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## THE PROBLEM OF LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION IN PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE

*The article examines the philosophical understanding of the phenomena of language and communication in their linguistic, social, and psychological dimensions. Since the 19th century, approaches to the study of language have changed significantly due to several discoveries in contemporary science, which led to the need to rethink these phenomena in philosophy. The authors analyze the teachings of leading philosophers about the principles of language and communication, the formation of meanings, the role of interpretation in scientific knowledge, interaction of understanding and explanation, as well as the place of discourse, deconstruction, intentionality, and intersubjectivity in these processes.*

*The study aimed to clarify the specifics of philosophical understanding of language and communication, as an interconnection of linguistic, psychological, and cultural components and to analyze the relationship between words, meanings, understanding, and interpretation in the teachings of leading philosophers.*

*Accordingly, the methods of comparative analysis, synthesis, and generalization, as well as historical and systemic approaches to understanding communication were used to achieve the objectives of the study.*

*As a result of the analysis, some conclusions were drawn. Firstly, without understanding the essence of language it is impossible to understand the phenomenon of communication, so for the majority of philosophers, these concepts are interrelated. Secondly, it is questionable whether a holistic definition of language and communication can be given without regard to their linguistic, psychological, and cultural components. Thirdly, intentionality plays an important role in the relationship between mental states and language, i.e., it is important not only to understand the linguistic basis of communication but also the intentions of the speaker when he uses particular words and phrases. Fourthly, as long as the possibility of objectively reflecting reality in science through language is questioned there is a need to understand exactly how language, communication, and truth are related.*

**Key words:** *language, communication, interpretation, explanation, understanding, discourse, deconstruction, intentionality, intersubjectivity, hermeneutics.*

**Articulation of the issue.** Philosophical approaches to understanding communication have their roots in the study of language. In particular, linguistic concepts are the foundation for the construction of various communicative theories of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries historic reconstruction was the dominant tool for studying various facts. It was believed that to understand the essence of a phenomenon (including language) it was necessary to identify its origins and to analyze its historic evolution, namely, to use a diachronic approach. By examining its sources, one could comprehend not only the nature of language but also the nature of human thinking. However, this

approach later ceased to be dominant due to the transition to comparative research. Thus, language should not be reduced to understanding the meaning of words, primitive forms of speech, interpretations of ancient symbols, etc. The reason for such changes in approaches was the identification of certain patterns that were inherent in different languages, e.i., internal structure, laws of functioning, etc. [1, p. 16].

**Current scientific research and issue analysis.** Most reflections within the philosophy of language have been reduced to answering the question «How should meaning (sense) be understood?». As a result of centuries of debate, two linguistic and communicative traditions have emerged. One group of philosophers (G.Frege, B.Russell, N.Chomsky) argue that meaning should be understood based on formal rules and laws of linguistics and semantics. On the other hand, L.Widgenstein and J.Austin called for an understanding of meanings through the context of speech and who its participants are. An important role in the study of the phenomena of language and communication was also played by J.Habermas, K.Apel, F.de Saussure, M.Heidegger, G.Gadamer, etc. The topic has been relevant among contemporary philosophers, too. C.Mangion studied the communicative ideas of J.Austin, J.Fiske analyzed the interpretation of communication through structuralism, N.Crick focused on J.Dewey's communicative philosophy, and S.Mills drew parallels between communication and discourse.

**Unresolved problem analysis.** There has long been a debate in philosophy about how to understand language: as a tool of communication, as a concept of performative expression, when through the process of communication a person, thus, performs a certain action or both. The importance of answering this question was that by choosing one of the options, we also choose how to study the language in general [1, p. 223]. In an everyday language, such a dilemma is of interest from the standpoint of differentiation between what was said and what was meant by what was said. For science, this problem looks more serious because it calls into question the possibility of objectively reflecting reality through language. And if natural sciences can use the language of mathematics, then for the humanities and most of the social sciences the reflection occurs only through the use of everyday (simple) language and phonemes.

**Research objectives setting.** The article aims to explore the specifics of the philosophical understanding of language and communication, as the combination of linguistic, psychological, and cultural components, as well as to analyze the relationship between words, meanings, and understandings based on the teachings of leading philosophers.

The methodological basis of research lies within the comparative method, historic and systemic approaches to understanding the phenomenon of language and communication. The methods of analysis, synthesis, and generalization were also used.

**Research results presentation.** One of the pioneers in the linguistic-communicative field of knowledge was F.de Saussure, who created a holistic approach to the problem of understanding in the humanities and became the founder of structural linguistics, calling for studying language as a structured system. The revolutionary nature of his idea was that in contrast to the previous (diachronic) tradition, which focused on the fragmentary study of languages, differences between them, and the role of language in social and cultural context, de Saussure proposed a synchronic view of language as a holistic systemic object, and not as a feature of other phenomena. The main assumption was that language, grammar, and other structural components have a rational basis and a general internal structure. This approach had a significant impact on the formation of structuralism and cultural criticism which united around a broad understanding of language, according to which it is structural and determined by the analysis of culture. The goal of structuralism is not to understand what the world is, but how a person perceives it [4, p. 115]. Thus, the true understanding of the text of a particular culture can be understood through its interaction with the texts of other cultures, i.e., with the use of a comparative approach. Therefore, de Saussure's main idea was that there was no need to turn to the outside world to understand linguistic signs.

The most significant contribution to the theory of communication as an interpretation was made by hermeneutics whose main task was to determine the principles of understanding the text. The herme-

neutic tradition dates back to ancient times. However, as a full-fledged doctrine, it was formed in the works of F.Schleiermacher who believed that to better understand the text we must take into account the grammatical and psychological components. The grammatical component contains the laws and rules of language functioning, and the psychological component - the identification of intentions that guided the author in writing a particular text. Therefore, the process of interpretation is not only an understanding of the words used by the author but also an understanding of what language is in general, as well as historical and cultural contexts. However, the understanding of both components is connected which is why F. Schleiermacher introduces the concept of «hermeneutic circle»: to understand the text one needs to understand the historical background in which the author worked, and to understand the historical background one needs to study the text.

Later, V.Dilthey moved away from the study of the text *per sei* and emphasized the distinction between explanation and understanding. His approach became the basis for the differentiation of natural sciences and the humanities. Knowledge in natural sciences consists of establishing a cause-and-effect relationship of a particular phenomenon and the ability to adequately describe it. On the other hand, knowledge in the humanities implies understanding the essence of the problem. Hence, according to Dilthey, hermeneutics is a method of the humanities. At the same time, both fields of knowledge must be based on the principle of objectivity. Later M.Heidegger would not agree with this thesis, believing that scientific objectivity did not exist in principle because neither knowledge nor understanding could exist outside the context.

Similar thoughts were expressed by G.Gadamer who focused on the role of prejudices (language, values, beliefs) in cognition and understanding, where the latter «should be considered not as a subjective act, but as participation in the event of tradition, in the process of transmission where the past and the present are constantly mediated» [3, p. 290]. Tradition in this case means the history of the interpretation of the text which is due to prejudices inherited from a certain tradition. Tradition is the standard for interpretation. Therefore, there is no understanding that is out of context. «The way of existence of tradition, of course, is not reasonable immediacy. It is language, and in interpreting its texts, those who understand it correlate it with their linguistic orientation to the world» [3, p. 463]. On the other hand, the philosopher uses his hermeneutic concept in rethinking the phenomenon of communication as a shared experience of the world around. Communication involves a joint attempt to understand the text by the author and the reader. If language is regulated by rules, it is obvious that in the process of communication and understanding there is also a need to follow certain rules. The thinker contrasts understanding as participation in the process of understanding with the creation of meanings. The value of Gadamer's hermeneutic concept is that he showed the connection between truth and interpretation, and considered the interaction of reader and text through dialogue. The importance of interpretation through dialogue lies in the possibility of understanding both ourselves and the world as a common experience of mankind.

Another researcher of the phenomenon of language and communication was C.Pierce, who was interested in the question: «How is it possible to perceive and understand the surrounding reality?» Known as one of the founders of sign theory and semiotics, he put forward the idea that scientific knowledge is the result of dialogue within the academic community. Thus, the search for a final opinion is a regulatory ideal, because if the dialogue continues, consensus will eventually be reached. In comparison with his predecessors, Pierce looks at the phenomenon of language more broadly. He also studied sign systems, not only as of the study of ordinary signs of language, but tried to explain them as a whole, namely, perception, understanding, man, and nature. Pierce's ideas were important for further understanding of communication. In particular, his ideas had a significant impact on the K.-O. Apel's theory of communication.

For J.Dewey, the role of scientific communication is to create symbolic maps that would control and predict possible phenomena in nature. Comparing science and art, he believed that the former affirms meanings, and the latter expresses them [4, p. 261-262]. Dewey was a supporter of the transmission theory of communication, the essence of which is in understanding communication as a process of information transfer. «Communication is not only instrumental but also complete. It is a means of

establishing cooperation, dominance, and order. Shared experience is the greatest of human goods» [5, p. 167]. Dewey drew parallels between language and mental states. Language has historically been interpreted as a feature of the structure of the brain or a certain mental feature of the internal expression of external states. «Social interaction and institutions were seen as products of a complete physical or mental allotment of a self-sufficient individual, where language acts as a mechanical mediator for the transmission of observations and ideas that existed independently» [5, p. 169].

The French philosopher J.Derrida proposed his interpretation of communication through the introduction of the concept of deconstruction - a process that calls into question the European philosophical tradition of opposites, differences, and oppositions through the study of language and texts. The author emphasizes the antagonism of oral and written speech, preferring the former as one that is closer to human consciousness. Derrida is a representative of the polysemantic approach, according to which meaning cannot be unique, it constantly changes, giving rise to a new interpretation, which also changes, etc. [6]. At the same time, the philosopher was skeptical of the traditional (transmission) theory of communication «sender-message-receiver». Unlike oral speech, where the presence of all links of communication is important, for written communication, the existence of the recipient of a message does not play a decisive role because the written message can be interpreted in the process of transmission without even reaching the recipient. In addition, you can understand the text even without understanding what the author wanted to say. Such conclusions led him to a question: If the sender or recipient is not required to be able to communicate to understand the content of the message, then is the existence of meanings possible in principle? Derrida believed that meanings are directly present in the structure of language [1, p. 120-140]. Any context is dynamic and open to interpretation. Thus, Derrida's views on the interpretation of texts are quite radical, as it allows language to get out of the author's control.

J.Searle and P.Grice explored the intentional approach to communication in their works. The presence of intention distinguishes speech communication from emotional reaction. This approach gives more weight to the speech act than to a single word or statement. For a speech act to become an act of communication, it must be based on certain intentions [7, p. 16]. At the same time, the understanding of intentions is closely related to the knowledge and understanding of the grammatical side of the language in which communication takes place. The difference in the teachings of both philosophers is that, according to Grice, the main function of the speaker is the intention to create a certain effect, making the listener realize his intention to create this effect, while Searle believed that meaning is more than a matter of intention, but, at least sometimes, the question of consent [7, p. 45]. Therefore, intentionality manifests itself through two components: psychological (state of consciousness) and satisfaction of intentions (success of intentions). Searle also believed that intentionality was projected into the world through language: mental states do not matter without language. To understand whether the mental state was successfully expressed through language, it is necessary to compare the intentions of the mind with the conditions of its success [1, p. 261-262]. Grice, on the one hand, after analyzing communicative interactions, developed the idea of the principles that guided communication, as well as how such principles can be violated, thereby destroying the process of communication. Searle, on the other hand, deepened the analysis of speech acts to find the necessary conditions for their creation, as well as developed their classification.

Another representative of communicative philosophy was J.Habermas. Influenced by the ideas of L.Wittgenstein, N.Chomsky, and J.Searle, he tried to reconsider the phenomenon of language and communication in terms of social norms and rules. A speech act is always performed for someone, with a certain intention. Thus, the process of communication occurs when the intentions of the speaker are clear in the process of transmitting certain content. Therefore, no matter what the statement is, it always has a social component. Hence the central problem of Habermas's theory of communication: how exactly is a meaning being formed in the process of communication? Habermas suggested a pragmatic approach to communication: «One simply would not know what it means to understand the meaning of a speech expression if one did not know how it can be used to communicate something with someone» [8, p. 228]. Therefore, language is an intersubjective process. «We have seen that

verbal communication can only take place when participants, communicating with each other about something, simultaneously go to two levels of communication: the level of intersubjectivity at which they have interpersonal relationships and the level of propositional content» [8, p. 75]. Habermas's main achievement was that he tried to show the connection between the theory of speech action and social theory, namely, how, despite internal conflicts, society could rationally develop through the process of communication.

Although K.-O. Apel is considered one of the leading philosophers of the 20th century, but his contribution to the development of communication theory remains underestimated. His main idea was that «the primary understanding of data in the world is intrinsically linked to the understanding of human language and life forms» [9, p. 19]. This approach is the foundation for any knowledge, including scientific. At the same time, the philosopher did not see a connection between the rationality of communication and its focus on achieving a certain goal. Apel singled out two questions, the answers to which might indicate a place of understanding and explanation in science. Firstly, what methodology is appropriate in the study of physical and social phenomena, and secondly, how to create a communication bridge between historical and natural sciences? How to correlate causal methods and hermeneutics? To answer these questions, he introduced a hermeneutic-reconstructive method as a mediator between «causal explanations of quasi-natural processes and normatively relevant reconstructions of strong or weak rules and arguments» [10, p. 12]. In making a historical exploration of scientific methods, Apel rejects the possibility of understanding the true nature of human nature and society, given the dominance of the empirical component of research. He also applied the concept of transcendental pragmatics, which he believed was the quintessence of Heidegger's hermeneutics, Wittgenstein's theory of language games, Austin's theory of linguistic acts, and Peirce's pragmatic semiotics [11, p. 233-234].

E. Husserl considered understanding and meaning in the terms of intersubjectivity. Communication involves two conditions: the ratio of conceptual and physical acts, as well as the ratio of the concept itself to the conceptual act [12, p. 9]. A conceptual act refers to the relationship between a priori knowledge and sensory experience. At the same time, Husserl emphasizes the phenomenological nature of communication - the communicative process can be perceived differently by different people. This interpretation has led to many debates about the place of language in cognition. If Husserl argued that the basis of language is logic, not rhetoric, Derrida argued that only expression can convey meaning, and, therefore, language is limited to expression.

L. Wittgenstein was convinced that meaning was formed pragmatically. He urged not to focus on what meaning was, but rather on how it could be used, showing language as a new means of social activity [13]. L. Wittgenstein drew an analogy between language and play. Firstly, language cannot function in isolation, because if language is a form of play, then there must be those who determine whether the game is played according to these rules. If there is no standard of communication, it will be impossible to determine whether the words we use correspond to the same meaning as before. Secondly, the essence of understanding is not the connection of language with reality, but its connection with the social context and the observance of rules. Therefore, for example, religious discourse will be significantly different from scientific or philosophical.

**Conclusion.** Considering the views that have emerged within the philosophical discourse on the problem of language and communication, several conclusions can be drawn. First, all thinkers agree that language is an extremely complex phenomenon. Understanding the functioning of language directly affects the understanding of communication. Second, the approach to the interpretation of meaning is controversial: it is either embedded in the very structure of language, or it depends on the different contexts in which speech act takes place. Hence, the ratio of linguistic, psychological, and cultural components of interpretation has to be taken into account. Third, the interpretation occurs through an understanding not only of the linguistic side of the conversation but also of the intentions that a speaker puts into the relevant words and phrases. The projection of the intentionality of the mind into the world is manifested through language. With the help of language, mental states are expressed, because both mental states and language are directed toward the world, but while language

has meanings, mental states do not have them. Therefore, the intentionality of the mind depends on the intentionality of the language: the language depends on the mind, but not vice versa. Fourth, in the context of science, there is a need to understand exactly how language, communication, and truth are related. Especially if we interpret the truth not as a universal and objective reality, but as a conceptual and cultural system. On the other hand, it was the communication that made science possible, because the accumulation of knowledge confirmed not only the transfer of information but also the ability to create new objects in the form of discoveries and inventions. And, consequently, the formation of science as a social institution is also the result of communication.

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### **Проблема мови і комунікації у філософському дискурсі**

*У статті досліджується філософське розуміння феноменів мови та комунікації у їхньому лінгвістичному, соціальному та психологічному зрізах. Починаючи з XIX ст. підходи до вивчення мови суттєво змінилися у зв'язку з низкою відкриттів у тогочасній науці, що, водночас, привело до потреби переосмислення цих явищ і процесів у філософії. Авторами проаналізовано вчення провідних філософів щодо принципів функціонування мови та комунікації, формування смислів та значень, ролі інтерпретації у науковому пізнанні, взаємодії розуміння і пояснення, а також місця дискурсу, деконструкції, інтенціональності та інтерсуб'єктивності у цих процесах.*

*Метою дослідження було з'ясувати специфіку філософського розуміння мови та комунікації, як співвідношення лінгвістичної, психологічної та культурної складових, а також проаналізувати взаємозв'язок між словом, смислом, розумінням і тлумаченням на прикладі концепцій провідних філософів.*

*Відповідно для досягнення завдань дослідження використовувалися методи порівняльного аналізу, синтезу та узагальнення, а також історичний та системний підходи у розумінні комунікації.*

*У результаті проведеного аналізу було зроблено низку висновків. По-перше, без розуміння сутності мови неможливо зрозуміти феномен комунікації, тому у концепціях більшості філософів ці поняття взаємопов'язані, по-друге, викликає сумнів можливість дати цілісне визначення поняттям мови та комунікації без урахування їхньої лінгвістичної, психологічної та культурної складових, роль яких є визначальною й у процесі розуміння, по-третє, інтеціальність займає важливе місце у взаємозв'язку між психічними станами і мовою, тобто важливим є не лише розуміння лінгвістичного основи спілкування, але й намірів, які вкладає мовець у відповідні слова і фрази і по-четверте, допоки можливість об'єктивного відображення реальності наукою через мову викликає запитання, виникає потреба у розумінні того, як саме пов'язані між собою мова, комунікація та істина.*

**Ключові слова:** мова, комунікація, інтерпретація, пояснення, розуміння, дискурс, деконструкція, інтеціальність, інтерсуб'єктивність, герменевтика.