

Wittgenstein On Language and Meaning

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The paper consists of two sections. The first sections deals with “Wittgenstein on language” and the section deals with “Wittgenstein on meaning”.

Section-I:

Human thoughts are expressed by words. *Patanjali* says that the expression of thought is the sole purpose that is served by the use of words.¹ The relation between language and thought is a fundamental problem in linguistics and philosophy. The relation between language and thought has been explained by Gadamer as follows : All thinking about language is already once again drawn back into language. We can only think in language, and just this residing of our thinking in a language is the profound enigma that language presents to thought.² It has been expressed by the Indian scholar Murti in a different way. He observes: “The problem of what we can know is closely bound up with the question of what we can say. It is only thought as expressed in words that can be understood, communicated and criticized. Language is not an accidental, dispensable garb which could be put on and put off. It grows with thought, or rather thought grows with it.”³

It is now understood from the above exposition that language stands for the medium of expression. In *Upanisads* it is said that mind finds itself fully expressed in speech. Speech has its seat in the mind *Sankara*, the chief exponent of *Advaita Vedanta*, says that speech (*vak*) is the product of mind.⁴ The philosophy of language has form. The use of language distinguishes man from animals. All knowledge of ourselves as well as all knowledge of the world comes to us through language.⁵ One cannot get outside of language so as to objectively examine it. Language must be used to study language from within.⁶ Nothing is beyond the power of language. Language itself is a duplicate, a shadow soul, of the whole structure of reality.⁷ The special task of the philosophy of language is to explore the relation between the form and content of language and the form and content of conceptualisation.⁸ That is to say, language is an expression of the common wisdom. Thus, Aristotle explains the origins of language with reference to the social convention. Basing on the philosophy of language in the West, the logical positivists and ordinary language philosophers have given their distinct approach. The positivists’ approach to language is neither responsive to reasonable methodological controls nor attentive to empirical evidence about language in its theoretical constructions. According to the ordinary language philosophers, language is an extremely complicated form of social behavior. It should be studied through the detailed analysis of individual words and expressions. In order to avoid the unsystematic orientation and unsatisfactory exposition, a new approach has to be established. In this context, Frege’s distinction between “sense” and “reference” invent a new logical system.

According to Frege, predicates not only express their sense but also refer to concepts, and sentences express a thought as their sense and have a truth-value as their reference. Frege's distinction was rejected by Russell and Wittgenstein. According to Russell, a sentence like "The King of France is bald" is false since there is no King of France. Moore promoted the method adopted by Frege and Russell, though he disclaimed any interest in language as such.

But, Wittgenstein, on the other hand, says in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* that an elementary sentence of a language is simply an arrangement of or concatenation of names. Since all meaningful sentences of a language are ultimately analyzable into truth functional combinations of the elementary sentences. These names play the crucial role of relating words to things in the world. "A name means an object. The object is its meaning."⁹ Here the early Wittgenstein's view of language is to communicate what can be true or false. This view has been challenged by the ordinary language philosophy school. This school of philosophy developed in part as a reaction to the logical empiricists' failure to come to terms with the facts of natural language. According to it, natural languages are perfectly all right as they are so long as they are used in the ordinary way. Rejecting his earlier views fully Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations*¹⁰ says that stating facts is only one of the countless jobs we do with language. Ordinary language is all right. It is all perfect. The misunderstanding of logic of language arises not because our language is faulty, but because philosophers misdescribe it. Misunderstanding can be eradicated by the proper understanding of logic of language.

According to the Early Wittgenstein, language is defined as the totality of significant propositions.¹¹ A significant language should consist of states-of-affairs, *i.e.*, facts. This means that language is possible only if there are facts. It forms the Picture Theory of Meaning. It gives an account of the essence of the world. Wittgenstein says: "To give the essence of a proposition means to give the essence of all description and thus the essence of the world."¹² Once the essential nature of the proposition is revealed, all philosophical problems will solve themselves. The solution lies in pictures.¹³

Wittgenstein's pictures are not spatial pictures like maps or photographs. He calls his pictures "logical pictures". The resemblance between a picture and what it describes is not visual but formal or structural. Wittgenstein tries to apply picture to language. All I have in common is the picturing function. His picture theory of language is simply to see it as a general theory about picturing. Wittgenstein denies a theory about the picturing function of sentences that assert something or other is the case.¹⁴ A picture is a fact. It represents or pictures a state-of-affairs. It is essentially connected with the situations. The Early Wittgenstein forms the language basing on the picture or actual states-of-affairs. In other words, the status of language according to the early Wittgenstein is situation oriented. The ordinary language has replaced the ideal language. Wittgenstein's view is that the *ideal of exactness* is something like a *logical myth*. But, the status of language in Wittgenstein's *PI* is as follows:

1. New conception of *language and meaning* (Sects. 1-133). It deals with

meaning as use and language-games, names, essence of language, logic and philosophy;

2. *Mental phenomena and concepts* (Sects. 134-427). It deals with understanding, reading, rules, private sensations, thinking, images and imagining, etc.; and
3. *Intentional aspects of mental phenomena and concepts* (Sects. 428-693). It deals with thinking and application, satisfaction and expectation, justification of thinking, what is essential and inessential in language, mental states and acts, willing, intending and meaning and so on.

The logical structure of language, according to the early Wittgenstein, is to be viewed in terms of truth-functional relations of compound or molecular propositions to elementary ones. But, the logic of linguistic expressions of language, according to the later Wittgenstein, is not to be examined in terms of truth-functions of elementary propositions as the essence of language. Language is ordinary language. It is not to be derived from something more fundamental in the form of elementary propositions. Language, being ordinary, is to be explored in all its great variety and complexity. It is to be described and understood *as it is found*, and to be reduced to some basic structure. It has multiple uses, not simply one of describing reality and picturing facts. The expression “language is a picture of reality” has gone, and it has gone with a serious modification, *i.e.*, the grammar of language-game. The theory of language developed in *TLP* is rigidly one-sided whereas the grammar of language developed in *PI* is many-sided.

The grammar of language-game dissolves all sort of philosophical puzzlements. By virtue of the analysis of language Wittgenstein moved from the logic of “essence” to the philosophy of “family resemblance”. The expression “limit of language” is now changed into the limitless function of language. But it is to be noted that there is a common essence among things, and what is called common essence among things—that is called certain *family resemblances*. It is a resemblance between similarities and differences among things. That is to say, “build”, “features”, “colour of eyes”, “gait”, “temperament”, etc. that overlap and criss-cross in various ways.¹⁵ Thus, Wittgenstein’s use of game example speaks of multitude aspects relationship between board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games and so on. So, he says: what is common to them all? – Don’t say : “There *must* be something common, or they would not be called ‘games’ “ but *look* and *see*. Whether there is anything common to all. –For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, relationships and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don’t think, but look! – Look for example at board – games with their multifarious relationship. Now pass to card-games, here you find many correspondences with the first group, but many common features drop out and others appear.

..... And the result of this examination is : we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing : sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of details.”¹⁶

The above exposition shows clearly that the meanings of linguistic expressions are determined by human beings who create and use language. The term “language-

game” is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the *speaking* of language is a part of an activity, or a form of life.¹⁷ The early Wittgenstein is of the opinion that a word is meaningful if and only if it is a name. But, the later Wittgenstein is of the opinion that a word is not a name. A word can be used as a name, but it can be used in numerous other ways as well. The notion of language-game is closely intertwined with the notion of *use*. In order to explain the meaning of a linguistic expression, one must see the use it has. So Wittgenstein says :“The explanation of the meaning explains the use of the word.” The use of a word in the language is its meaning.¹⁸

In the *TLP*, there is only one language. Language is said to consist of elementary propositions or truth-functions of elementary propositions. Elementary proposition is a picture of a state-of-affairs. Each has the same logical form as the states-of-affairs concerned. To discover the logical form of the various propositions is to discover the true form of the various states-of-affairs. Elementary propositions reveal their logical form and the said logical form corresponds to states-of-affairs. But, in *PI*, language is not seen as a tool, a tool with a rich variety of uses. Different words are like different tools in the tool-box. Just as there is no one single use which is the essential use of all tools, there is no one essential for use for words and sentences.¹⁹ Wittgenstein compares the variety of uses of words or the parts of a sentence with the lines on a map. He compares the different roles of words and various parts of speech to the pieces in a chess-game. In the later Wittgenstein, language is used in a wider perspective. In *TLP*, Wittgenstein was aware of the particular use or function of the picture. According to the later Wittgenstein, representing fact is not the only function of language. It is one of the functions of language. Meaning emerges from the *functioning* of language.

Language is a social institution. The learning of language is always possible in social context. It is intrinsically related to human life. Words function within a language. As language is a system, words belong to a system. Understanding a word means understanding a sentence ; and understanding a sentence means understanding a language. The meaning of any word is fixed by the rules of the system, *i.e.*, grammar. The grammar of language is its structure. Every language is complete in itself.

Language is an open ended term. It has the power to produce meaning. In this sense we may say that language is a public high-way concept. It can not be used in a private sense. The discussion concerning : “Can there be a private language ?” is a hard logical question. According to Wittgenstein, there can be no language called private language because the main function of language is to communicate thought or idea or feeling to others. But, according to Ayer, there can be a private language, because there are private objects. The debate may be ultimately settled in their respective philosophical analysis. For example:

“I am in pain,”
and
“He is in pain.”

Both expressions are different from each other not because of the grammar of first-person singular sentence or proposition and the third person singular sentence or proposition but because of their uses in language. The meanings of the word “pain” in both the

propositions remain same. There remains no occult meaning of the word “pain” but only remains overt meaning of the word “pain” that everybody will admit or accept.

Wittgenstein is an ordinary language philosopher. Ideal language or private language has been replaced by the ordinary language. Being an ordinary language philosopher we do not mean that Wittgenstein remains himself aloof from the discussion concerning sensation words such as, “itch”, “fingle”, “twinge”, “tickle”, “toothache”, “backache”, “pain” and etc.etc. in his philosophical works. In the end, we may safely say that Wittgenstein’s use of language is highly based on common man’s common sense view. There is no doubt about it.

Section-II:

This section discusses the logical status of meaning in Wittgenstein’s philosophy of language.

Language is a social institution. The learning of language is always possible in social context. The context contains the content of the text and the said content is meaningful when it is used in a proper place.

Wittgenstein’s analysis of meaning is used in two ways. One way of meaning is used in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* while the other way of meaning is used in his *Philosophical Investigations*. The former way of analysis of meaning is concerned with logic whereas the later way of analysis of meaning is based on philosophy. This establishes to say : the earlier conception of meaning in the early Wittgenstein’s philosophy, and the later conception of meaning in the later Wittgenstein’s philosophy.

A word has meaning in the context of a sentence. In the *TLP* Wittgenstein says :“Only in the nexus of a proposition does a name have meaning.”¹ By saying this Wittgenstein means that the meaning of a sentence is given by the set of circumstances in which it is true(or false). So, Wittgenstein maintains that sentences are either true or false, because they are concentration of names which is the sentence stands for objects and thus allow the sentence to be a picture of a possible situation. If that situation is actual, the sentence is true; if not, it is false. Meaning is determined by the truth conditions. This is the view of Frege and the earlier Wittgenstein. The early Wittgenstein’s views on meaning is based on picture which is popularly known as the Picture Theory of Meaning. (*PTM*). From the very pictures itself Wittgenstein forms sentences or propositions, and the very meaning of the sentence or proposition can be located in the body of the picture. This is called “Meaningbody” description in Wittgenstein’s philosophy.

Wittgenstein uses the term “meaning-body” to characterize the the idea that behind each sign there is a non-linguistic entity and its meaning determines how it is to be used correctly. The “meaning-body” term is a surface structure of the grammar. According to Wittgenstein, grammar is not accountable to any reality. It is a grammatical rules that determine meaning. They themselves are not answerable to any meaning and to that extent are arbitrary.²

Rules of inference, for example, determine the meaning of the logical constants. Whether a specific transformation of symbols is licensed or not is one aspect of the correct use and hence of the meaning of terms involved. That we use ‘ $\sim \sim p = p$ ’ as

a rule of inference contributes to the meaning of ‘ \sim ’. Without of rule, the sign would not have the meaning it has. If the rules were changed, if we accepted instead ‘ $\sim \sim p = \sim p$ ’, the meaning of ‘ \sim ’ would change correspondingly. Accordingly the rules of inference can not correspond or fail to correspond to the meaning of, for example, negation. Someone who passes let us say from ‘ $\sim \sim p$ ’ to ‘ p ’ does not follow a false rule of negation, but has given a different meaning to ‘ \sim ’.³

Basing on the determination of the logical status of meaning in *Philosophical Logic* Wittgenstein marks the difference between the meaning of name and the sense of a proposition. That is to say, a name has meaning but it has no sense; and a proposition has sense but it has no meaning. In other words, Wittgenstein holds that names have only meaning and no sense, and that propositions have only sense and no meaning.⁴ The grammar of English words “sense” and “meaning” corresponds to the German term “*Sinn*” and “*Bedeutung*”. But, the according to Frege, names and sentences could have “*Sinn*” and “*Bedeutung*”.

Wittgenstein marks the logical difference between sense and proposition whereas Frege makes the distinction sense and sentence. According to Frege, the sense of a declarative sentence is the thought which it “contains” and that the thought is “not the subjective performance of thinking but its objective content, which is capable of being the common property of several thinkers.”⁵ Here Frege makes a basic distinction between *sense* and *reference*.⁶ He uses this distinctions to solve the philosophical problem of how to correctly analyze certain types of identity statements. An identity statement is of the general form “ $a = b$ ”. It can be read as “ a is the same as b ” or “ a and b coincide.” The problem is how to analyse such identity statements. According to Frege, “ $a = a$ ” and “ $a = b$ ” are both identity statements. But “ $a = b$ ” conveys a kind of information, but “ $a = a$ ” does

not. They differ in cognitive status. The form “ $a = a$ ” contains an important empirical *discovery*. The statement “The Morning Star is the Morning Star”. This is possible, because in addition to the name and the object it refers to, *viz*, its *reference*, there is *sense*. The sense provides a “mode of presentation” of the object, and referring to a reference is always achieved by way of sense. The statement, “The Morning Star is the Evening Star” is more factually informative than the statement “The Morning Star is the Morning Star”, even though the reference is same, the sense of “The Morning Star” is different from that of “The Evening Star”. It states that one and the same object has different senses of the two expressions.

According to Russel, the phrases like “the author of Waverley”, “the present King of France”, “the tallest building in New York”, purport to name one definite object and no other. Hence they are “definite descriptions”. We normally believe that the meaning of a word is the object it names. In other words, a denoting phrase must refer to something— an object, quality, relation, or whatever. But words like “Cerberus”, “or”, “if”, “all” and the phrases like “the golden mountain” do not name anything. Russell distinguishes proper names from definite descriptions. According to him, whereas a proper name, if it has meaning, must denote an object. There are definite descriptions. That have no denotation whatever and in *that* sense have no meaning. Definite descriptions do not function like

names at all. Definite descriptions are not “complete” because they have no meaning “in isolation”. They gain meaning only in the context of a sentence. In the statements, “The present King of France is bald”, “The golden mountain does not exist”, “The author of Waverley exists”, etc., “the present King of France”, “the golden mountain”, “the author of Waverley”, are definite descriptions. There stands a distinction between the *ordinary proper names* and the *definite description*.

That is to say, “Scott” stands for an example of *ordinary proper names* whereas the “author of Waverley” stands for an example of the *definite description*. A ordinary proper name has a meaning consisting of its denotations. It is because of the fact that an ordinary proper name is “complete” whereas the definite description is not. In order to get the meaning of ordinary proper names one must translate them into the definite descriptions. By doing

this, one could avoid the paradox of using an ordinary proper name in a negative existential statement. In the sentence “Romulus did not exist”, we must replace “Romulus” by some definite description and then we could show how it is possible for the statement. “Romulus did not exist” to be both meaningful and true. For Russell, all ordinary proper names are replaceable by, or reducible to definite descriptions. Russell speaks of “ordinary proper names”, “ordinary definite descriptions”, “genuine proper names” and logically proper names. According to Russell, genuine proper names known as “logically proper names”. It is functioning as a pure demonstrative. It has only denotative role. It has no connotation. It does not express or convey any properties. It has no latent predicative components. It only indicates. It does not describe anything. Thus, Russell says : “The only words one does use as names, in the logical sense are words like ‘this’ or ‘that’. One can use ‘this’ as a name to stand for a particular with which one is acquainted at the moment.”⁷

According to the earlier Wittgenstein, it is not the words, but it is the sentence which has sense. By understanding the sense of a sentence, Wittgenstein says : “.... In order to be able to say, ‘*p*’ is true (or false), I must have determined in what circumstances I call ‘*p*’ true, and in so doing I determine the sense of the proposition.”⁸ Names have meaning, *i.e.*, reference. They do not have sense. Since a name is not a sentence, it is not either true or false. A name does not refer to a state-of-affairs or to a fact. In reference to an object, a name is not saying anything. Therefore, as a name, it is not either true or false. The earlier Wittgenstein maintains that a sentence, when fully analysed, is made up of *names*.

The above exposition shows clearly that Frege’s distinction between “sense” and “reference” shows that two words or phrases might refer to the same thing, but have different senses as “the morning star” and “the evening star” exemplify. Hence it is out of the question to make a simple identification of the meaning of a word with its referent. Hence Russell’s theory of Description has been critically analysed by Strawson and he considerably rejected Russell’s belief that the meaning of a term is the object it denotes. Here, we cite Strawson’s example of “handkerchief” from his essay “On Referring”.

Strawson says that one can produce a “handkerchief” from one’s pocket, but cannot produce the meaning of “handkerchief” from one’s pocket.⁹

Now, it is observed that the questions of identity and difference of meaning are more complex.¹⁰ If two people use ‘not’ in the same way except that one of them uses double negation emphatically and the other as equivalent to assertion. We could not say that they employ “two species of negation”. For we would not say that “not” means something different for each of them in “Do not enter the room”. On the other hand, we would say that it does not mean something different in “I ain’t done nothing”.¹¹ Questions of synonym are context dependent. To say that “ $\sim \sim p = p$ ” follows from the truth-tabular definition of “ \sim ” can be understood innocuously as the contrapositive of Wittgenstein’s own claim. From Wittgenstein’s claim that if we alter the rule we alter the meaning, it follows that if we do not alter the meaning we get the rule. By Wittgenstein’s own lights, the truth-tabular explanation is a rule, and to accept “ $\sim \sim p = \sim p$ ” is a criterion for having misunderstood that rule, because one is not applying to “ $\sim p$ ” the same operation that has been applied to “ p ”. Understanding the truth-tabular explanation and acknowledging “ $\sim \sim p = p$ ” are simply internally related aspects of one and the same practicing of using “ \sim ”. They are simply two different rules of our practice and both of them are constitutive of that practice.

In order to determine the logical status of the definition of “meaning” Wittgenstein has laboured hard in his *PI*. In *PI* Wittgenstein ruthlessly destroys proposition, *i.e.*, “the meaning of any word which is a genuine proper name is the thing it denotes”. It is a misuse of the word “meaning”. What corresponds to the name is its bearer, not its meaning. In the *TLP*, he had confused the bearer of a name with the meaning of a name. In the *PI* he clearly marks the distinction between “the meaning of name” and “the bearer of the name”. For example : the name “*Padmalochan*”. It can be well understood as “*Padma*” which means flower “Lotus” and the word “*lochan*” which means to imply “eye”. So, the name “*Padmalochan*” is defined as a man who has sound eye-sight with lotus like appearance. But the meaning does not undergo any change when a mathematician, bearing this name dies. Here, we say that the name “*Padmalochan*” is a bearer of the name, that is one kind of thing whereas when we say that the bearer of the name “*Padmalochan*” dies we mean to say that bearer of the name dies but the meaning of the word “*Padmalochan*” never dies, that is another kind of thing. Here, name is not in consonance or agreement with meaning. Naming is one kind of meaning and meaning is another kind of naming. “Naming” and “meaning” are quite distinguishable and separable.

We may now consider Wittgenstein’s own example. When Mr. N.N. dies, it is correct to say that the bearer of the name “N.N” dies, but absurd to say that the meaning of name dies. And it would be nonsensical to say that, for if the name ceased to have meaning it would make no sense to say “Mr. N.N. is dead”.¹² That is to say, a man’s name does not lose its meaning when he is destroyed.¹³ In order to substantiate this point Wittgenstein cites the section 79 from his *PI*. That reads :

We may say, following Russell : the name “Moses” can be defined by means of various descriptions. For example, as “the man who led the Israelites through the

wilderness”, “the man who lived at that time and place and was then called ‘Moses’”, “the man who as a child was taken out of the Nile by Pharaoh’s daughter” and so on. And according as we assume one definition or another the proposition “Moses did not exist” acquires a different sense, and so does even other proposition about Moses.

Looking at the philosophy of Wittgenstein Pitcher says : “I think it is unfortunate that Wittgenstein should have stressed the example of proper names in stating the objections to his earlier doctrine that the meaning of a name is the object it denotes. It is unfortunate, because it is not the case, in general, that proper names have a meaning.”¹⁴

The above exposition shows clearly that the meaning of a name and what it applies to its bearers are quite different. That cannot be identified with one another without absurdity. Take for example the word “slab”. The word “slab” is the name of a kind of piece used in constructing buildings; if the meaning of this term were the actual slabs themselves, we ought to be able to say such things as “I broke part of the meaning of the word ‘slab’” or “I laid a hundred parts of the meaning of the word ‘slab’ today”¹⁵ but such utterances are absurd.

According to Wittgenstein, the meaning of word is it’s in the language. What does it mean? To this, Wittgenstein answers : “For a *large* class of cases-though not for all-in which we employ the word ‘meaning’ it can be defined thus the meaning of a word is its use in the language.”¹⁶ Now one significant question is raised : “a *large* class of cases-though not for all ...”? The answer is found in the following description.

That, just as there are many different kinds of games, so there are many different kinds of meanings, and not all can be identified with the use of the word which is said to have a meaning. The expression “the meaning of a word is its use in language” is an unqualified identification of meaning and use. Thus, Wittgenstein’s identification of meaning and use leads him to misuse the words “meaning” and “definition”. Those two words are not used, as a rule, in connection with proper names. To be sure, some proper names have meaning. Wittgenstein always asks for the use. By the word “use” he means “practice”. So, he asks: What is the meaning of the word “five” is used. To understand the use of the word “meaning” means to look and see the “explanation of meaning”.¹⁷

Words are dead. In use words are alive. Use is its expression of meaning. An expression has meaning only in the stream of life.¹⁸ Here Wittgenstein identifies the meaning of a word and the sense of a sentence with its use in the language. This identification is not mistaken. For example if a word has a meaning, then it doubtless also has a use in the language. There is a connection between knowing the meaning of a word and knowing how to use it. If a person had no idea how to use a certain word, we would not allow that he knew its meaning. The meaning of the arrow and of the sign is its use in the language. Thus Wittgenstein says: “Every sign *by itself* seems dead. *What* gives it life? In use it is *alive*. Is life breathed into it there?-or is the *use* its life?”¹⁹

Each and every word has a meaning. A word without meaning is not a word. It is a pseudo-word. Now, the question is : how can we get the meaning of a word ? Can we get the meaning of a word from its use in a sentence or a proposition or a statement? We can get the meaning of a word from its use or practice. Use determines meaning, not causally but logically. But this does not mean that use is identical with meaning or meaning is

identical with use. There is a category difference between meaning and use. Identification is unqualified. Similarities and differences or identity and differences are not identical with each other in any circumstances. Two persons cannot have same experience. They differ in degree but not in kind. There remains a big logical gap in the philosophy of language. But at best we can say that without use or practice or performance, how can we get the meaning of a word used in a sentence or proposition? In order to overcome the issue we may look at and see the use of word to determine the meaning of meaning.

In attacking on essentialism Wittgenstein observed that no general term has a unitary meaning. The notion of having a unitary meaning is thus distinct from that of having a *single* meaning. If a word does not have a single meaning, it has two or more meanings. Each of these meanings may or may not, be unitary. For example, “game”. That nothing shall be called a “game” unless a score can be kept, and unless the players receive no money for their performance; and unless there is an official set of rules. Thus general terms have no unitary meaning.

In the end, we can say safely that the best way of determining the meaning of meaning of a word depends upon the use-context or situations or speaker-hearer’s positions or circumstances. So words are both bearers and vehicle of meaning. A picture is the vehicles of meaning. An use is the vehicle of meaning of a word in language. Language is used as an instrument of communication. Wittgenstein elucidates the meaning of words by describing their use. The meaning of a word is what is explained by an explanation of meaning. That is to say, how word can be used meaningfully in a particular language.

To understand the meaning is to understand the explanation of meaning, and to understand the explanation of meaning is to acknowledge the rules. Thus an explanation of meaning induces understanding. It is normative. It provides a standard rules for the correct use of a term. In this respect explanations are based on linguistic rules. Meaning is what is explained by an explanation of meaning. We learn the meaning of words by learning how to use them, just as we learn how to play chess, not by association of the pieces with objects, but by learning how they can be moved. Such explanations are what Wittgenstein calls a grammatical rule. Rules stand for to mark the correct use of expressions.

Meaning is used in accordance with grammatical rules. What aspects of use are relevant to meaning? Wittgenstein was aware of this problem. Commenting on a fictional language, game in which one and the same type of tool has a different name on different days of the week, he claims “not every *use* is a meaning.”²⁰ Wittgenstein did not hold an instrumentalist conception of meaning according to which the meaning of a word, like that of a tool, is its effect namely on the behavior of others. Sometimes Wittgenstein conceives by holding that the meaning of a word is determined by its “role in the whole life of a tribe”.²¹ This proves that an analysis of meaning is one of the most important unsolved problems of philosophy of language.

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