

Models of Communication in Research Interviewing

Vera Petrovna Zeleyeva

Kazan (Privolzhsky) State University, Kremlevskaya Str. 18, 420008 Kazan, Russia

Abstract: The study considers the appearance of communication models in research interviewing focused on various research objectives. Closer attention is put on the phenomenological interview the objective of which is description of the daily life experience of a respondent presented by him and obtained by him as the result of self-analysis during mutual research with the interviewer. Description of the psychological events ‘as they are’ as it is accepted in phenomenological psychology transforms the nature of communication of the researcher and respondent in the psychological research. The peculiar feature of the communication model of a phenomenological interview is the presence of intrapersonal communication determining the trends of the communicators’ development. The defining characteristics of the communication model in phenomenological interview and the principles of ethical interaction have been specified. It was shown that the collateral effect of a clinical psychologist in a phenomenological interview is psychological support of clients and creation of the communication conditions raising their subjectivity and self-support ability.

Key words: Research interviewing, clinical interview, phenomenological interview, models of communication, intrapersonal communication

INTRODUCTION

Today we observe research of communications in various scientific areas: in sociology, political science, journalism, psychology, management, linguistic and cultural studies, pedagogics. Interpersonal communication and methods of the information exchange determine the nature of the sociocultural phenomena. Communication models constituting the research basis are also affected by sociocultural changes and attain their nature and additional meanings.

One of the most popular research methods in sociology, psychology, pedagogics is research interviewing. Its format and structural characteristics are determined by the research objectives with reference to the tasks of a particular science. These differences are significant. Thus for example in sociology and psychology an interview traditionally meant a survey for the purposes of quantitative estimation of opinion distribution by the pre-defined questions and in journalism-receiving information about the interviewee or the free opinion of a particular subject.

Clinical interview holds a special place (Sommers-Flanagan and Sommers-Flanagan, 1989, 2006). Its quality directly depends on the quality of contact between an interviewer and respondent. But does an interview in the psychological science always rely on the statistical figures? In phenomenological psychology, we can often observe particular research features how a person perceives one or another event or phenomenon is

studied. Within the phenomenological tradition the objective of a quality research interview is discussion and understanding of the issues arising in everyday life from the respondents’ perspective (Kvale, 1996, 2009).

Sullivan (1954) analyzed a clinical interview as an interpersonal situation where the relevant data are generated by the interaction within a particular communication environment created between an interviewer and a respondent. Taylor and Bogdan (1984) considered social phenomena from the perspective of acting persons and described the world as the one experienced by the subjects relying on phenomenological psychology postulate: the reality is what people experience; this refers to psychological reality within which an interviewer interacts.

Phenomenologists tried to trust the phenomenon of the psychological reality of a person without speculating as to the origin and grounds of the experience. By describing and accepting phenomena ‘as they are’ the psychological research made it possible to arrange a contact between a researcher and a respondent based on other grounds. In a phenomenological interview, they become partners in investigation of some psychical phenomenon. This new role of a researcher demands from a respondent another attitude to the things experienced and generates a particular model of communication that is not peculiar to the typical research interview (Giorgi, 1984; Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003; Busygina, 2013).

ANALYSIS OF COMMUNICATION MODELS IN RESEARCH INTERVIEWING IN PSYCHOLOGY

Communication is a type of interaction between people supposing exchange of information (Kemerov and Kerimov, 2006). In contrast to a dialogue communication does not suggest merging of people and in contrast to personal interaction does not suggest the use of the common mechanisms of reproduction of the social experience and generation of the new one.

A communication model is a 'verbal, graphical or other description of the entire structure, components and functional features of a communication process' (Kolesnikova, 2007). Yakovlev (2006) considers the linear, interaction and transaction models of social communication based on the presence and (or) absence of feedback.

Kashkin (2007) distinguishes mechanical (linear, translation) and non-mechanical (interaction, dialogue, activity) models of communication. On the basis of analysis of communication models performed (Kolesnikova, 2007) distinguish a few models of communication: hierarchical (linear), horizontal (parallel); interactive (circular) and resonance one.

Each communication model within different classifications describes some aspects of the communication process: how the information transfer process proceeds what the speaker's objectives and intentions are whom it is addressed to can communication be managed or not; who influences the selection of information; what is the correlation between the verbal and non-verbal communication; what the functions of a message in communication are; what influences the process of information perception and understating? (Gnatiuk, 2010). Distinguishing different models of communication to a large extent enhances the traditional concept of communication as transfer of information not supposing interaction and co-authorship.

Let's consider the implementation of communication models in a research interview focused on different research objectives.

Let's assume that a classical psychological research interview is based on the hierarchical model of communication (Kolesnikova, 2007), linear one (Kashkin, 2007; Yakovlev, 2006). This is the simplest model described by Aristotle already. Transfer of information proceeds in one direction only. In a research interview the interviewer has to receive the relevant information from the respondent by means of the planned closed questions. However as was said before, a clinical research interview admits spontaneous respondent's responses and the interviewer adjustment to the changing

communication tuning. Therefore, communication in a clinical interview may be expressed by means of another communication model.

The horizontal (parallel) (Kolesnikova, 2007), interactional, dialogue (Kashkin, 2007) models of communication suggest information equality of the participants and represent the equal joint generation of information provided that the participants have nearly equitable information to be exchanged during a dialogue. This process requires understanding between the participants not only at the semantic but at the psychological level as well.

Both individual and group interview focused on the subject may be considered as an example of a circular (interactive) model of communication (Sherkovich, 2006; Kolesnikova, 2007) and transactional (Yakovlev, 2006) communication model. In sociological science the group directive interview as a research method is aimed at studying the respondents' attitude to the problem set representing a qualitative study (Zeleeva, 2012; Belanovskiy, 2001a, b; Melnikova, 2003).

The resonance model of communication is efficient for psychotherapeutic studies aimed at empathy and psychological support of a client. Within this communication the subjects may be in identical conditions and have the equally-directed attitudes. Within this model of communication the psychologist's feelings may be used as a research tool, this is why, the process of the client's feelings reflection is relevant. The entire therapeutic communication is based on the dynamics of experience and attitudes of the communicators.

PECULIAR FEATURES OF THE COMMUNICATION MODEL USED IN PHENOMENOLOGICAL INTERVIEW

Phenomenological research does not comply with any of the above-mentioned models of communication. Phenomenological psychology concentrates, its attention on the actual experiencing of the things happening in the intrapersonal world. Phenomenology pays primary attention to the events and how they are experienced by a person almost irrespective of the external, physical reality. A phenomenologist does not attempt to deny the objective reality, the main issue of phenomenological analysis is rather avoiding concentration on the physical events themselves and dealing with how they are perceived and experienced instead. The physical significance to phenomenologists consists in studying the individual's attitude to the real-world events and his responses to such events.

The objective of a phenomenological interview is description of the daily life experience of a respondent submitted to the interviewer by the respondent himself and obtained by him as the result of self-analysis during mutual research with the interviewer. The task of a phenomenologist is to maximally preserve the specifics of a phenomenon being examined and prevent from interpretations and interventions of the own experience. Phenomenological research is aimed not at investigating the private life but at co-investigation of the phenomenon experienced by a respondent. Questions, statements and generalizations used by the interviewer are aimed at producing descriptions oriented not towards confirmation of the theoretical hypothesis but towards focusing on receiving the detailed descriptions of the life experience.

A phenomenological interview involves not interpersonal communication only; it is also aimed at creating intrapersonal communication as well. Intrapersonal communicating supposes conscious or unconscious communication of a person with himself, it constitutes the basis for self-development and self-education as well as for intellectual development of a person and promotes to the development of ability to understand the ultimate sense expressed in everyday situations, ability to take a look into the future having rejected from establishing the cause-and-effect relationships between the past events (Zeleeva, 2012). Intrapersonal process activated by an interviewer and implemented thereafter in co-investigation constitutes the core of phenomenological communication (Fig. 1).

The model of communication in a phenomenological interview presented in Fig. 1 reflects the complexity of its structure. One can see from this model that relationships between all the system components are subjected to changes during the communication process. Changes in these relations determine transformation of the system in whole. The intrasubjective nature of the communication environment is determined by the combined analysis of both the research subject and communication itself. Dividing the communicators into an interviewer and a respondent is conditional since both communicators are co-investigators of the phenomenon experienced. The interviewer's questions at the first stage of interview include the process of the respondent's self-analysis and communication itself consists in focusing on the things experienced.

SUMMARY

The performed analysis of the communication models in a research interview allowed distinguishing the distinctive features of the communication model in

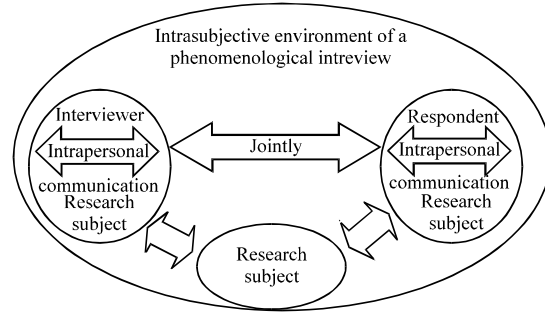


Fig. 1: Model of phenomenological communication

phenomenological interview determined by its particular status and specific objectives of a phenomenological study.

Firstly, analysis of the experience phenomenon requires specific ethical principles in communication determining its intrasubjective nature. The ethics of relationships in this model of communication supposes absolute trust in the data about the psychological phenomenon received during interviewing. The quality of the data obtained depends on the mutual trust and psychological safety of the respondent on his ability and readiness to investigate the phenomena of his life world and to share this data with the interviewer. Creation of conditions for receipt of this data determines the communication model of the research performed.

Secondly, the process of understanding the phenomenon under investigation substantially, differs from understanding in other studies. The nature of description and interpretation of the data obtained requires the questions asked by the interviewer in intrapersonal communication of the respondent to be referred to himself. Understanding by the researcher of the psychological phenomenon investigated together with the respondent directly depends on understanding of this phenomenon by the respondent himself. Since experience is the research subject the researcher relies by describing and interpreting the psychological reality of another person on the reflexive data, denies all the theoretical objectives and pre-defined scientific hypothesis and uses the common descriptive language that is peculiar to such research. The researchers belonging to phenomenological tradition insist on the necessity of working at the level of common meanings of the text and self-understanding of those surveyed.

Thirdly, the model of communication oriented towards analysis of the psychological reality and psychical phenomena is mostly effective in terms of clinical studies. Due to its flexibility, the model of communication in a phenomenological interview allows a

client to realize his peculiarities of behavior and interpersonal communication on his own as well as intrapersonal conflicts and life challenges and problems. The collateral effect of a clinical psychologist in a phenomenological interview consists in the psychological support of clients and creation of the communication conditions raising their subjectivity and self-support ability.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it shall be noted that the change in the psychologists' attitude to the study of anthropological phenomena improves the quality of the research the subject of which is experience and the subjective psychological reality.

As was shown above, the quality of data obtained during investigation of psychical phenomena depends on the communication specifics. The analysis of communication models in psychology allows improving the efficiency of both the psychological investigation and psychological support.

Thus, phenomenological model of communication is worth special attention of the psychological phenomena investigators both for the purposes of improving the quality of psychological investigations focused on individual and unique aspects and for the purposes of extending the range of phenomena being studied and psychological investigation tools.

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