



## SCEPTICISM ABOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF OTHER MINDS: A WITTGENSTEINIAN PERSPECTIVE

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### *Abstract*

The well-known skeptical claim ‘How can one know about other minds?’ presupposes the possibility of knowing other minds. For Wittgenstein, the sceptic’s claim about the knowledge of other minds is nonsensical. Here, instead of answering the question ‘how do we know other minds?’ our main concern would be to make sense to the notion of other minds. Thus, Wittgenstein reduces the above question ‘how do we know other minds?’ to ‘how do we know that the others are in pain? And *criteria* are the grammatical tools for making the word *pain* meaningful from linguistic point of view. Within the framework of *language-games* and *forms of life*, criteria are the conventions and to speak of a practice as a convention is to imply that it is a matter of choice. This choice may be restricted by criteria that are not subject to choice. One would never have learned the meaning of the word *pain* without the aid of other people, none of whom has access to the supposed private sensations of pain that he/she feels. Therefore, the meanings of our words are dependent upon our practices and social agreements.<sup>1</sup>

**Key words:** *Scepticism, criteria, language-games, forms of life, conventions*

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## 1. Introduction

In this paper, an attempt will be made to study scepticism about the knowledge of other minds from a Wittgensteinian perspective. The problem of other minds deals with the question: How do we know that others have minds? This question presupposes the possibility of knowing other minds. If we admit that there is a possibility of knowing other minds, the natural question that would arise is: What is the means of acquiring that knowing? In a very special and technical sense, Wittgenstein uses *criteria* as the means of acquiring our knowledge of other minds. For him, criteria are the *conventions* within the framework of *language-games* and our *forms of life*. And as a response to scepticism, Wittgenstein argues that there is no valid means to answer the sceptic and the sceptic's claim about the knowledge of other minds is *nonsensical*. For him, a sceptic does not understand the *meaning* and *usage* of the word 'know' in our language-games. Hence unlike a sceptic, Wittgenstein's main concern is about meaning rather than the knowledge.

## 2. Scepticism about the Knowledge of Other Minds

As we know that scepticism seeks to undermine the possibility of knowledge of the other minds. A sceptic claims that we have no knowledge of the minds of others. For him, what is needed for knowledge beyond justified true belief is that a belief must be *indubitable*. And if this is so, we have no evidence for our beliefs about the knowledge of other minds and thus there is no possibility of this kind of knowledge. Again, if it is the case then each person is limited to knowledge of himself and his own present sensations and thoughts. This does not lead to solipsism that only 'I' and 'my' own thoughts and sensations (or mental states) exist.

The most important issue arises over *self-knowledge* is, whether self-knowledge is really knowledge or whether this type of knowledge is possible or not. Some philosophers thought that we can only know our own experiences and what we claim to know about the world or other people is based on our own knowledge. Accordingly, one knows what pain is only from one's own case and our knowledge of our experience can be expressed in language. In this context, I would like to discuss Wittgenstein's views regarding the propositions like *I know that I am in pain* or *I know that I am thinking* or *I know that I am afraid* and how Wittgenstein helps us to bring out some important features of self-knowledge. Here, I would like to bring some interpretations of Wittgenstein's views regarding the self-knowledge.

It is a *philosophical claim* regarding self-knowledge that '...only I can know whether I am really in pain; another person can only surmise it.'<sup>2</sup> However, this claim is a conjunction of two

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<sup>2</sup> See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, G. E. M., Anscombe, (trans.), (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963), Part-I, Remarks No. 246.

propositions, *I can know that I am in pain and other people cannot know that I am in pain*. The question is here that why people claim that one person cannot know if another is in pain. One possible reason might be, sometimes in the case of pretence people could not be sure whether the person is pretending or not pretending. Because of this, people might make a general claim that one cannot know whether another is in pain or not in pain. Another possible reason might be that people assume to know pain means to have (possess) pain. They believe that one person cannot have another's pain, thus, one cannot know another's pain.

Nevertheless, Wittgenstein's views given in (*PI I 246*)<sup>3</sup> demand that in one way the claim (other people cannot know that I am in pain) is false and in another way it is nonsense. In the normal way of using the term *know*, the claim is false. For example, a child fell down and cried out. Here, other people know that the child is in pain. But, it is false to say that others cannot know that I am in pain. On the other hand, if we take the term "know" to mean know in such a way that doubt is logically excluded then the thesis (other people cannot know that I am in pain) is senseless, for there can be knowledge only where doubt is possible.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, other can know that I am in pain because they can doubt whether I am in pain or not in pain. In this context, let us take Wittgenstein's views like "I know ..." may mean "I do not doubt..." but does not mean that the words "I doubt..." are senseless, that doubt is logically excluded.<sup>5</sup> Here, Wittgenstein tries to show that I cannot doubt whether I am in pain or not in pain. But, it is not the case that "I doubt..." is always senseless. In the case of whether other person is in pain or not in pain, "I doubt..." is not senseless. Because there is the possibility of knowledge in the case of other people is in pain or not in pain. Hence, to claim other people cannot know that I am in pain is nonsensical. As Wittgenstein writes, 'I can know what someone else thinking, not what I am thinking. It is correct to say "I know what you are thinking", and wrong to say "I know what I am thinking".'<sup>6</sup>

In support of the first thesis (I can know that I am in pain), people argues that if one cannot know of his own sensations, or if one cannot know that what he is thinking then how can he know anything else? Kenny attributes to Wittgenstein and the view is that 'One cannot doubt that one is in pain.'<sup>7</sup> Therefore, there is no possibility of knowledge in the case of *I am in pain* and it is also nonsense to say *I know I am in pain*. Again, Kenny attributes to Wittgenstein that 'Where

<sup>3</sup> Like this, in the whole essay hereafter I shall write *PI* for *Philosophical Investigations*

<sup>4</sup> See Anthony Kenny, *Wittgenstein*, (Oxford: Blackwll, 2006), P. 147.

<sup>5</sup> *PI*, Part-II, P. 221.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>7</sup> Anthony Kenny, *Wittgenstein*, P. 147.

it is senseless to say “I doubt whether...” it is not always true to say “I know that ...”.<sup>8</sup> But, so far as *PI* I 288 is concerned, Wittgenstein does not deny the intelligibility of doubting whether one is in pain or not in pain. He denies that a particular expression of doubt has no place in the language-game and the doubt is not about the meaning or use of *pain* but about ‘whether *this*, that I have now, is pain.’<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, Wittgenstein writes, “I know what I want, wish, believe, feel ...” (and so on through all the psychological verbs) is either philosopher's nonsense, or at any rate not a judgment a priori.<sup>10</sup> Here, Wittgenstein does not mean that *I know what I want, wish, believe, feel...* means *I do not doubt what I want, wish, believe, feel...* The above statement implies that Wittgenstein's target is *philosopher's nonsense* and not to take the utterances like *I know what I want, wish, believe, feel...* is nonsense. Therefore, for Wittgenstein, a philosophical claim *I know that I am in pain* or *I know that I am thinking* is wrong. But, the utterance *I know I am in pain* is not nonsense. ‘It does not follow that utterances like “I know that I am in pain” or “I know that I am thinking” must be incorrect, or to put it in another way, that I cannot achieve self-knowledge of the relevant sort.’<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, there is an assumption that once I know from my own case that what pain, tickling, or consciousness is, then I can transfer the idea of these things to objects outside myself. Wittgenstein attacked the above assumption and for him, one learns what pain is and pain is something that exists only when one feels it. Therefore, if my conception of pain is obtained from pain that I experience then it will be a part of my conception of pain that I alone can experience it. Nobody else has the experience of pain what I feel. As Wittgenstein writes, If one has to imagine someone else's pain on the model of one's own, this is none too easy a thing to do: for I have to imagine pain which I *do not* feel on the model of pain which I *do* feel. That is, what I have to do is not simply to make a transition in imagination from one place of pain to another.<sup>12</sup>

Wittgenstein seems to say that it is doubtful that we could have any belief in relation to other minds and their sensations that ought to be justified. Therefore, imagining the pain of others on the model of one's own is not an easy task. As Wittgenstein writes, ‘But if suppose that someone has pain, then I am simply supposing that he has just the same as I have so often had.’<sup>13</sup> By

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>9</sup> *PI*, Part-I, Remarks No. 288.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 221.

<sup>11</sup> See Edward Sankowski, “Wittgenstein on Self-Knowledge”, *Mind*, Vol. 87, No. 346, Apr., (1978), P. 257.

<sup>12</sup> *PI*, Part-I, Remarks No. 302.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 350.

attacking the concept of *sameness* or *identity*, Wittgenstein gives an example of the use of *It is 5 o'clock here*. He states, It is as if I were to say: 'You surely know what "It is 5 o'clock here" means; so you also know what "It's 5 o'clock on the sun" means. It means simply that it is just the same time there as it is here when it is 5 o'clock.' The explanation by means of *identity* does not work here. For I know well enough that one can call 5 o'clock here and 5 o'clock there "the same time", but what I do not know is in what cases one is to speak of its being the same time here and there. In exactly the same way, it is no explanation to say: the supposition that he has a pain is simply the supposition that he has the same as I. For *that* part of the grammar is quite clear to me: that is, that one will say that the stove has the same experience as I, *if* one says: it is in pain and I am in pain.<sup>14</sup>

In the above paragraph, Wittgenstein's *the 5 o'clock on the sun* illustrated that how the concept of mental states extends from oneself to others. Here, *it is in pain* and *I am in pain* give the indication of an important sceptical problem in relation to the attribution of mental states or sensations to other material objects. In relation to this, the general question is that what is the criterion of attributing mental states or sensations to others?

### 3. Wittgenstein's Criterial Argument against Scepticism about the Knowledge of Other Minds

It is worth noting that Wittgenstein reduces the most general question like, *how do we know other minds?* to the question *how do we know that the others are in pain?* For him, the other minds problem is not like how can one know about other minds? But it is like, 'Given that "mind", for me, is this private inner realm, how can it even make sense to form the notion of "other minds" in the first place?'<sup>15</sup> *Pain* that I feel is one of my private experiences. Other people know when I am in pain. Wittgenstein points out that I would never have learned the meaning of the word *pain* without the aid of other people, none of whom has access to the supposed private sensations of pain that I feel. The meaning of the word *pain* presupposes some sort of external verification and its application needs a set of criteria. We can say that observation of writhing and groaning are *criteria* for our belief that someone is in pain. However, there is no systematic way to coordinate the use of word that express sensation *pain* with the actual sensation (pain) that are supposed to occur within myself and other agents.

In *the Blue Book*, Wittgenstein said, 'the man who says only my pain is real' that he was rebelling against the common criteria and thereby 'objecting to a conventions'.<sup>16</sup> And to speak of a practice as a convention is to imply that it is a matter of choice. This choice may be restricted

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<sup>14</sup> *PI*, Part-I, Remarks No. 350.

<sup>15</sup> See Soren Overgaard, "The Problem of Other Minds: Wittgensteinian Phenomenological Perspective", *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, Vol. V, (2006), P. 57.

<sup>16</sup> See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958), P. 57.

by criteria that are not subject to choice. Criteria are used as conventions in a language-game. And ‘We fix criteria by laying down grammatical rules.’<sup>17</sup> Again, having rise the question why we suppose that toothache corresponds to holding one’s tooth, he concluded that ‘here we strike rock bottom, that is, we have come down to conventions’.<sup>18</sup> In *PI*, criteria also play a fundamental role in Wittgenstein’s philosophy of mind. As he writes, ‘An “inner process” stands in need of outward criteria.’<sup>19</sup> Therefore, Wittgenstein’s dissolution to the problem of other minds provides both conditions under which we are justified in attributing mental concepts to others and an account of the utility of language-game in our lives. In this context, we shall discuss Wittgenstein’s three key concepts briefly. Those concepts are namely, agreement, form of life, and criterion.

### Agreement

The concept of *agreement* is an essential concept for our game of ascribing rules and concepts to each other. We human beings communicate with each other through language. Communication is nothing but a social practice and it depends on certain rules. The social practice needs a human agreement that decides whether we will do this or that. An agreement also decides whether we will follow this rule or that, and it decides what is true and what is false. Let us take an example, if one person asks to compute  $2+3$ , the answer will be 5, not 4 or 6. Now the question is, why not 4 or 6? Because, there is an agreement between the two people (one who asked the question and another one who answered it) and here they followed rules to compute  $2+3$ . However, that rule is based on an agreement that there is an addition rule, which they have to follow while answering the above question. Therefore, if there is no general agreement in the (human) community, the game of attributing of concepts could not exist. Mistakes and disagreements might occur, but that case is something different. Because, Wittgenstein states, ‘So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?’<sup>20</sup>

Human beings are linguistic animal and through language, they communicate with each other. Agreement is necessary for any kind of communication. Expressing the importance of agreement for communication, Wittgenstein states that,

... in order to communicate, people must agree with one another about the meanings of words. But the criterion for this agreement is not just agreement with reference to definitions, e.g.,

<sup>17</sup> See P. M. S. Hacker, *Insight and Illusion: Themes in the Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), P. 310.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>19</sup> *PI*, Part-I, Remarks No. 580.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

ostensive definitions - but also an agreement in judgements. It is essential for communication that we agree in a large number of judgements.<sup>21</sup>

Hacker and Baker, also interpret the requirement of *agreement* in communication, according to them, ‘If two people disagreed about how to explain the words they use, then what the one meant by an utterance would not be what the other understood by it.’<sup>22</sup> Here, this does not mean that speaker and hearer have to use the same words or the same language. Then, the question is, what they have to agree? It is nothing but the definition of the words uttered by the speaker. In addition to this, the agreement in judgment is necessary for communication. By agreement in judgment Hacker and Baker interpreted as, ‘interpersonal consensus about the truth and falsity of empirical propositions.’<sup>23</sup> Here, they explain the agreement by means of the concept of rules and as rules for the use of words.

However, the understanding of a rule and consequently, agreement about which a rule applies is manifested in two ways, namely, ‘in formulating or paraphrasing it and in applying or following it in practice.’<sup>24</sup> For Wittgenstein, both kinds of agreements are necessary for communication and both are criteria for agreement on meaning. Therefore, ‘We follow rules of grammar in making judgements, and the correct application of these rules is the criterion of understanding them.’<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the meanings of our words are dependent upon our practices and social agreements. For example, a criterion of an order is that it is obeyed. When we say a criterion for an order is that it is obeyed, we are not saying that all orders are always obeyed. It is also the case that orders are the sorts of things that one is normally expected to obey. If all orders were always disobeyed, the word *order* would no longer make sense.

Someone may argue against Wittgenstein and might say that an order is an order; we all know what it means, and whether it is obeyed or not obeyed, is a practical issue that has nothing to do with the meaning of the word. Following Wittgenstein, we may ask that, what if orders were never obeyed, would that have no effect on the meaning of the word? An order is only an order because of the social practices they are embedded in it. We generally forget the importance of criteria like *an order is something that is obeyed* because they are always right before us. One might always try to obey an order. The above example of Wittgenstein reminds us that the words are dependent on its use and their use is closely related to our forms of life.

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<sup>21</sup> See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, G. H. von Wright, R. Rhees, and G. E. M. Anscombe, (eds.), G. E. M. Anscombe, (trans.), (Oxford: Blackwell, 1956), Part -VI, Remarks No. 40.

<sup>22</sup> See G. P. Backer and P. M. S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein: Rules, Grammar and Necessity: An Analytical Commentary on the “Philosophical Investigations”*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), P. 258.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 259.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 259.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 259.

## Forms of Life

The concept *forms of life* is closely related to the concept of agreement. Our forms of life indicates a particular pattern of life and it is closely related to our activities. We agree with many human responses and the way they interweave with our activities is our form of life. Our form of life is completely different from other animals' forms of life. Since our form of life is completely different from them, the communication between them is impossible. In our day-to-day life, we find that in some extent, some birds or animals give some responses towards our action. That does not mean that they can communicate with human beings. Therefore, due to the lack of agreement, communication is impossible. In this context, Wittgenstein said, 'If a lion could talk, we could not understand him.'<sup>26</sup> Here, Wittgenstein seems to show that since our form of life is different from a lion, communication between a lion and a human being is impossible. Therefore, form of life is common to human beings, *the common behaviour of mankind* that is 'the system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language.'<sup>27</sup> This indicates that the use of language makes possible by the *human form of life* and only human beings are linguistic animals.

The most fundamental aspect of language is that we learn how to use it in our social contexts. We understand each other not because of the relationship between language and reality but it is possible we learn how to use language in social contexts. Language functions in our society according to the shared norms and forms of life. Wittgenstein denies the possibility of private language and according to him, one might invent a language for his/her private use to describe his/her sensations. In this type of language, there would be no criteria to decide whether a word is used correctly or not. For him, this type of language would have no meaning. In this context, I shall take a statement *I know I am in pain* that makes no sense. If we claim to know something, we can also doubt it and we must have also criteria for establishing knowledge about it. However, when we are dealing with one's own sensations, one will never doubt, and he /she also have no criteria for establishing knowledge about his/her sensation. He/she has the feeling of that sensation only. Therefore, we should not say *I know that I am in pain* instead of *I am in pain*.

We humans are interacting with each other through linguistic expressions, bodily expressions, or behavioral expressions. Without the context of interaction, we cannot react to others. This does not mean an empirical observation of the other rather it results to constituting our concepts of other. As Wittgenstein writes, 'My relation to the appearances is here part of my concept.'<sup>28</sup> According to Wittgenstein's discussion of the meaning of words for mental concepts,

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<sup>26</sup> *PI, Part-II*, Page No. 223.

<sup>27</sup> *PI, Part-I*, Remarks No. 206.

<sup>28</sup> See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, (eds.), G. E. M. Anscombe, (trans.), (Oxford: Blackwell, 1967), Remarks No. 543.



an expression gets meaning only in virtue of its employment in a language-game. To speak a language is to participate in a particular form of life. Our forms of life are defined through our interactions with the world and other minds.

Moreover, in Wittgenstein's *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology (Vol. II)*, Wittgenstein writes, "Can one know what goes on in someone else in the same way he himself knows it?" Well how does he know it? He can express his experience. No doubt within him whether he is really having this experience – analogous to the doubt whether he really has this or that disease – comes into play; and therefore it is wrong to say that he knows what he is experiencing. But, someone else can very well doubt whether that person has this experience. Thus doubt does come into play, but precisely for that reason, it is also possible that there is complete certainty.<sup>29</sup> Here, Wittgenstein argues for the question of concerning our knowledge of other minds and seeks to establish how the problem of other minds is the reversal of the problem of our own minds. Again, he attempts to show that talking about the other minds is possible only within a linguistic framework. Within the framework of language-games, he draws a line between *our knowledge of our own minds* and *our knowledge of other minds*.

As far as our knowledge of our own minds is concerned, we would like to raise a question like, how do I know what is going on in my mind while I am feeling a pain? Or how do I know that I am in pain? In a Wittgensteinian way, the sensation *pain* is identical with *I am in pain* or my pain. Therefore, I am in pain means the sensation pain. Traditionally, the difference between *I am in pain* and *he is in pain* explained by reference to the one who possesses pain. This means, *pain* in both the cases refers to the same sensation and this (same) sensation attributed to different persons.

Nevertheless, Wittgenstein rejects the view that in the above both sentences 'pain' is the same sensation. According to him, 'pain' in both the statements does not refer to different sensations because if this were the case then one has to be in a position to perceive pain of others. The question is, what is the meaning of *pain* in both the statements? The possible answer seems to be like this: in the first statement, the meaning of the term *pain* is given by acquaintance with some sensation but the meaning of the term *pain* in *he is in pain* is not at all a sensation but, here the meaning is exhausted by the observation of behaviors or his statement.

In *PI*, Wittgenstein writes, 'other people cannot be said to learn of my sensations only from my own behaviour, for I cannot be said to learn of them. I have them.'<sup>30</sup> Other people can doubt whether I am in pain or not, but I cannot doubt about myself because I feel that I have a pain. Therefore, Wittgenstein rejects the symmetrical construction of the use of the mental

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<sup>29</sup> See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Vol. II, G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman, (eds.), C. G. Luckhardt and Maximilian A. E. Aue, (trans.), (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), P. 92.

<sup>30</sup> *PI*, Part-I, Remarks No. 246.

concepts to oneself and to others. For him, the ways we ascribe any mental phenomenon to oneself and to others are very different. One knows that another person is thinking, perceiving, feeling pain etc. not by perceiving his thinking, perceiving, feeling pain, but by perceiving what he does or what he says. What he says or does, is the evidence for us to know whether he is feeling pain, perceiving, thinking etc. For example, I perceive a rabbit in the bush. Here, what I perceive is my evidence for the fact that there is a rabbit in the bush. I know that there is a rabbit in the bush because I perceive it.

However, what I perceive is not the fact that I perceive, even it is because I know that I perceive. Therefore, for one's own case, his perception does not provide him with the knowledge that he perceives. In this sense, we can say that no evidence one needs for his own perception, feeling, thinking etc. But, in the case of others mind, *evidence* is always necessary and in order to establish our knowledge about others mind, we have to built a correlation between my evidence (what others do or say) and what he is feeling. Based on that evidence, we have to believe that others are feeling pain. In this context, Wittgenstein writes, 'I am told: "If you pity someone for having pains, surely you must at least *believe* that he has pains.'"<sup>31</sup>

In the above statement, I would like to say that Wittgenstein adopted the argument from an analogy to reject the sceptical belief of other minds. According to the argument from an analogy, we can establish the correlation between observable behavior or linguistic expression and non-observable mental states, by arguing from our own case. I know that while feeling pain, I at least groan or wince. Therefore, in the case of other's, he shows a sign of groaning or wincing that he is feeling pain. Now the question is: How the argument starts from an inner realm (my mind) and extends it to the realm of other minds. However, the whole point about other minds is that we can never test whether the analogy does hold it. Hence, the sceptic is right about the impossibility of proving the correctness of our belief in other minds. He (the sceptic) is wrong in assuming that we cannot prove it because it is an unjustifiable assumption. In Wittgensteinian sense, it is the case that there is no need to proof in the first case (in our own case). Again, in the case of others, there is also no need of proof because our ascription of mental states to others involves a *presupposition*. 'Doesn't a presupposition imply a doubt? And doubt may be entirely lacking. Doubting has an end.'<sup>32</sup>

It is worth noting that Wittgenstein uses the word *doubt* against the sceptical or Cartesian form of doubt. He denies their universal doubt and uses the genuine or philosophical doubt. The philosophical doubt makes the difference between our practices and beliefs. It also prompts us to enquiry about something. According to him, doubt occurs only within a language-game and outside a language-game; it is not possible to doubt anything. Therefore this act of doubting

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<sup>31</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books*, P. 46.

<sup>32</sup> *PI*, Part-II, P. 180.

presupposes our ability in engaging that language-game and ‘what we do in our language-game always rests on a tacit presupposition.’<sup>33</sup> *I know I am in pain* presupposes the statement that *I am in pain*. When I am in pain, other people can also know that I am in pain. There is an agreement in our form of life and in that we use language as our means of communication.

We human beings are linguistic animals. Within the linguistic framework, we can understand the concept of mind. Language reflects all aspects of our life like mental, moral, ethical and religious. It also reflects the deep structures of our thoughts and experiences. It does not mean that we can express others sensations in our ordinary language. The confusion will arise while we attempt to express others sensations, emotions, feelings etc in our language and we try to use one word or statement of one language-game in the way it uses in another language-game. This confusion will be removed if we understand the *grammar* of that word.

The concept of grammar is closely related to the concept of form of life. Now the question is: what is the grammar of language? For Wittgenstein, *how is a word used?* and *what is the grammar of a word?* are the same question. We can explain the *grammar* of language by words, phrases, or linguistic expressions in language. The grammar of *I have toothache* is different from that of *Rama has toothache*. Here, the use of the word *toothache* when I have toothache and when someone else has it belongs to different language-games. *I have toothache* and *Rama has toothache* are different since their verifications are different. I might doubt whether Rama has toothache or not but I cannot doubt that I have toothache. Because the question does not arise in the case of *I have toothache* but in the case of *Rama has toothache* the question might arise. I have the feeling of my toothache but I cannot have the feeling of others’ toothache. My toothache is not the same as his/ Rama’s toothache, but we both may have similar toothache.

In Wittgenstein’s words, The question whether someone else has what I have when I have toothache may be meaningless, though in an ordinary situation it might be a question of fact and the answer, “He has not”, a statement of fact. But the philosopher who says of someone else, “He has not got what I have” is not stating a fact.<sup>34</sup> Here, the problem lies in the grammar of *having toothache* and the problem will arise if we try to express in a proposition, which belongs to the grammar of our language. Therefore, I cannot feel Rama’s toothache means I cannot try to know Rama’s toothache.

Another way of distinguishing the grammars of *I have toothache* and *Rama has toothache* is that it does not make sense to say that I seem to have toothache; but it is sensible to say that Rama seems to have toothache. In the case of *I have toothache*, there is no need of verification and

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>34</sup> See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein’s Lectures: Cambridge 1932-35*, Alice Ambrose (ed.), (Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), P. 18.

there is no question like whether I have toothache or not. The answer of the question *how do you know you have toothache?* –might be like, I know that I have toothache because I feel it and *How do you know?* is sensible in the case of *Rama / he has toothache*; but it becomes nonsense in case of *I have toothache*. Therefore, asking the question how do I know? –is not sensible in one's own case and the answer of the above question is I have toothache because I feel it.

### Criterion

The concept of criterion is an important concept in Wittgenstein's later philosophy of mind. The word *criterion* is always used as a criterion of something. What is this *something* for Wittgenstein? In his *The Blue and Brown Books* and *PI*, we find that in various places Wittgenstein writes a criterion is a criterion for an expression, or for the use of an expression, or for something be the case, or for a states of affairs and like this. However, all these ways of saying about the criterion are same. Let us take an example, which Wittgenstein discusses that *he has angina*, for it is being the case that he has angina, saying he has angina or for simply angina – these various forms of expressions saying about the same thing *angina*. Therefore, we might describe this criterion of something for a criterion of a linguistic expression fitting its object. To describe something means to specify what it is like and what it is unlike.

In Wittgenstein's work, criteria are contrasted with symptoms. For him, symptoms are taken to be outward manifestations of something, while criteria point to the thing itself. However, criteria are observable features that are directly connected to an expression by its meaning. Rather, symptoms are features that are indirectly connected to the expression by being associated with the criteria in our experience. To make the distinction between *criteria* and *symptoms* and to avoid the confusions, Wittgenstein writes,

Let us introduce two antithetical terms in order to avoid certain elementary confusions: To the question "How do you know that so-and-so is the case?" we sometimes answer by giving "criteria" and sometimes by giving "symptoms". If medical science calls angina an inflammation caused by a particular bacillus, and we ask in a particular case "why do you say this man has got angina?" then the answer "I have found the bacillus so-and-so in his blood" gives us the criterion, or what we may call the defining criterion of angina. If on the other hand the answer was, "His throat is inflamed," this might give us a symptom of angina. I call 'symptom' a phenomenon of which experience has taught us that it coincided, in some way or other, with the phenomenon which is our defining criterion. Then to say "A man has angina if this bacillus is found in him" is a tautology or it is a loose way of stating the definition of *angina*. But to say, 'A man has angina whenever he has an inflamed throat' is to make a hypothesis."<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books*, PP. 24-25.

However, we find that Wittgenstein takes criteria are primarily the criteria that men accept, introduce and use or apply in connection to their use of certain expressions. If something is the criterion of 'X' then that is a logically necessary and sufficient condition of 'X'. Criteria is also something by which one may be justified in saying that the thing is so and by whose absence one may be justified in saying that the thing is not so. Therefore, the criterion of angina in Wittgenstein's example is what *medical science calls angina* and we may say that it is *the defining criterion of angina*.

Moreover, the criteria are not factual tools for avoiding the confusions in philosophy. They are *grammatical tools* for Wittgenstein. They do not help us to settle the matters of facts such as, *Is he in pain?* rather they help us in clarifying the grammatical matters. Hence, Wittgenstein does not use the concept of criteria to distinguish someone who is in pain from someone who is pretending to be in pain. Rather, he uses it to determine that pain only, whether it is real or feigned. In my own case, there are no criteria at all. There are no questions of knowledge, doubt, investigation, and so on, which I can raise regarding my own pain. Thus, Wittgenstein is not opposing the idea that first-person pain ascriptions exist, but he is opposing the idea that these ascriptions can then be treated as objects of knowledge. Nevertheless, in the case of others, the criteria for determining whether someone is in pain are the same for determining whether the pain is real or feigned.

It is worth noting that Wittgenstein rejects the thesis (I know that I am in pain). For him, if it will be the case that each person knows what pain is from his own case then the learning of the word 'pain' will be impossible. Therefore, it will be impossible to generalize the meaning of the word *pain* in the same sense as in the case of other people. The same kind of argument we shall find in Wittgenstein's *beetles in the boxes example*. Here, Wittgenstein is trying to point out that the beetle is very much like *pain*. Just like no one looks into someone's box what exactly it contains, similarly, no one can exactly know what *pain* is like to be an experienced thing from another's perspective. But, we assume that like beetle, the word *pain* means the same for all people.

Wittgenstein argues that it does not matter what is in the box, or whether everyone has a beetle or not a beetle, since there is no way of checking or comparing it. There is also no way of asserting or denying whether a beetle is really in each box or not in box, but still we have to assume that *beetle in each box*. Similarly, we cannot assert or deny what a mental state contains but when we talk of having a mental state (or a beetle) we are using a term *mental* that we have learnt through conversation and through public discourse. In a sense, the word *beetle*, if it is to have any sense or meaning that simply means *what is in the box*. From this point of view, the *pain* is simply *what is in the box* – or rather *what is in your head* or 'what is in the body'. Therefore, we could not check or compare what a mental state contains and that is indescribable. One could only ascribe any mental state to oneself and also to others on the basis of expressions.

#### 4. Conclusion

From the above discussion, we would conclude that the meaning and use of the term *know* implies that it is not peculiar to know whether someone is in pain. Wittgenstein does not take the meaning of the sensation word *pain* from any individualistic perspective rather he makes the word *pain* meaningful from linguistic point of view. Therefore, Wittgenstein takes criteria are primarily the criteria that men accept, introduce and use or apply in connection with their use of certain expressions. A criterion for a given thing's being so is something that can show the thing to be so and show by its absence that the thing is not so. Hence, Wittgenstein does not use the concept of criteria to distinguish someone who is in pain from someone who is pretending to be in pain. Rather, he uses it to determine that pain only, whether it is real or pretended.