THE DISCUSSION ON THE PRIVATE LANGUAGE ARGUMENT: LINGUIST VERSUS PHILOSOPHER

Vsevolod Adolfovich Ladov

Faculty of Philosophy, Tomsk State University
Tomsk, Russia.
ladov@yandex.ru

Abstract:
The article is devoted to the discussion on the private language argument. I want to support the position already expressed by G.P. Baker and P.M.S. Hacker, adding to it yet one argument which may, in my opinion, make this view more intelligible and clearer. The position consists in affirming that the so-called community view does not contradict the opposing view on the nature of language. The point is that these views consider language on different levels. One may compare these different levels of investigation of the subject with different questions that a linguist and a philosopher may try to decide when they analyze the language. In this case the researcher who shares the community view can be represented as a linguist and his opponent as a philosopher.

Introduction

If the rule-following problem for the first time formulated by later L. Wittgenstein is held to be one of the significant problems in contemporary philosophy of language then the discussion on the private language argument is often considered as the kernel of the problem. The debate has been conducted in numerous publications; many well-known philosophers have expressed their views on the question. It is notable that the dispute continued on very high level of polemic. Philosophers produced webs of arguments, replies to them and replies to the replies. Indeed, as for sharpness of confrontation the bibliographic references remind one of reports on war operations.

In 1976 R. Fogelin (1976) for the first time connected the rule-following problem with the question about the existence of a private language and asserted the impossibility of one. Later C. Wright (1980) and C. Peacocke (1981) endorsed this conception. Kripke's book *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* brought this viewpoint into prominence. Kripke also insisted that a private language is impossible (1982). In 1984 C. McGinn (1984) expressed doubt whether Wittgenstein connected the theme of rule-following with communicative practice and the denial of the possibility of a Crusoe's language, and G.P. Baker and P.M.S. Hacker in their two works *Skepticism, Rules and Language* (1984) and *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity* (1985) advanced powerful criticism against Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein's private language argument as well as against philosophers who held a language of a solitary speaker to be impossible. In 1986 N. Malcolm (1986) expressed views that were similar to Kripke's position in respect of the essential social nature of language. In a review of this work Hacker (1987) averred Malcolm's interpretation to be mistaken. Malcolm (1989) responded and in his article *Wittgenstein on Language and Rules* criticized Baker and Hacker's viewpoint. The Oxford philosophers countered with new critical arguments in their paper '*Malcolm on Language and Rules*' (Baker & Hacker 1990). Other 'heavyweights' also found themselves on different sides of this barricade. D. Davidson (1992), although on different grounds from Kripke, asserted that a community of speakers is necessary for a language to exist. H. Putnam (1996), by contrast, expressed confidence in the logical possibility of a Crusoe's language. An impressive group of other thinkers participated in this

long drawn out discussion. Among them: S. Blackburn (1984), M. Budd (1984), D. McDowell (1984), P. Moser (1991), E. Savigny (1991), T.S. Champlin (1992), G. Robinson (1992), D.G. Stern (1994), J.V. Canfield (1996), P. Frascolla (1994), F. Benjamin, J. Armstrong (1984), H.O. Mounce (1986), P. Horwich (1990), S. Mulhall (2006), M. Kusch (2006) and others.

In this article I want to support the position already expressed by Baker and Hacker, adding to it yet one argument which may, in my opinion, make this view more intelligible and clearer. The position consists in affirming that the so-called community view does not contradict the opposing view on the nature of language. The point is that these views consider language on different levels. One may compare these different levels of investigation of the subject with different questions that a linguist and a philosopher may try to decide when they analyze the language. In this case the researcher who shares the community view can be represented as a linguist and his opponent as a philosopher.

But to demonstrate the correctness of this thesis I must first present the different viewpoints on the private language more carefully.

Kripke's position

The originality of Kripke's viewpoint on the private language argument consisted in the fact that he read the appropriate paragraphs of the *Philosophical Investigations* otherwise than the majority of Wittgensteinians. Usually one considered that the private language argument is contained in the paragraphs following §243. But Kripke insisted that the core of the argument is contained in earlier passages. He suggests that the conclusion regarding the private language problem has already been drawn in §§201-2 in which, in his opinion, the main point of the *Philosophical Investigations* has been presented too. The passages following §243 were rather consequences of these more fundamental considerations. We can see how Kripke describes this situation in his book:

> *A common view of the 'private language argument' in Philosophical Investigations assumes that it begins with section 243, and that it continues in the sections immediately following. This view takes the argument to deal primarily with a problem about 'sensation language.' Further discussion of the argument in this tradition, both in support and in criticism, emphasizes such questions as whether the argument invokes a form of the verification principle, whether the form in question is justified, whether it is applied correctly to sensation language, whether the argument rests on an exaggerated scepticism about memory, and so on. Some crucial passages in the discussion following §243 – for example, such celebrated sections as §258 and §265 – have been notoriously obscure to commentators, and it has been thought that their proper interpretation would provide the key to the 'private language argument.'*
> *In my view, the real 'private language argument' is to be found in the sections preceding §243. Indeed, in §202 the conclusion is already stated explicitly: 'Hence it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately:' otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it.' I do not think that Wittgenstein here thought of himself as anticipating an argument he was to give in greater detail later. On the contrary, the crucial considerations are all contained in the discussion leading up to the conclusion stated in §202. The sections following §243 are meant to be read in the light of the preceding discussion; difficult as they are in any case, they are much less likely to be understood if they are read in isolation. The 'private language argument' as applied to sensations is only a special case*

of much more general considerations about language previously argued…
[16]

The originality of this interpretation consists in the fact that Kripke connected the private language argument and the rule-following problem immediately, and so the argument changed its usual content. According to Kripke this argument is not merely about individual personal sensations, as it was previously held to be, for example by Ayer (1954) and Rhees's (1954) discussion. Now the concept of an individual's language has turned out noticeably wider. Not only sensations but things in the external world, abstract objects, and different events could be held to be putative references of private language expressions. The main point consisted in the suggestion that a private language is used by a speaker who applies linguistic expressions rather like a peculiar Robinson Crusoe isolated from any linguistic community. In respect of such a private language, a problem arises which Kripke formulates as a rule-following problem. In point of fact, the impossibility of a private language follows for Kripke from the presence of the rule-following problem in the formulation which he presented in his book.

Recollect what Kripke's skeptical argument regarding the use of a linguistic expression consisted in. At the present moment, when I use the sign '+' in the expression '2 + 2,' I find myself in trouble regarding the question: what kind of meaning should I ascribe to the sign? It might seem that plus, the arithmetical function of addition, must be considered as the meaning of the sign. But the point is that because of the finiteness of my cognitive experience, I cannot grasp the function entirely. On this account, we may consider the following epistemological situation to be possible. In a particular case I may use '+' to denote some other function which is different from plus with regarding to arguments larger than 1000, but here with regard to arguments less than 1000, the function coincides with plus. A radical ambiguity arises. In this particular application of '+' my use of the expression falls under at least two rules at once and I have nothing in my consciousness that could be resolve the trouble.

Thus, when we use a word, we do not grasp its meaning. The only thing that we can use is some illusion of meaning constancy, an impression that we understand what our words mean. In Kripke's opinion, an isolated Robinson Crusoe who uses language in solitude is not capable of producing and supporting the illusion. Like Buridan's ass, he will constantly be in a situation of radical indeterminacy of choice between alternative rules of application of his own linguistic expressions.

There is only one thing, according to Kripke, that could help Robinson Crusoe to avoid this predicament. It is a linguistic community. A linguistic community is indeed able to generate and support the illusion of constancy of meanings that is so necessary for the successful use of language. The illusion of constancy is generated in a person by a shared linguistic practice with other speakers in a community. In the process of communication, a speaker gets approval for his linguistic acts from other persons of the community and these facts reinforce his confidence in the correctness and consistency of interpretation of rules of application of linguistic expressions in different speech situations. In this way, an impression of stable and clear use of linguistic expressions is generated. Kripke holds that in this way we do not generate real meanings and genuine rules. Rather we generate mere illusions of meaning for our shared communicative practice does not give us, in some miraculous way, a capacity to grasp a rule in its infinite expansion as a whole, for example, the rule of addition that must be conceived as determining the meaning of the sign '+'. Nevertheless prolonged mutual agreement between members of a community fulfills an important task. It gives confidence to speakers regarding the correctness of their utterances. This language game is the one possible way to avoid the situation of radical indeterminacy of meaning. This event – the generation of an illusion of meaning by a linguistic community – turns out to be a necessary and a sufficient condition for the successful functioning of language.

On this account, a private language is not possible at all. The necessary condition of the functioning of a language is not realized in it, for even the illusion of constancy is absent.

G.P. Baker and P.M.S. Hacker: a Robinson Crusoe is possible

The Wittgensteinians from Oxford – G.P. Baker and PM.S. Hacker – chose a different route. Contrary to the so-called 'community view' regarding a private language, they asserted that the idea of a Robinson Crusoe, i.e. a person who follows his own rules for the use of expressions is intelligible. In the second volume of their *An Analytical Commentary on Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations* they pay attention to a quite different aspect of the rule-following practice and the successful functioning of language:

> *The concept of following a rule is here linked with the concept of regularity,*
> *not with the concept of a community of rule-followers* [3].

And in *Scepticism, Rules and Language*, which was devoted to criticisms of Kripke's position, they insist on their different view too:

> *Note that nothing in this discussion involves any commitment to a*
> *multiplicity of agents. All the emphasis is on the regularity, the multiple*
> *occasions, of action (cf. §199). What is here crucial for Wittgenstein's*
> *account of the concept of following a rule is recurrent action in appropriate*
> *contexts, action which counts as following the rule* [2].

In point of fact, Baker and Hacker's position can be presented as follows. A speaker does not need any community for the identification of rules and the following of rules. He needs a regularity taken as a norm of a behaviour, repetition of his action, and this is a necessary condition for the successful functioning of his language. When the linguistic acts of a Crusoe are regular, when he uses certain linguistic expressions to refer to certain things, facts, events, when this use is a custom for him then we have no reasons to doubt, first, the constancy of a Crusoe's language use and, second, the fact that he understands the meanings of his words, i.e. the rules of application of the words which he uses. The personal regularity of linguistic acts will discipline a Crusoe. He will be able to compare his present uses of words with past ones and estimate as correct more regular uses that he treats as standards correctness.

Another important argument against the community view, in Baker and Hacker's opinion, is that a rule and what accords with it must be internally related whereas the community view presents this as an external relation:

> *The pivotal point in Wittgenstein's remarks on following rules is that a rule*
> *is internally related to acts which accord with it. The rule and nothing but*
> *the rule determines what is correct. This idea is incompatible with defining*
> *'correct' in terms of what is normal or standard practice in a community.*
> *To take the behaviour of the majority to be the criterion of correctness in*
> *applying rules is to abrogate the internal relation of a rule to acts in accord*
> *with it* [3].

Adoption of community agreement as a criterion of correctness for the application of rules means adopting something independent in the process of using of linguistic expressions by reference to which a speaker may orient himself in his linguistic acts. This is different from appealing to Platonic ideas because community agreement does not exist in an independent metaphysical world but in finite worlds of linguistic communities only. Nevertheless it still has a series of features which are similar to Plato's universals. Namely, it is constant, independent of personal experience, abstract in the sense that it is unconnected with any particular case of a

concrete speech act and general inasmuch it covers each particular communicative situation in a linguistic group.

All of this, Baker and Hacker consider, is contrary to the main strategy of thought of the later Wittgenstein. Rather, a rule and its application are internally related, i.e. the identity of each is dependent on the other. A rule can be understood only on the basis of the concrete acts which are its application. A rule is defined by reference to what counts as accord with it. The rule of the number series '+2' gets its meaning in concrete steps which a person makes in the process of construction of the series, i.e. when he writes down '1000' after '998' and so on. The rule is not defined from the very outset as some constant entity in which all possible steps of its application have already been coded.

From Baker and Hacker's point of view an isolated Robinson Crusoe is able in his behaviour to exhibit and sustain this specific internal relation between rule and its applications. He can use language in his personal way in a regular and uniform sequence of acts, viewing the regularity as a uniformity which he treats as a norm.

N. Malcolm's counterarguments

If we try to classify Malcolm's critical arguments regarding the position of the Oxford philosophers we can find at least three important ones. I shall examine them sequentially.

A Crusoe by birth and a Crusoe by accident

First, Malcolm points out that we can talk about Robinson Crusoe in different ways. He introduces a distinction between an isolated Crusoe who lived in a human community for most of his life but once by accident found himself in prolonged solitude, and a primordial isolated Robinson who lived all his life in solitude and no contact with people. For short, I will call these persons 'Crusoe by accident' and 'Crusoe by birth.' One can imagine different cases of Crusoe by accident. For example, as Defoe does it in his novel, the isolation of a human being may happen as the result of a shipwreck. When Baker and Hacker assert the possibility of a Crusoe's language they imagine a catastrophe too, but on a universal scale:

> *Since Robinson Crusoe could talk to himself, keep a diary, follow rules, would he cease to be able to do so if, unbeknownst to him, the rest of mankind were destroyed by a plague? Obviously not* [2].

Malcolm imagines a monastic order:

> *It is easy to supply a background which does not imply that those people had spoken only in monologue for their entire lives. For example, after a normal upbringing, they might have become members of a monastic order that forbade its members to speak to one another* [19].

H.O. Mounce thinks up an even more mysterious event:

> *...suppose that some terrible affliction has fallen on a whole population, so that people speak only to themselves, having lost all interest in one another* [23].

The one important circumstance that is invariable in these situations is that a man lived among people, used common language for communication with others, and suddenly these connections are broken.

Criticizing the Oxford philosophers' position, Malcolm, at first, remarks that it is not clear whether they understand the distinction between Crusoe by accident and Crusoe by birth or not. Further Malcolm concedes that Crusoe by accident is possible. We should not enter into discussion regarding this subject, for it is quite clear that a speaker can use language in this situation. Indeed, anyone can find himself in isolation every day. But in these situations we do not lose the capacity to speak intelligibly. For example, I can repeat my speech to a forthcoming scientific conference, a schoolboy can do his homework in mathematics, calculating in accordance with arithmetical rules. All these acts we can do in solitude. We should talk, as Malcolm suggests, about a different scenario. Can a Crusoe by birth use his own personal language? That is the question. Malcolm directs our attention to a fragment from Baker and Hacker's book:

> *Wittgenstein was aware of the danger that his remarks about agreement might be misinterpreted in this way. He quite explicitly took care not to exclude the possibility that a solitary individual could follow a rule or speak a language to himself* [3].

and Malcolm reacts to it in the following way:

> *It is far from clear what the issue is here. Can a 'solitary individual' follow a rule? Most of us follow rules when we are alone. I calculate my income tax alone. I write letters, read, think, when I am alone. I was brought up in the English language and carry it with me wherever I go. If I were shipwrecked, like Robinson Crusoe, on an uninhabited island, I would retain (for a time at least) my knowledge of English and of counting and arithmetic. It is normal for people to do calculations, carry out instructions, prepare plans, in private. In this sense, all of us are 'solitary individuals' much of the time.*
> *Of course all of us have spent many years in being taught to speak, write, calculate. We grew up in communities of language-users and rule-followers. The philosophical problem about 'solitary rule-followers,' should be the question of whether someone who grew up in total isolation from other human beings, could create a language for his own use. Could there be a Crusoe who (unlike Defoe's Crusoe) was never a member of a human society, yet invented a language that he employed in his daily activities? And does Wittgenstein concede such a possibility?* [19].

First, Malcolm gives a negative answer to the philosophical question and, second, he asserts that Wittgenstein denied the possibility of a Crusoe by birth too. The common agreement of the linguistic community is a necessary background on which a language and a practice of rule-following can arise at all. A Crusoe by birth is excluded from a community in principle, and his attempts to develop his own language and follow rules are doomed to failure inasmuch as he is not able to find any criteria of correctness for his linguistic acts. A Crusoe by birth, in Malcolm's opinion, is not able to differentiate between his conviction that he follows rules and genuine rule-following, i.e. the distinction Wittgenstein speaks of in §202 *PI*:

> *And hence also 'obeying a rule' is a practice. And to think one is obeying rule is not to obey a rule. Hence it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately:' otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same thing as obeying it* [31].

On Baker and Hacker's observation that Wittgenstein included the theme of a Crusoe in his writings explicitly:

It is noteworthy that Wittgenstein explicitly discussed Robinson Crusoe [3].

Malcolm replies in following way:

This would be noteworthy only if Wittgenstein had conceived of a 'Robinson Crusoe' who (unlike Defoe's invention) had never encountered other people, yet in his life-long isolation had created a language. But of course Wittgenstein did not conceive of such a Crusoe. He imagines a Crusoe who talks to himself [Here Malcolm refers to Wittgenstein's manuscript MS 165, 103]; but there is no indication that he is conceiving of anyone other than Defoe's Crusoe [19].

Shared rules and rules as such

Malcolm directs our attention to the fact that Baker and Hacker try to make a distinction between rules of our shared language that we use every day in a linguistic community and rules of language as such, irrespective of whether the language is shared by a community or not. Baker and Hacker consider that an agreement in speech acts of different members of community is necessary for the functioning of a shared language when it is used for communication. On the basis of the agreement in the use of words, we elaborate common concepts, ways of action, meanings of expressions. Our common concept of addition was elaborated on the basis of numerous cross references to calculations of different community members, on the basis of a correlation between them in following the arithmetic rule. Nevertheless, the concept of a shared language, according to Baker and Hacker, does not exhaust the concept of language as such. There are cases of the functioning of language in which agreement in communication is not a necessary condition. The case of Robinson Crusoe by birth is one of them. This person, being isolated from other people all his life, could still logically speaking generate his own language, and follow rules on the basis of the regularity of his own linguistic acts.

Malcolm disagreed. He asserted that Wittgenstein, in that passage where he remarked on the important role of agreement in communication meant language in general, and not a shared language of some actual community. The distinction that Baker and Hacker tried to make is not relevant to Wittgenstein's thought, for Wittgenstein never makes it. Wittgenstein, in Malcolm's opinion, always talked about language as such, about conditions of the possibility of linguistic activity at all:

Referring to the imagined case in which people no longer agreed in their actions according to a rule, and could not come to terms with one another, he says that the upshot would be that there would be 'no language' [in this place Malcolm means the manuscript MS 165, 94 from Nachlass] —not 'no "shared" language' [19].

Malcolm stresses this point more than once, pointing to the fallacy in the Oxford philosophers' interpretation:

...Baker and Hacker allow a limited importance to 'agreement', when they say that 'if there were no agreement, there would be no common concept of addition ...'[Here Malcolm refers to Baker G.P., Hacker P.M.S. Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity, Vol. 2 of an Analytical

Commentary on the Philosophical Investigations. – Oxford: Blackwell, 1985. P. 243]. An unwary reader might think they were interpreting Wittgenstein as I do. But the emphasis here should be on 'common.' Baker and Hacker think that without agreement there could be concepts but not common concepts, rules but not shared rules, language but not shared language. This is their gloss on Wittgenstein.

But Wittgenstein himself does not employ these qualifications of his theme. He says, for example, that 'If there was no agreement in what we call "red," etc., etc., language would come to an end' [Here Malcolm refers to Wittgenstein L. Bermerkungenüber die Grundlagen der Mathematik, revised and expanded edition, G. E. M. Anscombe, Rush Rhees, and G. H. von Wright (eds). – Frankfurt am Main: SuhrkampVerlag, 1974. S. 196 in his own translation] — language, not 'shared' language. Quiet agreement 'belongs to the framework in which our language works' [Ibid. S. 323] — our language, not our 'shared' language. 'The phenomenon of language rests on regularity, on agreement in action' [Ibid. S. 342] — no 'shared' here. 'The phenomena of agreement and of acting according to a rule, are inter-connected' [Ibid. S. 344] — rule, not 'shared' rule [19].

'The external relation' between rule and its application

As we have already noted, one of the important critical arguments of Baker and Hacker against the community view consisted in affirming that the requirement of community agreement in the process of following a rule presents the relation between a rule and its application as external whereas the essence of the relation consists in its being internal. Malcolm disagrees with such an interpretation of the community view and asserts that the appearance of an external relation between a rule and its application is an illusion. We may have the impression that the requirement of community agreement severs the internal connection, but this does not happen really, for a language game is organized in such way that the agreement is hidden, it is only the background of linguistic practices. This point, Malcolm insists, was stressed by Wittgenstein himself:

This view, as it was meant by Wittgenstein, does not presuppose that rules and what accords with them are 'externally related.' For if 'externally related' means that a general agreement is 'inserted between a rule and what accords with it,' or means that one determines whether this action accords with that rule, by canvassing the opinions of people — then of course Wittgenstein does not hold that a rule and what accords with it are 'externally related.' His position is stated concisely in Z 430 [Here Malcolm refers to Wittgenstein L. Zettel. – Oxford: Blackwell, 1967. P. 75]: our language-games of following rules in arithmetic, of colour judgments, of measuring, etc., etc., would not work except in the framework of general agreement — but a canvassing and testing of agreement does not enter into the actual operation of the language-games [19].

Who is right?

In this section I shall determine the replies to Malcolm's objections that the Oxford philosophers give or could give from their point of view, and present my own reflections on the question: who is right in this dispute on Crusoe?

The replies on Malcolm's objections

The first of Malcolm's critical arguments consisted in the assertion that it is not clear whether Baker and Hacker understood the distinction between Crusoe by birth and Crusoe by accident. Possibly, the Oxford philosophers did not explicitly draw this distinction but one should not hurry to draw the conclusion that if the distinction is not explicit, then it is not understood. Another conclusion is more probable, namely that Baker and Hacker considered the distinction so banal that they did not see any sense point in giving it special consideration and in their reply to Malcolm they talk about the triviality of the distinction [14].

The second of Malcolm's objections concerned the point that Baker and Hacker acknowledge the necessity of common agreement only for the functioning of shared rules and concepts which are elaborated in actual communication, while Wittgenstein always talked about language in general, about a principled possibility of linguistic activity, not only about languages of actual communities. As for this point, the Oxford philosophers acknowledge that Malcolm presented their position correctly, but they do not agree with Malcolm's interpretation of Wittgenstein. In their opinion, Malcolm, in trying to support his thesis by reference to some textual evidence, ignores the context of Wittgenstein's passages. When we take into account the context, things become clear:

> *...we denied that a social practice is logically requisite. Malcolm holds this to be mistaken and an incorrect interpretation of Wittgenstein. He cites a wide range of quotations from Wittgenstein (which we had given) and stresses that in none of them does Wittgenstein say that agreement, community consensus, and so on are presuppositions of a shared language, but says that they are presuppositions of language as such. However, Malcolm disregards the contexts of Wittgenstein's remarks, which are never to demonstrate that concepts, rules, and language presuppose community agreement, but rather that our concepts and our language does so. A few examples will make this clear.*
> *Malcolm cites the remark 'If there was not agreement in what we call "red," etc., etc, language would come to an end' (Remarks of Foundations of Mathematics, 196), stressing that Wittgenstein did not write 'shared language'. But Malcolm does not note that this elaborates on the previous remark – namely, 'In what we accept we all work the same way, but we do not make use of this identity merely to predict what people will accept'. It is therefore perspicuously a comment on a shared language. Similarly, Malcolm emphasizes that quiet agreement 'belongs to the framework in which our language works' (Remarks on Foundations of Mathematics, 323) – 'our' language, Malcolm stresses, not 'shared language.' But this is an amplification of the claim that 'Isis of the greatest importance that a dispute hardly ever arises between people about whether the color of this object is the same as the color of that,' and that 'No dispute breaks out over the question whether a proceeding was according to the rule of not.' Here it is evident that our language is (obviously) a shared language [14].*

The third Malcolm objection concerned the concept of an external relation. He asserted that a rule and its application do not stand in an external relation in the case of the community view, as Baker and Hacker suggest, if by the term 'external' we mean the necessity of actual explicit testing of correctness of a person's actions in consultation with other members of community. Malcolm insisted that this does not happen. The agreement of the community is hidden. It is an unspoken agreement.

In this case Malcolm's criticism is unsuccessful because he interprets the concept of an external relation in a quite different way than the Oxford philosophers do. Baker and Hacker did not say that the external relation consists in actual and explicit testing of correctness of our following a

rule by means of correlations with actions of other people. The external relation between a rule and its application, in their opinion, arises in that case when, accepting the community view, we conceive of a rule as something independent and separate from linguistic activity of an individual.

Community as an individual epistemic subject

The point is that it is not difficult for us to present a linguistic community as a whole in the role of an individual epistemic subject, a collective Crusoe. And in this case we can see that the structure – 'the community as Crusoe' – one finds oneself in the same communicative emptiness as an isolated individual. This community cannot have any external connections with other things that might be conceived as providing criteria of correctness of its linguistics acts. The community itself turns out to be an isolated Robinson Crusoe and the interrelations between its members appear as the only criteria of correctness of linguistic acts. These inner interrelations in a community, in turn, can be considered by analogy with the interrelation between different linguistic acts of an isolated Crusoe. The single criterion of correctness of Crusoe's linguistic behavior, in turn, may be the regularity of his actions taken as a norm for his behavior. Thus we demonstrate that the community view, on more careful consideration, turns out to be analogous to an individualistic view on the nature of language. Baker and Hacker direct our attention to this matter. They say that Kripke's problem does not disappear when we adopt the community view:

> *But does this really resolve the sceptical question? Given that no one previously ever added 57 and 68, how do we know that our present community-wide inclination to answer '125' accords with what we previously meant by 'plus,' i.e. with what we would have been inclined to say, had we previously been asked what 57 + 68 is?* [2].

Nevertheless, the acknowledgment that the community view turns out to be akin to an individualistic view of the functioning of language has not any catastrophic consequences for the stability of a community's life. We have not any functional incorrectness in actions of members of a community in supporting the stability of its linguistics practices. It is enough that the community should be able to be guided by the repetition, the regularity in its actions. If we consider a community as a Crusoe and actions of different members of the community as appearances of the activity of a single isolated person, we should not think that this person will be confused because of absence of agreement between his actions and some external actions of another person. He will successfully be guided by the regularity of his own practice. If proponents of the community view would like to present some argument against to these considerations, they would have to assume the existence of a set of communities which could support each other in an external determination of the correctness of their actions. But, obviously, our individualistic argument could be applied to these communities as whole too.

Consequently, we should admit that the idea of community agreement is superfluous for the determination of the foundations of successful linguistic acts. The constancy of the meanings of linguistic expressions may be completely explained by means of the idea of regularity taken as a norm of a behaviour. But since an isolated individual is able to produce regular actions in the same way as a community, so the difference between a community and an individual regarding possibility of following rules turns out to be irrelevant. Just as a community of speakers will eliminate some non-typical interpretations of linguistic expressions because they do not correspond to the regular practice of use, so a solitary individual will be able to carry out the same semantic therapy founded on the regularity of his own actions. The idea of regularity taken as a norm turns out to be more fundamental for an explanation of following to rules than the idea of agreement and in this point Baker and Hacker are more perspicacious than their opponents.

Reconciliation of the sides

Seemingly, the ponderability of arguments 'from Oxford' has already inclined us to admit the possibility of a private language understood as a language spoken by a solitary person in solitude. But now Baker and Hacker produce two important remarks on the question, which alleviates the confrontation between the different sides.

First, and this point looks initially unexpected, Baker and Hacker claim that really they do not acknowledge the possibility of a private language and do not deny the social nature of human languages. And this turn of thought forces us to look at their position still more closely. The Oxford philosophers say that the public nature of language can be discovered in that when we attend to the actions of Crusoe we will be able to determinate regularities in his individual linguistic practices. This precisely demonstrates the public character of the language. We can say that the Crusoe who lives all his life in solitude, nevertheless has only an accidentally private language. He has lived, we suppose, in isolation since birth and used only his private language. However, this characteristic of his linguistic activity is not necessary. This point can be discovered not merely from the fact that he may enter into dialogue with others, but from that fact that other people may observe his uses of language and acknowledge such actions as intelligible.

The basic concepts which Baker and Hacker use to present their position are the concepts of a shared language and of a shareable language. Language need not necessarily be shared, i. e. employed in actual communication between speakers. Note that the language of a Crusoe by accident, of course, is not unshared just because the Crusoe happens be alone. The unshared language is the language of a Crusoe by birth. And, in the Oxford philosophers' opinion, it is obviously logically possible. However, every language must be shareable. We cannot to imagine the existence of an unshareable language:

> *…disagreement between Malcolm and us turns… on whether the practice that constitutes the framework or presupposition of the existence of the rule must be a shared, community practice, or whether it may be an unshared (but shareable) one* [14].

The shareability means that it is logical possible for others to understand the language. May be the possibility will never be realized. One can imagine that Crusoe, alone from birth, will live in solitude all his life. One can even concede that he might be discovered, his activity and linguistic practice observed, and that the observers will fail to understand in his language because of limitations of time and of possibilities of observations. Attempts to translate the language may be unsuccessful but this cognitive task must be thinkable:

> *…concept-possession, following a rule, mastery of language presuppose, not that these are shared with other people, but rather that they can be shared, that it must make sense for others to understand, agree on what counts as doing the same relative to a rule, follow the rule in the same way* [14].

Baker and Hacker stress that the problem is to clarify the position of a Crusoe by birth, not to distinguish a Crusoe by accident and a Crusoe by birth:

> *…contrast Wittgenstein is concerned with is not between a shared language that can also be employed in solitude and an unshared language, but between a sharable language and a putative language that cannot in principle be understood by any other person* [14].

A Crusoe who (allegedly) speaks a logically private language is not identical with a Crusoe who speaks an accidentally private language. A Crusoe by birth could use his own language

successfully if even he were isolated all his life. Nevertheless, it is sheer accident that his language is not shared with others, for it is thinkable that if his linguistic practices were observed, then the observers might recognize regularities that are treated by Crusoe as standard setting uniformities and behaviour of intentionally following rules. A Crusoe who spoke a supposedly logically private language would be quite different. We would never recognize in his linguistic acts any regularities. But that just means that regularities in his linguistic activity are altogether absent. Baker and Hacker, we can say, assert the necessary character of a conditional: if there are regularities in a language, then they can in principle be discovered. Accordingly, by *modus tollens*, one can conclude: if regularities cannot in principle be disclosed, then there are none. But if in a linguistic practice regularities of using of signs are altogether absent then that means that language as such is absent too. There is just a chaotic conglomeration of phonemes which are not subject to any rules. It seems that is the reason why Baker and Hacker call this 'a putative language.' This sound conglomeration would merely resemble a language but it would not be one. Such a Crusoe would not be able to speak, for an absolutely (logically) private language is impossible.

Second, Baker and Hacker say that actually a human being's linguistic practice in almost every case is social. Malcolm's arguments will be correct in the overwhelming majority of actual speech acts. For themselves, the Oxford philosophers keep in reserve an analysis of *the concept* of language, not *the phenomena* of language:

> *Indeed, one may concede that the phenomenon of language is a phenomenon of shared practices. For no one is arguing that as a matter of fact there are language-using wolf-children, or that some beings are actually born with an innate mastery of a language, The question is whether the concept of language presupposes a community of speakers and shared practices* [14].

Focusing on the analysis of concepts, not on empirical facts, on logical, not empirical researches characterizes philosophical considerations, in contrast to researches of empirical sciences. And in this respect, the methical aims of the Oxford philosophers earmark their researches as philosophical. One can say that in this discussion, Baker and Hacker conduct themselves as philosophers, while Malcolm and others who share the community view, rather, look akin to linguists. They draw quite correct conclusions regarding actual languages, whereas Baker and Hacker discuss questions which are connected with the *logical possibility* of language as such.

Acknowledgements

References

1. Ayer A.J., "Can there be a Private Language?", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society,* supp. vol. 28, 1954, pp. 63—76.
2. Baker G.P. and Hacker P.M.S., *Scepticism, Rules and Language*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1984.
3. Baker G.P. and Hacker P.M.S., *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity*, *Vol. 2 of an Analytical Commentary on the "Philosophical Investigations"*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1985.
4. Baker G.P. and Hacker P.M.S., "Malcolm on Language and Rules", *Philosophy*, 65, 1990, pp. 167—179.
5. Benjamin F., Armstrong J., "Wittgenstein on Private Languages: It Takes Two to Talk", *Philosophical Investigations*, 7, No 1, January, 1984, pp. 46—62.
6. Blackburn S., "The Individual Strikes Back", *Synthese*, 58, 1984, pp. 281—301.
7. Budd M., "Wittgenstein on Meaning, Interpretation and Rules", *Synthese*, 58, 1984, pp. 303—323.
8. Canfield J.V.*,* "The Community View", *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 105, No. 4, 1996, pp. 469—488.
9. Champlin T.S., "Solitary Rule-Following", *Philosophy*, 67, 1992, pp. 285—306.
10. Devidson D., "The Second Person", *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. XVII, 1992.
11. Fogelin R.J., *Wittgenstein*. London: Routledge, 1976.
12. Frascolla P., *Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Mathematics*. London: Routladge, 1994.
13. Hacker P.M.S., "Critical Notice", *Philosophical Investigations*, 10, 2, April, 1987, pp. 142—50.
14. Hacker P.M.S., *Wittgenstein: Connections and Controversies*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001.
15. Horwich P., "Wittgenstein and Kripke on the Nature of Meaning", *Mind and Language*, vol. 2. Summer, 1990, pp. 105—121.
16. KripkeS.A., *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1982.
17. Kusch M., *A Sceptical Guide to Meaning and Rules. Defending Kripke's Wittgenstein*. Cambridge: Acumen, 2006.
18. Malcolm N., *Nothing is Hidden*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.
19. Malcolm N., "Wittgenstein on Language and Rules", *Philosophy*, 64, 1989, pp. 5—28.
20. McDowell D., *"*Wittgenstein on Following a Rule", *Synthese*, 58, 1984, pp. 325—363.
21. McGinn C., *Wittgenstein on Meaning*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1984.
22. Moser P., "Malcolm on Wittgenstein on Rules", *Philosophy*, 66, 1991, pp. 101—105.
23. Mounce H.O., "Following a Rule", *Philosophical Investigations*, 9, 3, July, 1986, pp. 187—198.
24. Mulhall S., *Wittgenstein's Private Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
25. Peacocke C., "Rule-Following: The Nature of Wittgenstein's Arguments", [in:] *Wittgenstein: to Follow a Rule,* ed. S. H. Holtzman and C. M. Leich. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, pp. 72—95.
26. Putnam H., "On Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Mathematics", *Proceedings of Aristotelian Society*, Supp. Vol. 70, 1996, pp. 243—264.
27. Rhees, R., "Can there be a Private Language?", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, supp. vol. 28, 1954, pp. 77—94.
28. Robinson G., "Language and the Society of Others", *Philosophy*, 67, 1992, pp. 329—341.

29. Savigny E., "Self-Conscious Individual versus Social Soul: The Rationale of Wittgenstein's Discussion of Rule Following", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 51, 1991, pp. 67—84.

30. Stern D.G., "Review Essay: Recent Work on Wittgenstein, 1980—1990", *Synthese*, 98, 1994, pp. 415—458.

31. Wittgenstein L., *Philosophical Investigation*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford and Macmillan, New York, 1953.

32. Wright C. *Wittgenstein on the Foundations of Mathematics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980.