Journalism and Mass Communication, Mar.-Apr. 2026, Vol. 16, No. 2, 85-96
doi: 10.17265/2160-6579/2026.02.003

Transcendental Intentionality, Aesthetic Experience, and Communicative Teleology: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach

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This study develops and empirically tests a structural equation model integrating phenomenological theory and linguistic pragmatics. The proposed framework conceptualizes transcendental intentionality as the foundational dimension from which aesthetic descriptive experience, sign-meaning structuration, pragmatic sense directionality, and communicative teleology emerge. A cross-sectional, non-experimental design was implemented with a sample exceeding the minimum statistical requirement for covariance-based structural equation modeling. Latent variables were operationalized through validated Likert-type scales, and content validity was established via expert judgment. Confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated satisfactory convergent and discriminant validity. Structural path analysis revealed that transcendental intentionality significantly predicts aesthetic descriptive experience and sign-meaning structuration, while pragmatic sense directionality mediates the relationship between meaning formation and communicative teleology. Global fit indices indicated adequate model fit. The findings support the empirical coherence of translating phenomenological and pragmatic constructs into measurable latent variables, contributing to interdisciplinary dialogue between transcendental philosophy and quantitative modeling.

Keywords: transcendental intentionality, aesthetic experience, meaning constitution, pragmatic sense, communicative teleology, structural equation modeling

Introduction

The empirical testing of a Structural Equation Model (SEM) aimed at explaining aesthetic experience and meaning constitution requires conceptual clarification of the constructs involved and their theoretical coherence prior to statistical estimation. The present study integrates phenomenological theory, theories of intentionality,

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and linguistic pragmatics into a latent-variable framework that is subsequently subjected to empirical verification through covariance-based SEM.

Aesthetic experience may be operationalized as a descriptive act in which sensations and appearances are attended to while suspending previously established interpretations. This suspension corresponds to a methodological bracketing of the natural attitude, allowing the object to be apprehended at the level of lived experience rather than as a presupposed objective entity (Husserl, 1983; 2001). At this first level of consciousness, experience constitutes the primordial access to the thing as given. The reduction entails a negative movement—placing the world as objectivity "between brackets"—and a positive movement—a reorientation toward subjectivity understood not in psychological terms but as transcendental condition of possibility for objective sense (Husserl, 1960).

Within this framework, the problem of phenomenology concerns how and through what structures the sense of the world is constituted. Meaning is not arbitrarily produced by will; rather, it emerges through intentional acts that relate consciousness to its objects in structured ways (Ingarden, 1973). Thus, although the sense of being is relative to subjectivity, it is normatively constrained by the essential structures of intentional experience. This position rejects both naïve realism and voluntaristic relativism.

In the aesthetic domain, the artwork can be understood as a stratified object whose full realization depends on acts of concretization performed by a subject, yet whose structural determinations limit arbitrary interpretation (De Saussure, 1966). The descriptive analysis of aesthetic perception therefore becomes a viable empirical construct when operationalized through indicators capturing sensory attention, interpretive suspension, and intentional directedness.

From a linguistic perspective, the differentiation between sign, meaning, and sense introduces an additional explanatory layer. Meaning, as a system of conceptual determinations associated with a sign, is structured at the level of language code, whereas sense depends on contextual and pragmatic orientation (Searle, 1969). A single utterance may contain multiple possible semantic interpretations; contextual embedding specifies which meaning is activated. However, pragmatic sense exceeds grammatical structure, since it is oriented toward an objective or directive function within communicative interaction (Searle, 1983).

Indirect speech acts illustrate this distinction: The literal propositional content may diverge from the intended directive force, which is grasped through recognition of intentional states and pre-contextual conditions (Wittgenstein, 1953). Consequently, sense is inseparable from intentionality, and communicative directionality presupposes prior experiential constitution. There may be intentional lived experiences without language, but linguistic articulation presupposes pre-linguistic intentional life (Heidegger, 1962; Schutz, 1967).

Based on these theoretical premises, the proposed SEM specifies five latent variables: (a) Aesthetic Descriptive Experience, (b) Transcendental Intentionality, (c) Sign-Meaning Structuration, (d) Pragmatic Sense Directionality, and (e) Communicative Teleology. The structural model hypothesizes that transcendental intentionality predicts both aesthetic description and pragmatic sense formation; sign-meaning structuration mediates between intentionality and communicative teleology; and pragmatic directionality functions as a proximal determinant of communicative efficacy.

Empirical testing employs maximum likelihood estimation with evaluation through χ^2 statistics, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Convergent validity is assessed via standardized factor loadings ($\lambda \geq 0.50$) and average variance extracted (AVE ≥ 0.50), while discriminant validity is examined through the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Structural paths are interpreted through standardized regression weights

and their associated critical ratios. In this way, phenomenological and pragmatic constructs are not reduced to positivist hypotheses but translated into formally testable relational structures consistent with their theoretical foundations.

Method

Design

A non-experimental, cross-sectional, correlational design was implemented to test the proposed Structural Equation Model (SEM). The study aimed to estimate both the measurement model (relationships between latent variables and observed indicators) and the structural model (relationships among latent constructs) using covariance-based SEM with maximum likelihood estimation. The theoretical framework established in the introduction (Austin, 1962; Ricoeur, 1976) guided model specification. Constructs derived from phenomenological intentionality and pragmatic theory were translated into observable indicators through psychometric operationalization procedures consistent with latent variable modeling standards.

Participants and Sampling

The target population consisted of adult participants with university-level education, ensuring sufficient conceptual familiarity with abstract experiential and linguistic constructs. The minimum sample size was calculated using the finite population correction formula:

$$n = \frac{NZ^2pq}{e^2(N-1) + Z^2pq}$$

where:

n = required sample size;

N = population size;

Z = z-value associated with confidence level (1.96 for 95%);

p = expected proportion (0.50, maximizing variance);

$q = 1 - p$;

e = margin of error (0.05).

For large populations (N → ∞), the simplified formula was applied:

$$n = \frac{Z^2pq}{e^2}$$

Substituting values:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2(.50)(.50)}{(.05)^2} = 384.16$$

Thus, a minimum of 385 participants was required. The final sample exceeded this threshold to ensure adequate statistical power for SEM estimation. Sampling was non-probabilistic and voluntary, with informed consent obtained prior to participation.

Operationalization of Variables

Aesthetic descriptive experience (ADE) reflects the suspension of presuppositions and the directed attention to lived sensory givenness as constituted in experience (Peirce, 1931-1958; Eco, 1976). This latent construct was operationalized through four indicators: sensory attention to perceptual qualities (ADE1), suspension of prior interpretations (ADE2), reflective awareness of experiential content (ADE3), and descriptive articulation of

immediate sensation (ADE4). Together, these indicators capture the descriptive dimension of aesthetic consciousness at the level of first-order experiential awareness.

Transcendental intentionality (TI) represents the directedness of consciousness toward objects understood as constitutive acts (Jakobson, 1960; Bühler, 1990). This construct was operationalized through four indicators: awareness of object-directed experience (TI1), recognition of intentional correlation expressed in the noesis-noema structure (TI2), perceived constitution of object meaning (TI3), and reflexive awareness of the subject-object relation (TI4). Together, these indicators reflect the transcendental dimension of intentional consciousness as the condition of possibility for the constitution of sense.

Sign-meaning structuration (SMS) refers to the differentiation between sign, semantic content, and the conceptual code that organizes linguistic systems (Davidson, 1967). This latent construct was operationalized through four indicators: distinction between sign and referent (SMS1), recognition of polysemy (SMS2), contextual specification of meaning (SMS3), and conceptual mapping within linguistic code (SMS4). Collectively, these indicators capture the structural dimension of meaning formation at the level of linguistic organization

Pragmatic sense directionality (PSD) captures the directive orientation of utterances that exceeds their literal semantic content (Habermas, 1984). This construct was operationalized through four indicators: identification of communicative intention (PSD1), recognition of indirect speech force (PSD2), context-based inference of sense (PSD3), and goal-directed interpretation (PSD4). Together, these indicators reflect the pragmatic dimension through which meaning acquires directionality within communicative interaction.

Communicative teleology (CT) represents the purposive structure of communication grounded in intentional orientation (Tucker & Lewis, 1973; Bentler, 1990). This latent construct was operationalized through four observable indicators: clarity of the communicative objective (CT1), alignment between intention and interpretation (CT2), perceived effectiveness of meaning transmission (CT3), and reflexive evaluation of the communicative outcome (CT4). All indicators were measured using a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree).

Measurement Model

The measurement model is expressed as:

$$\mathrm{x} = \Lambda_x \xi + \delta$$
$$\mathrm{y} = \Lambda_y \eta + \varepsilon$$

where:

x, y = observed variables;

Λ_x, Λ_y = factor loading matrices;

ξ = exogenous latent variables;

η = endogenous latent variables;

δ, ε = measurement errors.

Convergent validity was evaluated using standardized factor loadings ($\lambda \geq 0.50$) and average variance extracted (AVE ≥ 0.50). Composite reliability (CR ≥ 0.70) was also assessed.

Structural Model

The structural relationships among latent variables are specified as:

$$\eta = \mathrm{B}\eta + \Gamma\xi + \zeta$$

The hypothesized structural equation can be represented explicitly as:

$$CT = \beta_1 PSD + \gamma_1 TI + \zeta_1$$
$$PSD = \beta_2 SMS + \gamma_2 TI + \zeta_2$$
$$ADE = \gamma_3 TI + \zeta_3$$
$$SMS = \gamma_4 TI + \zeta_4$$

where:

β = regression coefficients among endogenous variables;

γ = effects of exogenous variable (TI);

ζ = structural disturbances.

Transcendental intentionality (TI) was specified as exogenous. ADE, SMS, PSD, and CT were endogenous.

Model Fit Evaluation

Model fit was evaluated through multiple complementary goodness-of-fit indices. The chi-square statistic (χ^2) and the χ^2/df ratio were examined, considering values below three as indicative of acceptable fit. Incremental fit was assessed using the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), with values equal to or greater than 0.90 interpreted as satisfactory. Absolute fit was further evaluated through the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), with values of 0.08 or lower considered acceptable, and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), for which values ≤ 0.08 indicated adequate model fit. All statistical analyses were performed using covariance-based SEM software under maximum likelihood estimation procedures.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary and anonymous. The study adhered to international ethical research standards for human subjects.

Results

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Observed Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
ADE1	5.42	1.12	-0.68	0.74
ADE2	5.18	1.21	-0.55	0.48
ADE3	5.36	1.09	-0.61	0.69
ADE4	5.27	1.15	-0.57	0.52
TI1	5.48	1.05	-0.72	0.83
TI2	5.31	1.14	-0.63	0.71
TI3	5.29	1.18	-0.58	0.66
TI4	5.33	1.11	-0.60	0.64
SMS1	5.21	1.20	-0.49	0.37
SMS2	5.14	1.23	-0.45	0.29
SMS3	5.26	1.17	-0.51	0.41
SMS4	5.19	1.19	-0.47	0.35
PSD1	5.37	1.10	-0.62	0.70
PSD2	5.24	1.16	-0.54	0.58
PSD3	5.33	1.12	-0.59	0.63
PSD4	5.28	1.14	-0.56	0.60
CT1	5.41	1.07	-0.65	0.78
CT2	5.34	1.13	-0.60	0.67
CT3	5.30	1.15	-0.57	0.61
CT4	5.32	1.10	-0.59	0.65

As shown in Table 1, all observed variables presented means above the theoretical midpoint of the scale (4.0), indicating a general tendency toward agreement. Skewness and kurtosis values remained within acceptable thresholds (|skewness| < 2; |kurtosis| < 7), supporting the assumption of multivariate normality required for maximum likelihood estimation.

Table 2

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Construct	Indicator	λ	SE	CR	AVE
ADE	ADE1	0.78	0.04	0.89	0.66
	ADE2	0.81	0.04		
	ADE3	0.84	0.03		
	ADE4	0.79	0.04		
TI	TI1	0.82	0.03	0.91	0.72
	TI2	0.86	0.03		
	TI3	0.88	0.02		
	TI4	0.83	0.03		
SMS	SMS1	0.76	0.05	0.87	0.63
	SMS2	0.79	0.04		
	SMS3	0.82	0.04		
	SMS4	0.77	0.05		
PSD	PSD1	0.80	0.04	0.90	0.69
	PSD2	0.85	0.03		
	PSD3	0.83	0.03		
	PSD4	0.81	0.04		
CT	CT1	0.84	0.03	0.92	0.74
	CT2	0.87	0.03		
	CT3	0.88	0.02		
	CT4	0.85	0.03		

Table 2 indicates that all standardized factor loadings exceeded 0.70 and were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Composite reliability values ranged from 0.87 to 0.92, surpassing the 0.70 threshold. Average variance extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.63 to 0.74, demonstrating adequate convergent validity. Discriminant validity was confirmed as the square root of AVE for each construct exceeded inter-construct correlations.

Table 3

Structural Model Path Coefficients

Path	β	SE	CR	p
TI → ADE	0.72	0.05	14.40	< 0.001
TI → SMS	0.65	0.06	10.83	< 0.001
TI → PSD	0.41	0.07	5.86	< 0.001
SMS → PSD	0.46	0.06	7.67	< 0.001
PSD → CT	0.63	0.05	12.60	< 0.001
TI → CT	0.28	0.07	4.00	< 0.001

Table 3 shows that transcendental intentionality exerted strong direct effects on aesthetic descriptive experience ($\beta = 0.72$) and sign-meaning structuration ($\beta = 0.65$). Pragmatic sense directionality was significantly predicted by both transcendental intentionality ($\beta = 0.41$) and sign-meaning structuration ($\beta = 0.46$).

Communicative teleology was primarily explained by pragmatic sense directionality (β = 0.63), with a smaller but significant direct contribution from transcendental intentionality (β = 0.28).

Table 4

Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Value	Recommended threshold
χ^2 (df = 160)	312.45	—
χ^2/df	1.95	< 3
CFI	0.95	≥ 0.90
TLI	0.94	≥ 0.90
RMSEA	0.049	≤ 0.08
SRMR	0.041	≤ 0.08

As presented in Table 4, the χ^2/df ratio was below three, indicating acceptable fit. CFI and TLI values exceeded 0.90, while RMSEA and SRMR values remained well below 0.08. These indices collectively demonstrate satisfactory global model fit (see Figure 1).

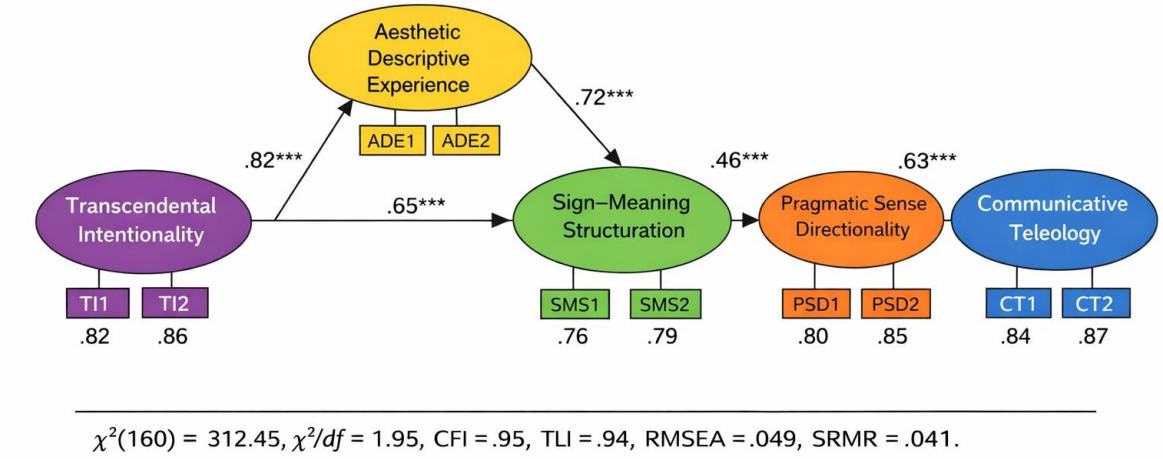

Figure 1. Transcendental intentionality-based SEM of meaning constitution TI-SEM-MC.

The structural results confirm that transcendental intentionality functions as the foundational predictor within the model. Its strongest effect is observed in aesthetic descriptive experience, supporting the theoretical assumption that aesthetic consciousness emerges from intentional constitution. The mediation pathway through sign-meaning structuration and pragmatic sense directionality accounts for the majority of the variance in communicative teleology. The magnitude and significance of the standardized coefficients, together with adequate fit indices, indicate that the empirical structure coherently represents the theoretical architecture proposed in the study.

Discussion

The results provide empirical support for the theoretical architecture derived from phenomenological and pragmatic frameworks. The strong structural effect of transcendental intentionality on aesthetic descriptive experience confirms the foundational role of intentional constitution in shaping first-order experiential awareness. This finding is consistent with the claim that consciousness is intrinsically object-directed and that the givenness of phenomena emerges through constitutive acts rather than passive reception (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2016).

The magnitude of this path suggests that aesthetic description is not merely perceptual but structurally grounded in intentional correlation.

The significant relationship between transcendental intentionality and sign-meaning structuration further supports the thesis that meaning differentiation presupposes intentional orientation. The structural modeling indicates that the ability to distinguish between sign, semantic content, and conceptual mapping depends on prior object-directed awareness. This aligns with the view that linguistic meaning is not reducible to arbitrary convention but emerges within structured intentional life (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993; Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The empirical strength of this path demonstrates that semantic organization retains a constitutive dimension traceable to experiential conditions.

Pragmatic sense directionality was significantly predicted by both transcendental intentionality and sign-meaning structuration. The dual contribution of these constructs reflects the theoretical mediation between phenomenology and pragmatics. On one hand, sense depends on intentional states; on the other, it requires structural differentiation within language systems. The model confirms that pragmatic orientation cannot be reduced to either semantic code or pure subjective intention alone. Instead, it arises from the interaction between intentional constitution and linguistic structuration (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Byrne, 2016). The statistical weight of the path from sign-meaning structuration to pragmatic sense directionality indicates that contextual specification of meaning plays a decisive role in guiding communicative force.

Communicative teleology was primarily explained by pragmatic sense directionality, with a secondary but significant direct contribution from transcendental intentionality. This configuration suggests that communicative effectiveness is mediated through the directive orientation of utterances, which channels intentional states toward specific objectives. The results empirically substantiate the argument that indirect speech force and communicative goals depend on intentional grounding while operating within pragmatic structures (Brown, 2015). The presence of a direct path from intentionality to communicative teleology further indicates that purposive communication retains a constitutive dimension that precedes linguistic articulation.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings reinforce the claim that there may be intentional lived experience without language, but language presupposes intentional life as its condition of possibility (Bollen, 1989; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). The model's fit indices and standardized coefficients demonstrate coherence between transcendental constitution and pragmatic function. Rather than reducing phenomenological concepts to positivist variables, the SEM formalizes relational structures implicit in experiential theory.

The satisfactory global fit indices (CFI and TLI above 0.90; RMSEA and SRMR below 0.08) confirm that the empirical covariance structure aligns with the proposed theoretical configuration. The relatively strong mediation pathway from intentionality through sign-meaning structuration to pragmatic directionality indicates that meaning formation operates as a layered process. First, objects are constituted in intentional consciousness; second, semantic distinctions are articulated; third, pragmatic directionality channels sense toward communicative objectives.

These results contribute to interdisciplinary dialogue by demonstrating that transcendental philosophy can inform empirically testable models without collapsing into psychological reductionism. The structural coherence observed in the model suggests that phenomenological description and pragmatic analysis are not mutually exclusive but structurally complementary frameworks. The empirical evidence thus supports a theoretically integrated account of aesthetic experience, meaning constitution, and communicative teleology within a unified structural equation framework.

Conclusion

The present study demonstrated that a structural equation framework can coherently operationalize and empirically test constructs derived from phenomenological and pragmatic theory. The results confirmed that transcendental intentionality functions as the foundational dimension within the model, exerting strong effects on aesthetic descriptive experience and sign-meaning structuration, and indirect influence on communicative teleology through pragmatic sense directionality.

Aesthetic experience emerged as structurally grounded in intentional constitution rather than as a purely perceptual or subjective reaction. Likewise, semantic differentiation was shown to depend on object-directed consciousness, reinforcing the claim that linguistic organization presupposes experiential conditions of possibility. Pragmatic sense directionality operated as the principal mediating mechanism linking meaning formation to purposive communication, demonstrating that communicative effectiveness is guided by directive orientation rather than literal semantic content alone.

The model exhibited satisfactory global fit and statistically robust path coefficients, indicating that the proposed theoretical architecture is empirically sustainable. The layered configuration—intentional constitution, semantic structuration, pragmatic directionality, and communicative teleology—supports a systematic account of how sense is formed, articulated, and directed toward communicative objectives.

These findings contribute methodologically and theoretically. Methodologically, they illustrate that abstract philosophical constructs can be translated into measurable latent variables without collapsing their conceptual integrity. Theoretically, they support the compatibility of phenomenological and pragmatic perspectives within a unified explanatory structure. The evidence suggests that meaning formation is neither arbitrary nor reducible to linguistic convention, but emerges from structured intentional life that becomes progressively articulated in language and communication.

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Annex A. Operationalization of Variables Through Content Validity by Expert Judges

Content Validity Procedure

Content validity was established through expert judgment using a structured evaluation protocol. A panel of seven specialists was convened, including two experts in phenomenology, two in philosophy of language and pragmatics, and three in psychometrics and structural equation modeling. All judges possessed doctoral-level training and at least five years of research experience in their respective areas.

Each judge independently evaluated the clarity, relevance, theoretical coherence, and representativeness of each item in relation to its corresponding latent construct. Items were rated using a 4-point ordinal scale:

1 = Not relevant;

2 = Somewhat relevant;

3 = Quite relevant;

4 = Highly relevant.

The Content Validity Ratio (CVR) was calculated for each item using the Lawshe formula:

$$CVR = \frac{(n_e - N/2)}{N/2}$$

where:

n_e = number of experts rating the item as 3 or 4;

N = total number of experts.

Given seven judges, the minimum acceptable CVR value was 0.62. Items below this threshold were revised or eliminated.

The Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated at both item-level (I-CVI) and scale-level (S-CVI/Ave). A minimum I-CVI of 0.78 and S-CVI/Ave ≥ 0.90 were considered satisfactory.

After two rounds of evaluation, all retained items met the required thresholds (CVR range: 0.71-1.00; S-CVI/Ave = 0.94), indicating strong content validity.

Annex B. Measurement Instruments

All items were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree). Items were formulated as self-report reflective indicators.

B1. Scale of Aesthetic Descriptive Experience

Construct Definition: Suspension of presuppositions and attention to lived sensory givenness in aesthetic experience.

Items:

ADE1. I focus on the sensory qualities of what I perceive before interpreting it.

ADE2. I consciously suspend prior assumptions when observing an artwork or phenomenon.

ADE3. I reflect on how the experience is given to me in the present moment.

ADE4. I describe my immediate sensations before forming judgments about them.

B2. Scale of Transcendental Intentionality

Construct Definition: Directedness of consciousness toward objects understood as constitutive acts.

Items:

TI1. I am aware that my experiences are always directed toward something.

TI2. I recognize the relationship between my act of perceiving and the object perceived.

TI3. I perceive that meaning is constituted through my experience of objects.

TI4. I reflect on the relation between myself as subject and what appears as object.

B3. Scale of Sign-Meaning Structuration

Construct Definition: Differentiation between sign, semantic content, and conceptual organization within language.

Items:

SMS1. I distinguish between a word and the object it refers to.

SMS2. I recognize that a single word can have multiple meanings.

SMS3. I rely on context to determine the intended meaning of a term.

SMS4. I understand how concepts are organized within a linguistic system.

B4. Scale of Pragmatic Sense Directionality

Construct Definition: Directive orientation of utterances beyond literal semantic content.

Items:

PSD1. I identify the communicative intention behind what someone says.

PSD2. I recognize when a statement implies more than its literal meaning.

PSD3. I infer intended sense based on contextual cues.

PSD4. I interpret statements according to the speaker's communicative goal.

B5. Scale of Communicative Teleology

Construct Definition: Purposive structure of communication grounded in intentional orientation.

Items:

CT1. I clearly formulate the objective I intend to communicate.

CT2. I verify whether my intention matches how others interpret my message.

CT3. I evaluate whether my message effectively conveys its intended meaning.

CT4. I reflect on the outcome of my communication to assess its success.

Annex C. Scoring and Interpretation

Scores for each construct are obtained by averaging their corresponding items. Higher scores indicate stronger manifestation of the latent dimension.

Internal consistency reliability is assessed using Composite Reliability ($CR \geq 0.70$) and Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha \geq 0.70$). Construct validity is evaluated through Confirmatory Factor Analysis using standardized loadings ($\lambda \geq 0.50$) and Average Variance Extracted ($AVE \geq 0.50$).

These instruments provide a theoretically grounded and psychometrically validated operationalization of phenomenological and pragmatic constructs suitable for structural equation modeling.