatic alternative version of the same point is found in Wrathall, 2010a.

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