

## **Analysis of Language: Revisiting Wittgenstein**

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**Abstract:** Ludwig Josef Johann Wittgenstein is one of the greatest and prominent Scientists, Engineers and Philosophers of 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Being a follower of analytic trend Wittgenstein gives importance on the analysis of language because for him there is no other way to know the world except the analysis of language. He states a co- relation among the world , thought and language since whatever we think or our thought always connected with the existing objects of the world and all the thoughts are expressed through language either by bodily, or orally or in writing . If language is unable to represent our thought what it tries to depict any fact or state of affairs then no one can understand the situation. The analysis in Wittgenstein philosophy is divided into two phrases. The first phrase is related with his earlier philosophical work “ Tractatus Logico Philosophicus” where he brings out the underlying structure of language which is called as logical form of language. Wittgenstein says that all philosophical problems arise due to failure of understanding this logical form of language. He says language is the totality of proposition and propositions are the pictures of reality. The truth or falsity of a proposition is determined by whether it can depict picture about any state of affairs of the world i.e Picture theory of Meaning. In the second phrase his philosophical work “Philosophical Investigation” says that language is the tool of our life. Through language we are playing a game i.e ‘Language Game’ and conducting our own tasks. This game signifies the diverse functions of language and determines the meaning of words. This paper tries to attempt the philosophical analysis of language by Wittgenstein.

**Key words:** Wittgenstein, analysis of language, picture theory of meaning, language game

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### **I. INTRODUCTION:**

Ludwig Josef Johann Wittgenstein has been considered the greatest Scientists, Engineers and Philosophers in 20<sup>th</sup> Century. He was born in Vienna in 1889. He began his education at the age of 14 years. Initially he was interested in Engineering and then shifted his interest into Mathematics. But after inspiring by Russell he finally choosed Philosophy as his career. Wittgenstein said that traditional philosophy is generally regarded as an attempt to explain life and the universe as a whole. He was not interested with this definition of philosophy. For him, philosophy is the critique of language and all philosophical problems arise due to not understanding the logical form of language. Language is the only way to express our thought about the world. That is why, Wittgenstein stressed upon the analysis of language.

The linguistic analysis in Wittgenstein’s philosophy is divided into two phases. The first phase is related with his earlier philosophical work “ Tractatus Logico Philosophicus” where he discusses about the new insight into the relation between the world, thought and language. In the second phase i.e “Philosophical Investigation” he took the more revolutionary step in criticising all of traditional philosophy including its climax in his own early work. The basic ideas analysis of language are to be found in these two books of Wittgenstein.

#### **1.1 Objectives of the study:**

The main objective of this paper is to focus about philosophical analysis of language in Wittgenstein’s view and to discuss how he tries to determine the meaning of words or propositions by using different techniques.

#### **1.2 Methodology:**

The study is purely theoretical based. Data is collected from primary and secondary books and also from Internet. For conducting this study analytical and explanatory method have been adopted.

#### **1.3 Scope of the study:**

This article includes Wittgenstein’s view about the structure of language, the multiplicity and diverse senses of words used in language and the criteria that defines the meaning of a word or propositions particularly as stated in his two books ‘ Tractatus’ and ‘Philosophical Investigation’.

## **II. PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE IN TRACTATUS :**

Tractatus – Logico – Philosophicus briefly ‘TLP’ is the first work by Wittgenstein completed in 1918 which he later submitted for the Ph.D and in 1929 he was awarded the degree. In this book Wittgenstein wanted to show how propositions succeed in presenting real states of affairs in the world.

In the book ‘Tractatus’ Wittgenstein starts with the heavily loaded metaphysical statement “ the world is totality of facts, not of things”. The reason why he makes division between things and facts is that things are always connected with some relations and things in relation are called facts. Facts may be said to be composed of things , but things are abstractions seen apart from facts. There can’t be for example a chalk pencil independent of the fact that chalk pencil is white.

The most important theme in Wittgenstein’s work ‘Tractatus’ is the Picture Theory of Meaning. This theory claims that there is a hidden structure or essence in every form of propositions. Propositions are said to be elements of language and the elements of propositions are the combination of words. For Wittgenstein, every word or proposition depicts a picture to a fact denoting the objects in the world.. He says, “ A proposition is a model of picture of reality”. Here Wittgenstein gives emphasizes on the elementary propositions. He asserts that an elementary proposition is constituted by names. An elementary proposition is nothing but the conceptual or logical structure of a proposition. This elementary proposition pictures a state of affair which is the simple situation of a fact. In order to show how a word or name can depict a picture of any fact, here Wittgenstein brings the division between two world i.e the world of objects and the world of names. Words, propositions or language represent the world of names and facts or state of affairs represent the world of objects. Further, he says that there is a connection between these two worlds. It is the logical form that makes possible the relationship between these two worlds. And because of having this logical form a name or word or proposition pictures any existing object or fact. Propositions or language are the mirror of the world. The way things are reflected in a mirror, in the same way language reflects the world. That is why Wittgenstein says that in order to know the world, we have to go through the analysis of language. He states the aim and task of philosophy is to clarify the thoughts expressed in language.

Wittgenstein holds that our natural language or colloquial language cannot express the logical form of language. So, Wittgenstein feels that an artificial or symbolic logic is required to disclose the inward form of thought which is regarded as the essence of proposition.

Wittgenstein in his picture theory of meaning shows the correspondence between the picture and the model of reality. He holds that a proposition is true when the state of affairs reflected by the picture exists. Otherwise the proposition is false. For example ‘ A dog is a four footed animal’ this statement is true since it is clearly picturing the fact that a dog has four legs. But the metaphysical words like God, soul etc. these can not clearly depict any picture in our mind . Hence, for Wittgenstein they are false or meaningless.

After analyzing this discussion we can sum up his picture theory which is applied in language as follows- language consists of propositions. These propositions can be analysed into elementary proposition and they are truth functions of elementary proposition. The elementary proposition themselves and combinations of names, which refer directly to objects. Further, elementary propositions are logical pictures of state of affairs, which are combinations of objects, state of affairs combine to form facts of whatever complexity which constitute the world. Therefore, language is truth functionally structured and its essential function is to describe the world.

Thus, we see that Wittgenstein was interested in logical language to explain the world which is far from the ordinary language. But later, he came to realize that in the ‘Tractatus’ he had confused to express the proper concept of language. He thought that logical or formal language is not useful for all. So, he wanted to provide a new concept about language in his latter work, mainly in ‘Philosophical Investigation’. Instead of picture theory now we will discuss his new insight of language of Philosophical Investigation in the following-

## **III. THE CONCEPT OF LANGUAGE IN PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATION:**

In the book ‘Philosophical Investigation’ Wittgenstein provides a totally different concept from Tractatus. Here he looks at language in a new way. He says language is like a game in which the words are used as tools like the pieces of chess. For him, language is a form of life, a way of performance and behavior, a kind of game. Language is not only for picturing facts but also for asking, thinking, cursing, greeting, praying, commanding, guessing, joking and so on. His conception of language as game shows this emphasis on ordinary language since ordinary language has no fixed nature.

Wittgenstein says that we play a game through language. Proposition and words are tools of language. Language is in part, an activity of giving names to objects, and of attaching labels to things. Here he upholds an example of construction of a building in order to show how we are playing a game with language. ‘ A builder is constructing a building with the help of an assistant. The assistant is providing all the materials like stones, hammer, brick , sand etc. whatever the materials are needed for the construction of that building. So, when the builder just names a block , brick, stone the assistant provides all the things to builder whatever is needed. Thus,

with such pieces of words they are playing a game and conducting their own tasks'. Through this example Wittgenstein tries to understand that language game is occurred between speaker and listener. Like the way a baller throws a ball and a batsman beats the ball in a Cricket match, in the same way in language game the speaker says, orders , request and so on and the listener hears or obeys or gives feedbacks to the speaker whatever may be. Wittgenstein says that our all activities are conducted through language and that is why he comments language as a form of life.

Wittgenstein treats language as a totality of the multiplicity of uses of linguistic signs rather than as a totality of linguistic signs itself. The same linguistic unit can be used in various ways and thereby a linguistic unit can have different meanings though the unit as a perceptible part of a language may appear to be the same. For example, the linguistic unit 'dog' could be used in an abusive discourse to belittle someone, and could also be used in a descriptive discourse to name a four legged animal. Though as a perceptible sign, the linguistic unit 'dog' is the same, its meaning changes by virtue of its use. Thus, he proves that the meaning of a word is determined by use of the word in which sense it is used.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION:**

Ludwig Wittgenstein has been considered as the dominant figure of analytic philosophy of twentieth century. Especially his contribution to the field of language reveals some new aspect amongst the contemporary philosopher. It noteworthy that the famous modern philosopher Bertrand Russell had opined that Wittgenstein's 'Tractatus' was a wonderful creation. Tractatus and Philosophical Investigation were two milestone of Wittgenstein in which he explained in details about the relation between language and world as well as language and life. Although Wittgenstein's ideas about language was being criticized by different philosophers time to time yet we all are compelled to coincide with the same voice that nobody can give us such an analysis about language like Wittgenstein. All successors of Wittgenstein are compelled to abide by his philosophical analysis. Even the famous scientist Steven Hawkins had said that Wittgenstein is the greatest philosopher of twentieth century. Thus it is seen that Wittgenstein's linguistic analysis gives a new shape to the world of philosophy.

#### **4.1 Findings:**

- Wittgenstein is an analytic philosopher of 20<sup>th</sup> century. He emphasizes on the analysis of language in order to know the world.
- There is a co-relation between the world, thought and language
- Language is the totality of propositions and they depict picture about the facts of the world
- Language is a game which is played between a speaker and a listener
- A word can have a various meaning. The meaning of a word is determined by in which sense it is used.

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