

# Great universe of language

Gran universo del lenguaje  
Grande universo da linguagem

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## Abstract

**Introduction and objective:** in this article we analyze the possibility of extending the application of the concept of language, beyond the human as subject and possessor of this, including animals -not human- within its widest definition. **Method or methodology:** first, a review is made of some epistemological contributions related to the theory of language in its philosophical, psychological and linguistic dimension. Subsequently, the constitutive elements of the theories are reviewed, seeking to identify those positions that imply a conceptual confusion of the elements that make up the totality of the concept of language, to finally establish **Conclusions and results:** there is an assimilation between what is meant by language and language, which has led to the exclusion of animals -not human- in the category of language holders, when it is a question of the lack of a structured and systematized language on the part of the latter.

**Key words:** *Lenguaje; Lenguaje; Lenguaje; Agility; Comunicación.*

## Resumen

**Introducción y objetivo:** en el presente artículo se analiza la posibilidad de extender la aplicación del concepto de lenguaje, más allá del humano como sujeto y poseedor de este, incluyendo a los animales -no humanos- dentro de su más amplia definición. **Método o metodología:** primeramente, se hace una revisión de algunos aportes epistemológicos relacionados con la teoría del lenguaje en su dimensión filosófica, psicológica y lingüística. Posteriormente, se revisan los elementos constitutivos de las teorías, procurando identificar aquellas posturas que impliquen una confusión conceptual de los elementos que conforman la totalidad del concepto de lenguaje, para finalmente establecer **Conclusiones y resultados:** existe una asimilación entre lo que se entiende por lengua y lenguaje, lo cual, ha desembocado en la exclusión de los animales -no humanos- en la categoría de poseedores de lenguaje, cuando de lo que se trata es de la carencia de una lengua estructurada y sistematizada por parte de éstos.

**Palabras clave:** *Lenguaje; Lengua; Pensamiento; Capacidad; Comunicación.*

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## Resumo

**Introdução e objetivo:** este artigo analisa a possibilidade de alargar a aplicação do conceito de linguagem para além do humano como sujeito e possuidor de linguagem, incluindo os animais - não-humanos - na sua definição mais ampla. **Método ou metodologia:** em primeiro lugar, faz-se uma revisão de alguns contributos epistemológicos relacionados com a teoria da linguagem nas suas dimensões filosófica, psicológica e linguística. Posteriormente, revêem-se os elementos constitutivos das teorias, tentando identificar as posições que implicam uma confusão concetual dos elementos que compõem o conjunto do conceito de linguagem, para finalmente estabelecer **conclusões e resultados:** existe uma assimilação entre o que se entende por linguagem e língua, o que levou à exclusão dos animais -não humanos- na categoria de possuidores de linguagem, quando o que está em causa é a falta de uma linguagem estruturada e sistematizada por parte destes últimos.

**Key words:** *Linguagem; Linguagem; Pensamento; Capacidade; Comunicação.*

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## Introduction

Language throughout history has been considered by many linguists, psychologists and philosophers of language as a purely human property, because it allows human beings to distinguish themselves from other animals on earth. Ferdinand Saussure understands language as the capacity to construct a language, that is, a system of distinct signs that correspond to distinct ideas (Saussure, 1945). Benjamin Whorf conceives it as the tool that fundamentally determines thought, mainly because of the linguistic structure that conditions the expression of thought (Whorf, 1956). In a more radical sense, Hans Gadamer understands it as the true and only center of the human being (Gadamer, 1960).

Whatever their position or theory, these authors agree that one can only speak of language through language and through its sole possessor: the human being. Anthropocentric thought has been fundamental for the elaboration of those paradigms that aim at consolidating the human being as the owner of the world. In this sense, the philosophical bases established by Protagoras will permeate the construction of all racial and scientific knowledge, since "man is the measure of all things, of those that are insofar as they are and of those that are not insofar as they are not" (Protagoras (n.d.) quoted by Eduardo Tijeras 1965, p. 58).

This paradigm about language is the result of a great confusion in the true meaning of the elements belonging to the trident language-language-tongue-thought. This confusion has allowed many theorists over time to argue, in favor of this paradigm, for example, that the other animals of the world do not possess language because language and tongue are the same thing. Moreover, since to this day no evidence has been found of a set of linguistic signs logically structured by any animal species other than humans, it is impossible to conceive of even a trace of language in any being other than humans.

Now, from the perspective of Whorf (1956) on the thought-language relationship, human beings are the sole possessors of language, since they are the only ones capable of generating thought. Bearing in mind that the latter supposes a codification in linguistic form, then, thought and language are practically the same thing. For these reasons, it would be almost impossible to try to talk about language in a species other than our own.

Any argument made under these conditions will be contributing to the growth of this great paradigm, which through the present work is intended to elucidate, so that, in that sense, it will be demonstrated that we are "neither the inventors nor the only possessors of language" (Llinás, 2017, p. 286). To this end, the following parts will be focused:

1. Language: capacity and element.
2. Language, language and thought.
3. Language-communication relationship.
4. Conclusions.

### 1. Language: capacity and element.

The language will be understood in this way: Capacity and Element. The former can be said to be the set of natural conditions and aptitudes of language, which are given to all those who possess it, so that they can perform actions that, without language, would be impossible to execute. The latter can be understood as that organized system of instruments that serve to materialize and (or) improve all the faculties of language; this is, roughly speaking, the matter with which the great linguistic universe operates.

It is necessary to point out that these two parts not only embody language, but are per se the flesh of language itself, and it is for this reason that they will always be indispensably linked to each other.

### 1.1 Language as a capacity.

Language as a capacity is composed of two components: internalization and linguistic capacity. Internalization is that part of language that allows reality to be expressed in the form of abstractions in the mind. For Wittgenstein (1921) the world-language relation arises because both the world and language share the same logical structure and because one of the purposes of language is to describe the state of things in the world. Linguistic capacity, on the other hand, is that faculty one has either to be able to make use of language as an element or, on some occasions, to constitute new manifestations of it. In either case, the main purpose of linguistic ability is to make communication possible.

### 1.2 Language as an element.

Language as an element is composed of all the manifestations of language, that is, all the forms by means of which language fulfills its communicative function to the full. This function depends to a great extent on the manifestations, since it is these that allow communication to be different from one another. These manifestations are classified as immediate and mediated.

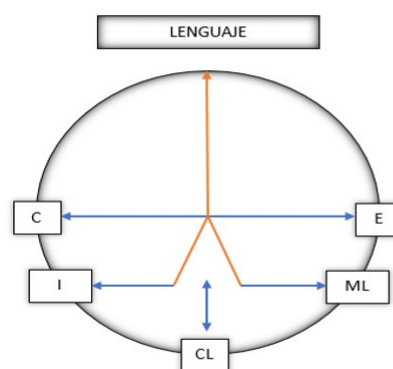
Immediate manifestations are understood as those manifestations that are natural to the possessor of the language due to its physiological and/or genetic characteristics, i.e., that are not acquired by the subject, but are innate to him/her. On the other hand, mediated manifestations are those that are not natural or proper to the possessor, but are the result of a social elaboration or construction among subjects of a common species, based on their immediate or basic manifestations. Among the mediated manifestations, language stands out for being merely human, the product of the use of language as a capacity. In this order of ideas, the following figure summarizes in a structured way the concepts that underlie language.

### 1.3 Language interactions.

In order to understand the great universe of language, it must first be known that language fulfills its functions (representational and communicative) through

**Figura 1**

*Lenguaje*



*Nota:* Siendo C, Capacidad; E, Elemento; I, Interiorización; ML, Manifestaciones lingüísticas y; CL, Capacidad Lingüística.

*Fuente:* Elaboración de los autores.

the interactions that constantly take place between its component parts. The fundamental interaction, that is, the one that in itself comprises all language, is the interaction of capacity-element. Capacity is understood as the immanent faculty of every living being, and element can be understood as the instrument by means of which capacity is materialized. For this reason, it is necessary to talk about the interactions that occur between these components.

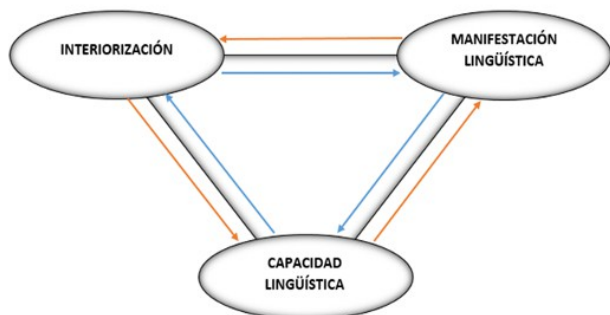
The interactions serve a tripartite order of mutual relationship between each component: the first interaction is between internalization-linguistic manifestations; the second interaction is between linguistic ability-linguistic manifestations; and the third interaction is between internalization-linguistic ability. The following figure is intended to exemplify the mutual and tripartite interaction between the aforementioned components.

### 1.3.1 Internalization-linguistic manifestations.

This interaction is based on the needs of the parties. In the first place, the need arises for the internalization to be able to increase and (or) improve

**Figura 2**

*Interacciones del lenguaje*



*Fuente:* elaboración de los autores.

its effectiveness. The internalization process is more effective when the connection between reality and the uni- versal becomes faster or easier to generate. Effectiveness is measured in degrees, which can be minimum, medium and maximum.

The minimum degree of internalization is that in which language, by means of the senses, allows a possessor of it to make a mental image (uni- versal) of what he perceived by any of these. It is called minimal because for the possessor of language it is sometimes impossible to distinguish or differentiate between some elements of reality, since he always needs the presence of it to be able to make an image of it. Verbigraphy of the above: dogs, in order to have a mental image of their food, need the presence of it, so that they can perceive its existence through their senses (smell or sight) and, so that they can have an image of it in their mind through language.

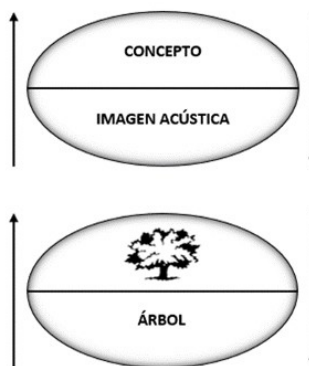
On the other hand, the medium degree of internalization is that which requires linguistic signs, namely, the psychic entity composed of two faces or elements: the concept and the acoustic image, which makes it possible to fully represent a common event.

nicative in its own terms (Saussure, 1945).

This degree of internalization facilitates the distinction or differentiation of the elements of reality, by giving an acoustic image (meaning) to each concept (signifier). It is possible to give a logical structure to the universal that has been created in our "microcosm".

**Figura 3**

*Manifestaciones lingüísticas*



*Fuente:* (Saussure, 1945, P. 92).

in such a way that not only can abstraction be seen in the mind, but it can also be characterized, filling it with attributes, that is, with qualities that make it different.

In the first instance, it will only be the acoustic image with which the concept is referred to that allows this distinction. But as the interaction between the linguistic capacity and the linguistic manifestations improves, in which all kinds of signs, symbols and signals are developed, it will be possible to attribute qualities that more strongly distinguish such concept or signifi- cante. All this for the sake of the effective process of inter- rization that takes place in language as a capacity.

Finally, the maximum degree of internalization is that in which the connection between abstraction and reality is so effective that abstraction itself does not need reality. This is due to the use of linguistic signs that allow the creation and structuring of thought, which enable the acoustic images or meanings to create and be in their totality their own signifiers. In this way, it is no longer



They only describe the state of things in the world, as Wittgenstein said, but now give the possessor of language the possibility to create and describe his own world as well as his own things.

An example of this is that there are acoustic images that represent concepts that are not materially in our reality, but are the result of the state or maximum degree of internalization. An example of this could be fiction or fantasy books, which mostly describe concepts or signifiers that, although they have an acoustic image or meaning, are not physically part of reality. This maximum degree, moreover, allows the possessor of language to enjoy imagination, which can be said to be the faculty to represent events, stories or images of things that do not exist in reality or that are or were real, but are not present (Sanchez, 1921).

Secondly, there is the need for linguistic manifestations to facilitate communication through internalization, which, in this case, allows the message to be expressed in the form of an abstraction in the mind of the receiver (as long as he/she is previously aware of the reference). Linguistic manifestations fulfill the communicative function of language, provided that internalization is used as an instrument for it. In the absence of the representation of concepts or signifiers, the existence of acoustic images or meanings would be meaningless, since the receiver would be unable to understand the content of the message conveyed by the sender. Thus, any linguistic manifestation would be useless when communicating and, in this sense, language would be alien to its communicative function.

### 1.3.2 *Linguistic capacity - linguistic manifestations.*

Once again we are in the presence of a relationship of mutual necessity. First of all, there is the need for linguistic capacity, which is only logical, since, in the absence of linguistic manifestations, it would be necessary to have a linguistic capacity,

the faculty to put them into operation (C.L) would have no reason to exist. This is almost similar to the following example: the musician who has the necessary knowledge to play his instrument, but lacks the knowledge to materialize all that he knows about it in the abstract. The same thing happens with the need for linguistic manifestations, since by definition, they are the instrument by means of which the capacity becomes effective in order to fulfill the communicative function of language.

Continuing with the example, imagine that this time there is an instrument, but no one has the slightest idea of how to play it, that is, there is no musician, nor anyone who has the ability to use it in such a way that it can fully fulfill its function. In any case, the mutual need of the parties is evident. However, it is also vitally important to point out that, just as linguistic manifestations have more than one form (immediate and mediate), linguistic capacity has more than one function. For these reasons, it is necessary to say that in each of its specific parts C.L and M.L interact in a different way.

In the first instance, there is an interaction between the immediate manifestations and the use of these manifestations by the linguistic capacity, which is limited to using the biological structure of the language holder to make the communicative function effective. Tactile, chemical, visual and auditory signals come into operation precisely as a consequence of the L.C. which, in a certain way and continuing with the example, plays the music that is already genetically written in the scores of every linguistic being (language holder).

In a second instance, there is the interaction that occurs between mediated manifestations and linguistic ability, as a function of acquired use, i.e., which requires a learning process for its execution. This relationship arises from the L.C., which is not limited to the use of an existing immediate manifestation, but constitutes from zero linguistic manifestations other than those mentioned above. The above

is not only for the sake of improving the communicative function of language, but also to allow the expression of thought. In Chomsky's terms, this is the true purpose of language, insofar as such expression "is a human need to which the emergence of language responds" (Baron & Müller, 2014, p. 420).

In order to understand the terminology that we seek to clarify, it should be taken into account that Chomsky, like other authors, describes language in words that correspond to the definition of language. Taking into account the assumptions made, language will be the one whose objective is the expression of thought.

Continuing with the example we have been working on, imagine that, on this occasion, the musician creates his own instrument, which he must learn to use, so that, in some sense, he can communicate musically with all those who learn its rules and use.

### 1.3.3 Internalization-linguistic ability.

In this interaction, the parts, since they belong to the same sphere of language (as a capacity), do not relate directly, but do so as a consequence of the needs of the L.M. (linguistic manifestations). Since, in order to fulfill their (essential) function, they require both linguistic capacity and internalization, to the extent that, were it not for them, the manifestations could neither express themselves abstractly in the mind, much less be useful in communication. To understand the above, the following figure is reflected:

In language, linguistic manifestations are like the green piece of the medium, because they clearly need other pieces in order to be completed. This last (which in principle can be seen as a defect), is what makes it so important, since it connects such parts of language as internalization and linguistic capacity which, due to their own characteristics, do not need to be joined to each other - as happens in the figure with the blue piece (left) and loves the green piece (right).

**Figura 4**

*Capacidad lingüística.*



*Nota:* Siendo: I, Interiorización; M.L, Manifestaciones Lingüísticas; C.L, Capacidad Lingüística.

*Fuente:* Elaboración de los autores.

rilla (right). However, they do so to the extent that they solve a natural and proper void of the M. L., all this for the sake of correctly assembling the great puzzle of language.

## 2. Language, language and thought.

One of the main reasons why the scientific community (in the majority) has excluded the other animals of the earth from the study of language is their apparent inability to learn and make use of it. As mentioned in the previous chapter, there is a confusion between the terms belonging to the language-language-thought trident, which has allowed, over the years, the argument to be made that human beings are the only possessors of language, either because they are the only possessors of language or because they are the only ones capable of generating thought.

For the aforementioned reasons, it is absolutely necessary to explain the differences between language, language and thought, in order to demonstrate that each element has its own qualities and, therefore, should not be considered as the same.

### 2.1 Language.

To understand the language as it will be treated here, the following example will be used: Imagine that a group of prestigious musicians decides to create a new instrument, with the objective of improving the musical quality of all the members of the institute to which they belong. To this end, they undertake the task of I. Carrying out a pro-

II. Determine what should be the shape of the instrument, (in order that the instrument can be perfectly blended with them) and; III. To elaborate a manual for the correct use of the instrument. Once finished, they perfect it together and thus achieve their goal.

Language, being a mediated linguistic manifestation, is precisely like the instrument of example, since it is born from a process of social construction among members of a common "institute" or species. All this, with the objective of improving the musical or communicative quality of language, which is only possible by following the steps already outlined, namely: to carry out an in-depth study of our technical or biological qualities; to determine the form that language is going to take in our realities and; to elaborate, finally, a manual that serves as a guide for its correct use, which, as in the previous steps, must be perfected jointly, until the task is achieved.

It is important to mention that language is not autonomous, since it always needs other elements of language in order to develop, specifically linguistic capacity and internalization, which allow, respectively, the language to come into operation and, likewise, to connect with the mind of the possessor. Continuing with the logic of the example, linguistic capacity would be like the ability of the musician (the human possessor of language) to be able to use language correctly, so that it can generate music or communication. On the other hand, internalization would be the tool that allows the music (language) to express itself in the minds of those who can listen to it.

Another aspect of language that must be explained is speech which, under Saussure's (1945) postulates, is defined as:

An individual act of will and intelligence in which it is necessary to distinguish between: 1. the combinations by which the speaking subject uses the code of the language, 2. the combinations by which the speaking subject uses the code of the language, and 3. the combinations by which the speaking subject uses the code of the language.

2. the psychophysical mechanism that allowshim to externalize these combinations (p. 41).

Speech belongs exclusively to the sphere of language, which means that whoever can speak has acquired language. However, this does not mean that by the simple fact of acquiring it, it can already be spoken, since speech needs certain conditions to be able to externalize language. If the latter is understood as an instrument, it would be said that the former (speech) is like the amplification that allows the music generated by language to be heard by the other musicians of our species. This is why those who lack such an amplifying structure, in spite of having acquired the language, will not be able to speak it.

However, it is necessary to clarify that speech is neither the only, nor the most important means of externalization that language has, since writing is, from what is proposed here, the center of all the functions of language in language. Although the most common of all forms of externalization is speech, which, in that sense, makes it the best known.

Language, besides being distinguished by its process of creation (a point that is totally impossible in immediate manifestations, since they are biologically established), is also distinguished by its utilities, since, unlike other manifestations, it does not have the sole purpose of communicating, but also of multiplying and expressing thought. In this task, it is an irremediable consequence of its own nature, since it is precisely thought that is the main component of language. In the example developed, it is the fine wood that the musicians or possessors of language used through the linguistic capacity to be able to materialize their creation. It is for this reason that language is very well suited to the role of the most suitable instrument for the production of thought.

For this and other reasons, language is unique in its kind and for all humans, it is as important as life itself. However, it is not the only thing



The language itself is found outside of all the elements that compose it. Neither language is everything in language, nor man is the only one in its universe, since the presence of elements proper to it, or the execution of actions that can only be performed through it, in any being, does give a sense of the existence of language in it. Having said this, to think that language is all language in general is as far-fetched as to affirm that a single instrument contains by itself all the music in the world.

## 2.2 Thought.

Much has been said about thought and its relation to language. Some authors, such as Benjamin Whorf, believe that language determines thought in such a way that, if the former did not exist, the latter would surely not exist either, because language is not simply an instrument for the reproduction of ideas, but is in itself the true shaper of ideas (Whorf, 1956). Other theorists such as Lev Vygotsky (1934), although they consider that such a determination does exist, prefer to place it on the other side of the scale, that is to say, contrary sensu sensu to what Whorf stated, Vygotsky believed that language only acquires importance to the extent that it "is linked to thought and illuminated by it" (p. 168).

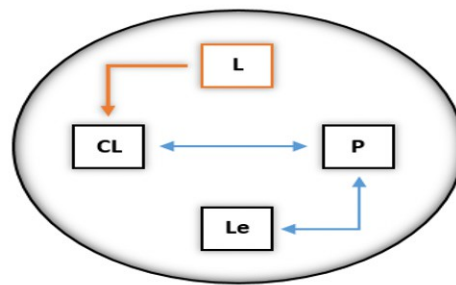
Now, although these positions on the subject are not so far from the idea that we intend to develop, in order to differentiate thought and language, the fact is that it is necessary to define what thought is from the perspective of the present work. Thought can be understood as that cognitive activity of reflection, that is, of careful attention to something or someone in order to understand it. This activity can be linguistic or non-linguistic. It is linguistic when it requires for its execution psychic containers called words; and it is non-linguistic when it does not require or has not acquired such "contents" for its development.

Based on the foregoing, it is possible to highlight two

The first is that there is indeed a relationship between language and thought, and the second is that even if such a relationship exists, it is not always indispensable for thought. Following this order of ideas, it is necessary to specify in what specific way language and thought are related. For this purpose, we will make use of the following figure, which is intended to exemplify the above and also serves as a basis for explaining what will follow:

**Figura 5**

*El lenguaje y el pensamiento*



*Nota:* Siendo: L, Lenguaje; CL, Capacidad Lingüística;

Le, Lengua; P, Pensamiento.

*Fuente:* elaboración de los autores.

As can be seen, the relationship between language and thought is not direct but indirect, since it is through language that they come into contact, which in turn is the result of the union between linguistic capacity and non-linguistic thought, as mentioned above. Thus, although they are related, they are not totally united, all this because of the indirect nature of their relationship, in which language always plays a very important role.

From the above arises the fact that the tongue is like the bee that extracts the pollen of thought through the stings of the word. It feeds on it and goes and distributes it to all the future flowers of the great field of our species. So it is said that when the tongue grows, thought grows and vice versa. This is a relationship to which, without a doubt, we owe each and every one of the human achievements made and to be made.

However, thought has also nourished language and helps it to improve. In merit of the above, Piaget (1977) affirms that thought "merely transforms it profoundly, helping it to reach its forms of equilibrium by means of a more advanced schematization and a more mobile abstraction" (p. 115). This is due to the fact that, as already mentioned, thought is the raw material of the product known as language.

They (language and thought) do interact directly, unlike the case of language which, although it contains language, is not language and therefore does not relate in the same way to thought. As can be seen in the figure, they never come into contact, but only through intermediaries called language and linguistic capacity, which, although they belong to language, are not language in themselves. With all this, it must be understood that language is the genus of genres and not a species of species, for it is outside its elements and the latter are always within it.

For the above reasons, to believe that the other animals of the earth do not have language because of their lack of thought would be as misguided as to say that a colored man is not a human being simply because he does not have green eyes. In this sense, it is necessary to see thought as that color that language takes in human beings, which makes it somewhat different, but by itself cannot make them the only possessors of it (language), for, as has been said, the other animals are also, although they do not have thought (or perhaps they do possess one, but a different one).

Thus, just as the man in the example is a human being, in spite of not having green eyes, animals in the same way, in spite of not having thought, are undoubtedly possessors of language. And all because, what makes the distinction is the color and not the eye, namely, thought and not language, which, as we have seen, does not belong exclusively to the human being.

### 3. Language-communication relationship.

For two chapters now, it has been mentioned of

It was said repeatedly that human beings are the only possessors of language, because that which is commonly called language is either language or thought, but in the end it is neither true nor completely language in its own right. It was also said that language was like a great universe to which many planets belonged: some large, others small, some similar, others different, but that in general they were all part or product of it. All this was said in order to differentiate language (being as large and unique as it is) from other elements that are either a species of its genus or a product of its species.

However, in the present chapter, things will be a little different, since we are not going to talk about the "planets" of language, but about the "uni- versal" functions of language, specifically one of them: communication.

#### 3.1 Communication perspectives.

Communication can be understood from two points of view: one internal and the other external. From the internal point of view, communication is that product of language, generated naturally by the elements that make it up. From the external point of view, it is the mediating instrument between language and its ultimate goal.

Communication from the internal is essentially formed by language, so much so that it could be said that "the raw material with which communication operates is language" (Trillos, 2017, p. 300). This inasmuch as it is the elements of the latter, through linguistic interactions, that allow communication to exist and fulfill its sole purpose: to serve language. To understand the above, imagine the following: one fine day a certain painter, needing a new color to finish his work, decided to mix the only colors he had. The latter, to the painter's surprise, gave rise to a color never seen before, which allowed him to fulfill his purpose.

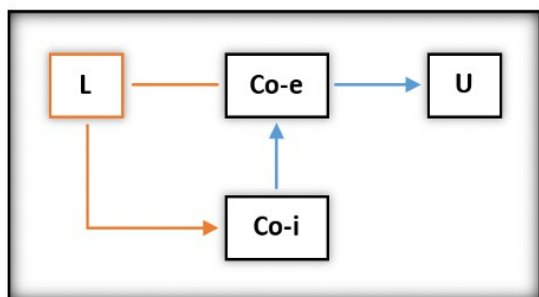
The language, understood from the example, is as follows

that painter who uses his two colors: capacity and element to be able to create communication, which as already said, is substantially conformed by the components or "primary" colors of language. In the face of such precepts, these are the ones that allow the existence or creation of the new color for language.

Externally, communication is that form (or function) by means of which language achieves its main objective, which is to unite all members of the great animal kingdom. Taking as a basis the example already given, communication would be like the brush used by the painter to achieve his objective, which, in this case, consists in uniting the language holders of the same species (homogeneous union), as well as the language holders of different species (heterogeneous union). In this sense, communicating means helping to unite, insofar as uniting is the great objective of the whole universe of language. The following figure exemplifies the above in a structured way.

**Figura 6**

*Comunicación interna y externa*



*Nota:* Siendo: L, Lenguaje; Co-i, Comunicación interna; Co-e, Comunicación externa; U, Unificación.  
*Fuente:* elaboración de los autores.

In conclusion, communication from its two perspectives can be understood as a tool produced by language in order to fulfill its basic purpose.

### 3.2 Forms of communication.

As stated in the first instance, the co

Communication is first and foremost a product of language, which is why every possessor of language is capable of communicating. However, such communication will vary according to the characteristics of each possessor. This means that communication will take different forms according to the language possessor who generates it. To exemplify the above, imagine that language is like a carpenter who, in order to survive, needs to cross a river, but cannot do so on his own because the water is too deep. For these reasons, with the help of the tools and materials he has, he creates a boat, which now allows him to cross the river as many times as he wants.

Language, in the same way as the carpenter, creates communication in order to allow it to survive by fulfilling its main objective. In the same way, it constantly uses the tools and materials proper to each language holder, so that it can communicate, according to the medium created from its natural characteristics.

All forms of communication are differentiated by the type of linguistic manifestation they possess. As explained above, manifestations are classified into: immediate and mediated, the former being those that are specific to each possessor, and which are generated according to their biological characteristics; and the latter, those that have a conventional character, namely, that are the product of several processes carried out by members of a species over time.

The forms of communication in almost all cases base their functioning on an immediate linguistic manifestation, which can be anything from a chemical signal to a visual or auditory signal. The truth is that this is the general rule in almost all forms of communication. However, there are exceptions such as mediated manifestations, among which language stands out. Thus, we will see immediate and mediated forms of communication, which will be named according to the linguistic manifestation on which they are based.

From the above, it is evident that communication is generated in different ways. There are ways

The same is true of forms of communication which, to continue with the example, are like a yacht: totally sophisticated, fast, and much larger than a boat, but that does not mean that they are the only and exclusive means through which language achieves its purpose, because there are forms of communication which, although they may seem less effective than a yacht or a ship, still serve language and its corresponding owners. Thus, although there are different forms of communication, all of them (to the extent of their possibilities) render a great service to language.

### 3.3 Paradigms about communication.

Throughout history, communication has been dealt with by countless authors. The positions with respect to it vary from time to time, however, it could be said that in general there are approaches that are widely accepted by the expert scientific community on the subject.

Communication, according to many of these experts, is an exclusively human quality. Therefore, as with language, they have tried to exclude the other animals of the earth, stating for example that: "communication not mediated by language or by some other system of signs or means can only be, as is observed in the animal kingdom, of the most primitive type and within the narrowest limits" (Vygotsky, 1934, p. 8). Vygotsky, like other authors, describes language in the same terms in which language is framed. In this sense, for this section the word "language" should be replaced by the word "linguistic" (this being the most accurate for its correct interpretation).

Moreover, it has come to be thought that this kind of (animal) communication does not even deserve to be recognized as a form of communication, but should in fact be called contagion, as Lev Vygotsky (1934) states in his work *Thought and Language*.

Vygotsky's thought is widely shared, however, there are also authors such as

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1781), who states: "I have no doubt that animals that work and live in community, beavers, ants, bees, have a natural language to communicate with each other" (p.25). For Rousseau, languages were all those forms by means of which species communicate, which corresponds (to a large extent) to our definition of linguistic manifestation. Therefore, in the context that has been developed, language should be understood as a linguistic manifestation. The thesis outlined above has been the most contested in favor of the communicative exclusivity of the human species, which, either through language or through communication, seeks to make a dent in the line that separates and differentiates human beings from the other members of the great animal kingdom.

Thus, it could be said that there are two major camps in relation to the validity or otherwise of non-human forms of communication, the first being the most dominant. Now, what is certain is that there is one factor on which both groups coincide, which is language, since both those who deny animal communication and those who validate it defend the idea (in most cases) that language is unique, namely, that it belongs to the human species and to no one (or nothing?) else.

This idea, from the perspective of the present article, does not make the slightest sense, since language and communication are inseparably linked. In this sense, if there is communication there is language, to the extent that communication from its internal aspect is conceived as that product formed by the elements of language.

Therefore, it is valid to affirm that whoever communicates is a possessor of language, and since "it is evident that animals are capable of communicating at a certain level among themselves, as well as with humans" (Gleason, 2010, p. 9), they (animals) are, therefore, legitimate possessors of language.

### OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this article is to analyze the characteristics of the



The aim is to extend its concept and application to non-human animals in order to attenuate the existing synecdoche in the epistemology of language and language. The above will allow the classical conception of language to be applied beyond the limits imposed by the majority doctrine, which means that non-human animals can be considered as possessors of language.

## METHODOLOGY

This article of reflection is framed within the type of qualitative research according to the approach to the problem, since it focuses on the essence of the research object. In this sense and from the level of depth, the research is explanatory, correlative and propositive, since it seeks to theoretically support the reasons why there are conceptual confusions about language; it seeks to establish the relationship between language, language and thought in order to identify the differences between them; and it proposes a new way of understanding language from its broadest definition, that is, extending its application to non-human animals. Thus, the area of research in which this article is circumscribed corresponds to the philosophy of language.

In this order of ideas, the method used is the deductive-analytical one insofar as the research is approached from the general framework of language to its more particular components, namely: its elements, interactions and functions. In addition, it is decided to logically and structurally divide the object of study, taking as a foundation the theoretical weaknesses that serve as a basis for dealing with the contemporary linguistic paradigm.

Therefore, it is necessary to implement information gathering techniques in order to describe the current state of the theory of language and to contrast such information with the theoretical assumptions resulting from the research. Hence, the study and documentary analysis of scientific texts, such as books and academic articles, are used to arrive at the following conclusions.

to the positions and conclusions pursued in this reflection article.

## CONCLUSIONS

Language has been the focus of countless studies since the dawn of history. The technical and social construction of the epistemology of language has been established differently by its many theorists. However, there is a common denominator with respect to the concept and scope of language: its exclusive character. In the face of this exclusivity, various reasons have been put forward in order to emphasize that it is the human being alone who is capable of possessing language.

In this sense, the main thesis that we have tried to defend in this work has been focused on the development of what is considered a conceptual confusion and, therefore, a restricted field of application of language. The binomial capacity-element has allowed language to be understood from a broader perspective, so that the other animals of the earth can be considered as possessors. The lack of language and the inability to use thought have been the main reasons why animals have been excluded from any study of language.

With respect to the above, it is explained in the first instance that language is only a part of language, specifically, of linguistic manifestations. The latter is a type of language that has many forms of its own, including chemical, visual, tactile and auditory signals, which are characteristic of non-human animals. Thus, it becomes evident that language is not even the only existing form of linguistic manifestation. Thus, it cannot (as has been done so far) be treated as language, since language is the genus of genres and not a species of species.

Now, the above idea also allows us to reach the conclusion that, if language is not a species of the species, much less can it be considered a



product of one of them. In this sense, the relationship between thought and language is explained: how language is essentially made up of thought and how thought is expressed and reproduced by language. This point helps to understand that language is not directly related to thought and that, therefore, thinking is not a requirement to be considered a possessor of language. Thus, non-human animals, even when they do not have thought, do possess language.

From all that has been explained, it should also be emphasized that the execution of actions that can only be performed through language, allows us to recognize who (or what?) is or is not a possessor of language. In this way, the representation and communication generated by the other animals of the earth show how, despite not being homo, much less sapiens, they can be possessors, especially of language. Even more so, when language, with its existence, is intended to unite and not to separate, as this small-great species has done throughout history.

For all that has been said, it is necessary to change the conception of language; to understand that the difference is in the color and not in the eye, that is, in language and thought, but not in language, which, as has been reiterated, does not belong exclusively to the members of a species that tries to understand the world, but sometimes forgets that the universe is much larger.

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