

WITOLD PŁOTKA

BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION: A HUSSERLIAN APPROACH

At the very beginning of Husserlian phenomenology, we can grasp two contradictory intentions. On the one hand, Edmund Husserl postulated that phenomenology is a kind of description; on the other, according to its project, the philosophy should base its conclusions on intuition grounded in a pure, non-verbal inspection. The former intention arose as the refutation of psychologism.¹ The latter is accompanied by Husserl's turn to transcendentalism, which was presented in the lecture series about *The Idea of Phenomenology* (1907), and in *Ideas I* (1913).² Despite of mentioned contradiction, the role of communication seems to be marginal in both ways. In contrast to the assertion, **the main task of this article is to present Husserl's theory of communication as a fundamental concept for the understanding of phenomenology as communal research.** In order to demonstrate phenomenology from mentioned perspective, firstly, our pre-

¹Generally speaking, the latter philosophy reduced logical beings to the process of thinking [Husserl 2001, 41]. In consequence, the discipline of logic was grasped as a kind of psychology limiting its achievements to empirical laws. In contrast to philosophers who accept an empirical character of logic, in his *Logical Investigations*, Husserl stressed ideal, and non-temporal quality of logical beings, guaranteeing the logic its own field of inquiring [Mohanty 2008, 65-69]. This field should be described by phenomenology.

²In his *Ideas I*, Husserl presented "the principle of all principles," which expresses "that every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition, that everything originarily (so to speak, in its 'personal' actuality) offered to us in 'intuition' is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being, but also only within the limits in which it is presented there" [Husserl 1983, 44]. In other words, phenomenology should base on a intuition grasping philosophizing as "watching." In *The Idea of Phenomenology*, Husserl emphasized metaphorically, that philosopher should be reduced to an "observing eye" [Husserl 1950, 62].

sentation necessarily involves the role which so-called communicative speech played in Husserl's discussion with psychologism. Secondly, it is claimed here that a communicative attitude is necessary for phenomenology. In addition, the model of communication should be sketched. Moreover, it will become evident that Husserl's collaboration with Fink as well as Fink's investigations exemplify a communicative character of phenomenology. Finally, as it becomes clear from the following, the consideration of communication could verify thesis about solipsistic nature of phenomenological philosophy.

From the perspective of the *Logical Investigations*, phenomenology is a science making claim to the objectivity. To phrase it differently, phenomenology's theorems present expressions which document the "truths in themselves" [Husserl 2001a, 223]. Such a proposition guarantees that, on the one hand, uttering person can repeat the same expression *in infinitum*, on the other, the expression will have the same meaning all the time. Although, the proposition is valuable according to the postulate of the objectivity, it bears metaphysical consequences. Namely, meaning must be grasped as non-temporal and non-worldly being; to put it precisely, meaning receives an ideal nature. Let us quote the First Investigation: "Meaning is related to varied acts of meaning ... just as Redness *in specie* is to the slips of paper which lie here, and which all 'have' the same redness" [*ibid.*, 230]. In consequence, for Husserl, language mediates between the world of accidental things and the world of ideal meanings; therefore, the language is only an instrument [Waldenfels 2007, 49], and it is "dead" [Bruzina 1996, 97] as such.

In the light of above observations, it should not surprise us that Husserl accepted only monologue (so-called solitary speech), where the connection between word and the ideal meaning is possible;³ consequently, he abandoned the field of communicative speech. It should be stressed that, following Husserl, "[e]xpressions were originally framed to fulfill a communicative function" [Husserl 2001a, 189]. Nevertheless, the relation between the word and the meaning is questioned in the field of communication, because there is no such a necessity, i.e. one word is accompanied by only one ideal meaning. Just the opposite, in the process of communication there cannot be any ideal meanings at all which will guarantee the truth or falsehood of expression. In this communicative speech, according to Husserl, "truth ... coincidence with sincerity" [Husserl 2001b, 334]. Therefore, communication is useless from the perspective of phenomenology, at least of its formulation presented in the *Investigations*.

Mentioned exclusion of communication involves two different moments. First of all, it mirrors the problem of solipsism.⁴ Secondly, it seems to be the consequence of the concept of ideal meaning. Inasmuch as Husserl wanted to guarantee the ideal status of meaning he must exclude communication. Husserl changed, however, his approach to the theory of ideal meaning. In his letter to Roman Ingarden from the 5th of April 1918, Husserl expressed the critique of ideal meaning; he pointed there a very serious mistake, namely he underlined that the repetitiveness of utterances should not be combined with the ideal, so non-temporal concept of meaning.⁵ Therefore,

³Following Rudolf Bernet, it should be stressed that an immediate character of grasped meaning is possible only in the case of so-called solitary speech [Bernet 1979, 41].

⁴At the first moment, Husserl's researches on phenomenology could be grasped as the model of soliloquizing philosopher. For this precisely reason, in the letter to Mahnke from the 17th of October 1921, Husserl wrote: "*I am for myself and I must go my way as a loner*" [Husserl 1994, 433].

⁵"First of all there was a mistake, when a 'meaning' and a 'sentence', in the case of judging experiences, predicative sentences, as propositions and senses, was grasped as an essence, or an 'idea' in the sense of

we can speak of the immanent development of phenomenology. No doubt, after Husserl's departure from "static" Platonism, following Husserl's letter to Natrop from the 29th of June 1918 [Kern 1964, 346], the way to the analysis of communication stood open for phenomenological inquiry. Moreover, such analyses should question the problem of solipsism.

While reworking the German edition of the *Cartesian Meditations*, in 1931, Husserl emphasized that we are surrounded by the world which is full of meaning. Nevertheless, the meaning is not guaranteed by soliloquizing philosopher. Rather, the predicates of objects in the world indicate other subjects; precisely these subjects found objects' meanings. To put it clearly, following Husserl, "[a] single subject has not only his own acts in general, but his private acts as well, opposite others, communicative acts; due to them [communicative acts - W.P.] he finds in a communicative way" [Husserl 1973d, 56]. Husserl indicated two kinds of acts, without favouring any. For this reason, monologue cannot dominate the field of meaning. A subject has not a privileged access to meanings; rather, the latter is founded in a communicative way. Therefore, transcendental subject could be grasped as a communicative subjectivity [Husserl 1956, 257] founded in a communicative community; to put it differently, the community has *a priori* character in our relation to the world [Welton 1983, 292]. Hence, communication is presupposed by the monologue [Husserl 1958, 394].

Due to the transcendental character of the communicative community, the communication is the very moment of constituting our common world. It should be not surprising that Husserl was emphasizing the latter thesis repeatedly.⁶ On the other hand, that focusing merely on language leads to the theory of ideal meaning is undisputed. The way out of the consequence is to turn relation between language and communication. Inasmuch as communication is *a priori* the ideality could be grasped as appearance. Precisely here the main theme of *The Origin of Geometry* arises. In his essay about geometry from 1936, Husserl asked for ideal meanings: "[h]ow does the latter, in its 'ideality,' thereby become objective?" [Husserl 1970, 359]. In the context of asked question, we can become, following Husserl, a "victim to the *seduction of language*" [*ibid.*, 362]. After his critique of the ideal character of meaning, Husserl had known that language could smuggle a series of presuppositions into phenomenological investigations. First of all, as Husserl wrote in the *Experience and Judgment*, "difficulties" arise at the moment of speaking, writing or, more general, of using language; using language is connected with "*first idealization*" [Husserl 1973a, 57], where the ideality is presupposed. Nonetheless, it must be stressed clearly, our belief about the ideality is merely a presupposition [Husserl 1958, 383]. Let us briefly describe mentioned "idealization" of language.

If we have a sentence, for example, "this tree is green", we could suppose the repetitiveness of the sentence by other subject. All subjects will say the same words, and express the same meaning, however it can indicate something else in each uttering. For one person, that the tree is green could indicate signal for him to do something; for the other person, these words can be incomprehensible, because he does not know English at all, *etc.* Despite of these and many other situations, we could defend the theory of the ideal meaning of expressions by indicating the

the essence (*species*). The independence of a sentence meaning of accidental propositions and a judging person still does not mean that the uniqueness is ideality-identity" [Husserl 1968a, 10].

⁶Cf. Husserl 1958, 121, 387; 1968b, 141; 1973b, 468; 1973d, 6-12; 1976, 416; 1993, 134; 2002a, 195; 2002b, 261; 2006, 401; 2008, 54.

sameness of expressions. Nevertheless, the sameness is associated merely with syntax of mentioned sentence. To put it differently, ideality can be only an abstract element.

A key insight offered by Husserl's inquiry into the language and communication is that, according to Ronald Bruzina, "[t]he pre-givenness of language before any speaking action is not just potentiality standing before actualization, the availability of an expressive medium in its complex articulation;" of course, "[t]here is the formal component of it in the form of vocabulary and syntax, but there is in addition a more complex factor" [Bruzina 1996, 96]. Communication seems to be mentioned more complex factor. Furthermore, communication introduces the context of the world as well as communicative subjects' history and interests. It is exactly at this point that Husserl suggested the introduction of the concept of the lifeworld which contains a complex structure of human being. At the same moment we leave a "dead" language and we pass over to the analysis of living speech [cf. Mohanty 1964, 65].

In order to sketch the Husserlian analysis of living speech, so of the communication, let us emphasize that Husserl does not exclude here his general model of expression. As always, the notion of intentionality plays here the main role. Namely, due to consciousness talking subject points toward "something," hence, he is conscious of "something." For this reason, the difference between "the voice of the word" and "the meaning of the word" should be stressed [Husserl 1958, 242]. In such a perspective, the subject does not express merely "voices," but "meanings" as well. At the beginning of the twenties, while considering a communicative situation, Husserl showed that other person grasps meanings in a conversation, rather than merely voices; Husserl wrote clearly: "my *words*, and not air movements of physicist or nerve processes of physiologist" [Husserl 1973b, 473]. Although, human thinking has its identical correlates, the latter is merely an abstract moment of expression [Husserl 1968b, 112]. For Husserl, this abstract moment presupposes the other field constituting the expression, however, this field remains indefinite. Inasmuch as we connect the former with public, and expressive sphere, this indefinite field should be grasped as intimate sphere [Husserl 2002b, 26]. As it becomes clear, this intimate sphere plays decisive role in communication. However, now we should ask following question: if Husserl did not exclude general model of expression, what makes mentioned appearance of ideal meaning possible?

Husserl's answer is clear here: due to repetitiveness the appearance of ideal meaning is possible, but the effect of such a repetition is not the ideality in fact, rather it is so-called "irreality," as Husserl pointed in the *Experience and Judgment*. In this work the author defined the "irreality" as object which could arise in many moments and in many places; sentences' meaning arising according to each utterance is here the best exemplification. For this reason, Husserl concluded, the non-temporality of ideality is in fact "the temporal being of supertemporality, of *omnitemporality*, which, *nevertheless, is a mode of temporality*" [Husserl 1973a, 261]. So Husserl's proposition leads to the inclusion of the ideality to temporal field. Therefore, to cite Donn Welton, "[t]he meaning is 'ideal' in the sense, as Husserl came to put it, that we find it at work 'time and again' (*immer wieder*), in the sense that the same rule could be in play in a different but similar situation" [Welton 2000, 187]. The meaning of utterance is not non-temporal, but it constitutes itself in the temporality, more precisely, it constitutes itself due to the repetitions.⁷

⁷James G. Hart examined the constitution of ideal meaning in the context of culture: "[t]he constitution of personhood rests on the capacity to shape the immediate sensible presence in a way which surmounts its immediacy by acts which enjoy a validity beyond the immediate present. Husserl generally calls these of *cultura culturans* as the constituting of these ideal formations. Culture as *cultura culturata*, as what the

Now we are able to return to Husserlian analysis of communication. Above all, it should be stressed that Husserl understood communication in a broad sense. In his text entitled *The Phenomenology of a Communicative Community*, from 1932, Husserl introduced such a broad notion of communication, namely it encompasses words, writing, and gestures as well [Husserl 1973d, 475]. Few years later, Husserl repeated that writing is a form of communication where additionally immediate or mediate personal address is not necessary [Husserl 1970, 360-361]. Therefore, in phenomenological perspective, communication encompasses a wide scope of human activity. This activity founds community, hence Husserl called such acts “social,” and claimed these acts are fundamental according to connection between I and Thou [Husserl 1973c, 166-167] as well as to the society [Husserl 2002b, 27]. In text form 1921, entitled *Gemeingeist I*, the author presented an example: “I announce him something; when my wife put an apple in my hat, then I think that I should eat something before I leave, hence I understand her aim” [Husserl 1973c, 166]. Let us briefly analyze quoted example.

No doubt, the communication is always communicating something. Nevertheless, announcement’s aim has not the character of the ideal meaning, also it is not grasped immediate. We must interpret present facts in order to grasp the aim. Husserl’s example makes it evident our interpretation is necessary in the process of understanding. Precisely for this reason, as we can read in mentioned text about the phenomenology of the communicative community, from 1932, our speech is requesting to somebody [Husserl 1973d, 474], who interprets this request. The phenomenon of questioning however tells us much more, than we could suppose. After all, the phenomenon has no sense in the solitary speech; it arises only in the communicative speech [cf. Husserl 1973a, 307]. On the one hand, it should be stressed that question has no meaning at all, it expresses just the need for any answer. On the other, indeed a person asks the question, so the person should have earlier competitions to formulate the question. Husserl emphasized, question “is originally motivated by events in the passive sphere” [*ibid.*]. Therefore, in phenomenological perspective, questioning arises from earlier activity [Husserl 1968b, 57]. Here question does not aim at one ideal meaning, but it presupposes whole universe of possible answers. Generalizing our observations, we can assert, following *The Vienna Lecture*, in the communication “grows a new sort of humanity, one which, living in finitude, lives toward poles of infinity” [Husserl 1970, 277]. On the communicative level, mentioned “infinity” calls sedimented sense which presents the horizon of possible understanding. Exactly due to this sedimented, so “horizontal” sense the communication is possible [Buckley 1992, 91].⁸

As it was mentioned above, the communication constitutes our common world. Obviously, in the communication is the identification of the “worlds” possible;⁹ moreover, it is the condition of possibility introducing changes into world [Husserl 2008, 57]. Let us return to mentioned example about an apple and hat. My wife constitutes her own world where she wishes to give me an apple; without the communicative connection, I could not identify her world, and hence her

constituting effects, may be regarded as the constituted idealities. But these, it must be noted, are also derivatively ‘constituting,’ i.e., as ‘personal traditions, or the traditions of a people they abidingly shape human lives’ [Hart 1992, 94].

⁸According to Husserl, the usefulness of the notion of horizon consists also in that it provides an explanation of the ‘occasional judgments’ and their validity” [Kuhn 1968, 120].

⁹For this reason Husserl pointed out that common world should be grasped as *opinio communis* [Husserl 2008, 202].

intention. Furthermore, my interpretation makes possible changes which take place in my world. To put it differently, inasmuch as I communicate something to someone, so inasmuch as I act in a communicative way, I exactly act on the person; therefore, communication motivates Others to do something [Husserl 2006, 333-334]. In such a communicative situation, phenomenology points out that responsibility should be the main principle. There is no doubt, the communication introduces completely new dimension of human practice. Namely, according to communicative acts I am never alone, and my actions should be grounded on the responsibility for the Other. Sketched relation is two-sided, but the aim is common: a consensus. Only due to the communication we overcome our particular lives, and in this way we built the personhood of higher order [Husserl 1973c, 194, 199]. For Husserl, the task of such a personhood as well as the task of phenomenology itself is a concordance [Husserl 2006, 432-433].

As it should become clear in the light of above observations, emphasized priority of the communication over the solitary life verifies the problem of solipsism. In the perspective of the communication, “We” dominate over “I” stressing that a person *always* is situated in the horizon of the community. But the consequence arises here crucial. In phenomenological perspective, the communication overcomes actual situation leading us to the thesis about a generation character of communal investigations [Husserl 2008, 511]. Such a communal investigations were exemplified in Husserl’s collaboration with Eugen Fink.

Bruzina described this collaboration as a paradoxical move beyond initial limits: “[p]aradoxically, the elaboration, communication, and sharing of the study that as transcendental science consumed Husserl’s energies was done in talk and in writing with a mundaneness of medium” [Bruzina 1986, 4]. Following Husserl’s great philosophical effort presented in thousands of his research manuscripts, it becomes evident that phenomenologist shares his achievements in mundane medium which due to its nature cannot be private; this medium just overcomes solitary life of phenomenologist. Mentioned paradoxical move stands however in the center of phenomenology. After all, phenomenologist never stops writing and talking about his achievements. Phenomenology is here not only a theory; rather it is a communal effort into inquiring the field of philosophical problems. Therefore, Husserl’s collaboration with Fink presents phenomenology as *philosophia perennis*. For this reason, to quote Bruzina once more, “[b]eyond any single philosopher’s position, or indeed any philosopher’s living thought, philosophy had to be *perennis*. Such was the reality of the work of Husserl and Fink, and such was the intrinsic nature of the task that governed them” [Bruzina 1989, 306].

To sum up, let us notice that phenomenology seems to be in tension between the analysis of language and the postulate of inquiring into the communication. Inasmuch as focusing on the concept of language leads to the program of phenomenology as private, so solitary research, focusing on the communicative situation of man overcomes this solitary life. As it was mentioned above, in the *Investigations* and in *Ideas I* Husserl limited his project to the former possibility. Nevertheless, he criticized such an approach and postulated introduction of the field of communication. The latter postulate stands quite in the opposite to the problem of solipsism which is simply absent in such a project. Here solipsism is senseless, because I am always accompanied by whole communicative community. The accompaniment, as was presented above, has practical meaning. On the contrary, the problem of solipsism could arise only on the ground of epistemological relations.

At the end, let us notice that sketched project needs deeper investigations of Husserl's phenomenology as well as of Fink's considerations. It was Fink exactly who saw that Husserl's phenomenology is not "any argumentative hypothesis" [Fink 1988, 178], but communal researches. For this reason, today, more than one hundred years after Husserl's first formulation of the project of phenomenology in his *Logical Investigations*, so-called phenomenological movement is still fruitful proposition of philosophizing.

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Between Language and Communication: a Husserlian Approach

ABSTRACT. The article asserts that in order to work out the problem of solipsism within Husserlian phenomenology, a tension between, the analysis of language and the investigations of communication should be stressed. Inasmuch as focusing on language introduces the theory of the ideal meaning, and therefore phenomenology must face with the charge of solipsism, on the dimension of communication phenomenologist overcomes the latter charge. The communication implies temporal character of meaning and moreover it demands to take into consideration whole context of communicative act. Additionally, in the article practical level of communication is emphasized in general, and it is presented in Husserl's collaboration with Eugen Fink in particular.

KEYWORDS

phenomenology, Husserl, language, solipsism, meaning