PRIVATE LANGUAGE QUESTION IN CONTEMPORARY ANALYTICAL PHILOSOPHY: 
AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF WITTGENSTEIN'S TREATMENT OF PRIVATE 
LANGUAGE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

BY
M. SHABBIR AHSEN
M.A. Karachi

Supervisor
PROF. DR. ARIFA FARID

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DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF KARACHI
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

(For further details see bibliography)

Abbreviations used to refer to Wittgenstein’s work:

BB
   The Blue and Brown Books.

CV
   Culture and Value.

OC
   On Certainty.

PG
   Philosophical Grammar.

PI
   Philosophical Investigation.

PR
   Philosophical Remarks.

RFM
   Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics.

RPP
   Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology. (Vol. i. & ii.)

T
   Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.

Z
   Zettel.

Unpublished:

MS
   Manuscripts
Abbreviations for works by other writers:

W
Waismann, F.

Wittgenstein und der Wiener Kreis.

K
Kripke, S.

Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language.

Reference style:

All reference to *Philosophical Investigations*, Part I are to refer to sections, except those to notes below the line. References to *Philosophical Investigations*, Part II are to pages.

All references to *Tractatus* are to propositions.

All references to *Zettel* and *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* are to sections signified.

In all other cases references are to pages.
Abstract

Wittgenstein's treatment of private language is the dissolution of some of the major problems in traditional philosophy. Philosophical problems, for Wittgenstein, are the conceptual confusions arising due to the abuse of language. They can be fully dispensed with by commanding a clear view of language. Language, for Wittgenstein, is on the one hand, the source of philosophical problems while, on the other hand, it is a means to dispense with them. Private language is one such issue which is ultimately rooted in a mistaken conception of language and is the source of various philosophical problems/puzzles.

Private language, a language whose subject matter is exclusively the subjective experiences of the speaker and which is said to be understood by the speaker alone, is not explicitly stated or owned by any thinker. Yet it is a paradigm which is presupposed by many philosophical schools. Various philosophical problems in ontology, epistemology, mind and language presuppose the coherence of private language.

'Private language' rests on a mistaken conception of language i.e., name-object relationship is central to language. This view leads to the mistaken conception of experience, that is,
Sensations/experiences are private objects. They are inalienably owned and are known to the first person alone. The inalienable privacy and epistemic privacy are connected together by private ostensive definition.

Wittgenstein's treatment of private language demonstrates that it is a mistake to think that sensations etc. are objects belonging to one's private realm. The issue of epistemic privacy is also based on a grave misunderstanding. These misunderstandings are due to the mistaken picture of language i.e., name-object relationship is the foundation of language. The incoherence of private language is the incoherence of the philosophical positions/problems which presuppose the coherence of private language.

Wittgenstein's treatment of private language is a myth demolishing activity. Its special task is to dismiss the myth of psychologism. This myth is built on and derived from the 'myth' of supposing name-object relationship as the foundation of language. Wittgenstein's rejection of ostensive definition (along with its private analog) as the foundation of language does away with the 'myth' of supposing name-object relationship as the foundation of language and the myth of psychologism.
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Private language, against the possibility of which Wittgenstein argues in the *Philosophical Investigations*, is said to be understood by the speaker alone. The so called private language cannot, in principle, be translated into public language. The subject matter of private language is assumed to be the subjective experiences of the user/the first person.

Since private language cannot be translated into public language, it must not contain anything having a public use. It consists of names (private signs), it is claimed, which get their meaning by being correlated with private objects. The private ostensive definition, it is held, brings out this correlation between 'private sign' and 'private object'. Thus private ostensive definition is the foundation of the private language.

This picture of language has far reaching implications in philosophy. Some of the fundamental problems in traditional
epistemology, ontology, philosophy of mind, and the philosophy of language are intimately connected with private language.

Wittgenstein considers private language to be logically incoherent. That is to say that it is not possible to use language in this manner. One could not communicate even to oneself if it is, by definition, incommunicable to others. It rests on a mistaken idea about language and meaning, and the nature of sensations and experiences. Both the mistaken conceptions, however, are related together.

The issue of the privacy of sensation depends on the supposition of treating name-object relationship as the foundation of any language. Sensations are mistakenly taken to be objects belonging to the first person's private realm. The supposed privacy of the sensations could be done away with 'only if we make a radical break with the idea that language always functions in one way'. The sensation expressions belong to an entirely different class from the one in which things are described/ referred to. 'It is not a something, but not a nothing either.' There is a tendency of assimilating
diametrically opposed uses of language which leads to philosophical problems. The issue of the privacy of sensation is a glaring example of it. Again, since the sensation vocabulary is a part of ordinary language, therefore, it is not intelligible to the first person alone.

The 'private language' issue is a question whether name-object relationship is fundamental for philosophy of language in general and mental vocabulary in particular. It also throws light on the question whether the nature of concepts (sensation concepts) is to be derived from something fixed, existing independently or is given by the form of life/language. Whether having a first hand experience is a necessary and sufficient condition of understanding it. Whether knowledge rests on certain foundations given in experience. Whether metaphysical dualism of the inner and the outer, proofs of the existence of the external world are legitimate.
The private language question is also a question whether mind is to be seen as a subject or as an object, whether it can be known by introspection or observation? The issue is closely linked with self-knowledge, knowledge of other minds, solipsism and idealism, and Cartesianism and behaviorism which are the dominant themes in the philosophy of mind.

Wittgenstein's later philosophy has been dominated by the debate regarding the possibility of there being a private language.

Since 'private language', as argued by Wittgenstein, rests on the mistaken conception of language and sensation, the issue is internally related to the nature of language and linguistic meaning. What Wittgenstein advocates in his later period is that philosophers have made mistakes in arguing that there is an essence of language. According to this view 'naming and describing' constitute the essence of language. 'Describing' presupposes 'naming.' Sentences composed of names serve the purpose of describing facts. Names must refer to objects which are their meanings. Names and objects belong to different
groups. The relation between a name and object named is brought about by ostensive definition. Thus ostensive definitions constitute the foundation of language.

This view of language has deep implications in philosophy. According to this view the nature of language is derived from the nature of reality. Since reality remains fixed, it implies our language must also remain fixed and stagnant. The supporters of this view of language maintain that our ordinary language is 'defective' or 'deceptive' therefore, it does not remain fixed or stagnant. Our ordinary language, some maintain, conceals an ideal structure which accords with the view cited above. Thus a whole generation of philosophers devoted their energies in deciphering the ideal language. If it is maintained that language is rooted in reality, it implies that the nature or meaning of a concept depends on the nature of object (particular, universal, mental, etc.).

Connected with this view of language is the conception of meaning and understanding. If there were any function or a
definite set of functions essential to language then there would be a definite/rigid view of meaning and understanding. In such case theories of meaning and understanding could be formulated more or less in the same way as we have theories and theoretical explanations in the various fields of scientific inquiries.

This has direct implications on philosophy. The possibility of there being any theory of meaning implies that it is the task of philosophy to search for it. Moreover, since theories are employed in theoretical/scientific explanations, it implies that, it is the task of philosophy to give an explanation i.e. philosophical explanation with the help of theories.

This task of supplying theoretical explanation will not be limited to the philosophy of language but for philosophy in general. The picture of philosophy that emerges from here is that the (traditional) problems of philosophy are genuine problems. (A genuine problem is a problem of a question and an answer type.) The goal of philosophy is to supply answers to
such problems. The proper answer to the philosophical problem would give a new information/truth which was hitherto unknown. Thus the goal of philosophy is the search for truth—the philosophical truth. This in turn implies that there are genuine propositions which belong to philosophy. It is to be noted that traditional philosophers have looked for such, so-called, philosophical propositions, theories, and explanations and it is this conception which Wittgenstein is at pains to repudiate.

Wittgenstein contends that when answering the question about the nature of language one must look at the language, the way it functions. When seen this way one does not find any function central to language. There are, however, countless different functions of language related to each other in many different ways. Language, for Wittgenstein, is interwoven with action. The regularity in action is what is known as the 'rules' of language/action. Thus, it is claimed that, language is a rule-governed activity. The regularity in action is to be seen in ways of living or forms of life. There is nothing hidden as far as ways of living are concerned. What is given
in the final analysis is a description of how things are how an activity is carried out.

... I want to say this: it is characteristic of our language that the foundation on which it grows consists in steady ways of living, regular ways of acting.

Its function is determined above all by action, which it accompanies. (Cause and effect: intuitive awareness pp 420-1)

As language is a rule-governed activity embedded in ways of living or forms of life, it has its basis in practice rather than in logical or psychological or metaphysical structures. The notion of language game is employed to bring to light the fact that language is a rule-governed activity. Language-games, for Wittgenstein, are the ways of using language. They may be real or imaginary, simple or complicated. They have complete meaning. The important point to be noted here is that
language and actions are interwoven together. Language-games are rule governed activities capable of being modified. To understand a language-game means to understand the form of life in which it is embedded. The "language-game" expression is employed to show that using of language is a kind of doing.

To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to be master of a technique. (PI 199)

Wittgenstein maintains that language is, de iureo, an intersubjective phenomenon. It has no essential function. It a human institution which grows, develops or decays.

In order to make clear the nature of language and meaning Wittgenstein draws a parallel between language and instruments. 'Language is an instrument. Its concepts are instruments' (PI 569). Using language is a doing, an employment of concepts. 'Concepts lead us to make
investigations; are the expressions of our interest, and
direct our interest' (PI 570). As language is an instrument
its functions are similar to the functions of the instruments.
It is important to note that there is no one function or use
which is THE function of any instrument. The same is the case
with language or words in the language. Wittgenstein draws a
parallel between 'words in language' and 'tools in the tool-
box.' The meaning of 'tools' is not given by its structure or
picture or representation, but by the functions or uses of it
in actual concrete situations. The same holds good for
language. It is the use of language in various situations
which determine meaning.

What implies from here is that our ordinary language is
neither deceptive nor defective as argued by ideal language
theorists. There is no need to construct or to search for an
ideal language. Our specific uses of language presuppose
certain context. This context or the form of life gives
meaning to our linguistic expressions. Ostensive definitions
too presuppose the form of life, for it is the form of life
that shows what is being referred to. That is to say that
ostensive definitions presuppose language rather than being
the foundation of it. The nature of concepts depends on the form of life. The idea of reality is derived from language. It also implies from here that there is no such thing as the theory of meaning since there is no such thing as the function of language. Therefore, it is wrong, in principle, to hold that the task of philosophy is to search for the theory of meaning. The role of philosophy, according to this conception of language, is to dispense with the philosophical problems which are due to the abuse of language. This is done by bringing the language back to its correct use by getting surview of language.

Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy, as seen above in its positive face, is that it is an activity to do away with the philosophical problems not by giving answers (solving or resolving them) but by dissolving them by bringing the language back to its correct use. The goal of this activity, the dissolution of the philosophical problem, is achieved by surviewing language. The philosophical investigations or philosophical activity then consists in grammatical or
conceptual investigations, since philosophical problems are conceptual confusions.

The 'private language' argument is a philosophical activity in the same vein. Its purpose is to do away with some of the deep rooted philosophical confusions by making a perspicuous representation of every day concepts/ use of language. Wittgenstein routs out, in the *Philosophical Investigations*, the mistaken conceptions of language and linguistic meaning which he believes is the source of philosophical problems /puzzles. The problems of philosophy, according to *Philosophical Investigations*, are the diseases of the intellect arising due to the abuse of language. The proper of task or the method of philosophy, according to Wittgenstein, must be therapeutic. It must dispense with those questions that arise 'when language goes on holiday.' Thus Philosophy, for Wittgenstein, is an activity. Its task is not a theory but therapy.
Wittgenstein's treatment of private language is a testing ground for his conception of philosophy as therapy. It, on the one hand, shows how a mistaken view of language and linguistic meaning begets philosophical problems, and, on the other hand, shows how can they be completely dissolved by a correct appreciation of linguistic uses and practices. The 'philosophical problems', Wittgenstein maintains, constitute what we call traditional philosophy while the dissolution of these problems is the Wittgenstein's view of philosophy as therapy. Wittgenstein's treatment of private language is a dissolution or therapy of some of the deep-rooted philosophical problems. These confusions are to be found in the philosophy of language, philosophy of psychology, Ontology, epistemology, etc. The problem of self-knowledge and other minds, solipsism and idealism, inner and outer realm, foundationalism, scepticism about the external world, (and the view of concepts as pictures and meaning as mental states/experiences/processes) are some of the main issues which presuppose the coherence of the private language.
Wittgenstein's treatment 'private language' has been challenged both by contemporary and present day philosophers. A J Ayer's and Saul A. Kripke's criticisms need special attention.

Ayer maintains that private language is not an impossibility. It is rather a necessity. He thinks that if anything is to mean in our public language there must be a private stipulation of meaning. That is to say that our public language is dependent and built upon our private languages. It must be noted that this is in continuation with the conception of language as understood by the British empiricists.

Kripke, on the other hand, maintains that Wittgenstein presents a sceptical paradox about rule following and hence meaning in the Philosophical Investigations and has offered a sceptical solution of it. Sceptical solution is a solution in which one accepts the sceptical premises but rejects the sceptic's conclusion. This sceptical solution which Kripke attributes to Wittgenstein is this that rule following
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essentially involves a community therefore there is linguistic meaning despite there being no fact about meaning. According to Kripke Wittgenstein's denial of private language depends on the impossibility of there being rule following and hence meaning in isolation from the community.

This study will examine how Wittgenstein establishes the incoherence of 'private language', and thus uses private language argument as a device for dissolving philosophical problems. It will also be shown how the challenges of Ayer and Kripke are mistaken. The study would also make clear the nature of sensation and the nature of mental process. This study, I hope, would not only be helpful in understanding the Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy, language and meaning, the nature of psychological concepts, and mind, but will also show how Wittgenstein's later philosophy is related to the traditional problems of philosophy. It will give a deeper understanding not only in the philosophy of Wittgenstein but traditional philosophy as well.
Chapter 1

THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE

The Problem of the Essence of Language

Augustinian Picture of Language:

'The central preoccupation of Philosophical Investigations is the nature of language and linguistic meaning.' Failure to understand the nature and functions of language give rise to false conceptions of meaning which in turn gives birth to philosophical problems. One such view is the Augustinian picture of language. In what follows the introduction and implication of this will be undertaken.

When they (my elders) named some object, and accordingly moved towards something, I saw this and I grasped that the thing was called by the sound they uttered when they meant to point it out. Their intention was shewn by their bodily movements, as it were the natural language of all peoples: the expression of the face, the play of the eyes, the movement of other parts of the body, and the tone of voice which expresses our state of mind in seeking, having, rejecting, or avoiding something. Thus, as I
heard words repeatedly used in their proper places
in various sentences, I gradually learnt to
understand what objects they signified; and after I
had trained my mouth to form these signs, I used
them to express my own desires. (PI 1)

In this quotation from Augustine's *Confessions*, Wittgenstein traces the roots of a certain picture of human language which philosophers and non-philosophers alike are tempted to hold. It is the view that there are certain functions essential to language. The essential function of language rooted in the Augustinian picture is described by Wittgenstein as follows:

These words, it seems to me, give us a particular
picture of the essence of human language. It is
this: the individual words in language name objects-
sentences are combinations of such names.—In this
picture of language we find the roots of the
following idea: Every word has a meaning. This
meaning is correlated with the word. It is the
object for which the word stands. (PI 1)
Wittgenstein considers it to be a mistaken notion of human language. Since our conceptual schemes are embedded in our language, therefore, any misconception regarding the nature of human language is unfortunate for philosophy. This concept of the essence of human language is, as we shall see during this study, one of the biggest source of confusion (philosophical problems). Gordon Baker and Peter Hacker write: 'Numerous sophisticated accounts of meaning are unconsciously rooted in the Augustinian picture, and this manifests a disease of intellect.' An Augustinian picture of language is not clearly stated or owned by anyone. It is a paradigm or a Weltenschuangel shared by many. Various philosophical theories of meaning have been shaped by it. It is therefore instructive to workout the implications of the Augustinian picture of language.

**Implications of the Augustinian Picture of Language:**

According to this conception of language a word is significant only if it signifies something. The thing signified is the meaning of the word. The word belongs to language whereas its meaning lies outside language, in reality or in the world for instance. How does the link between the word in the language
and object (something) in the world is brought about? The answer to this will also explain the relation between language and reality. The proposal in this connection is ostensive definition in which a word is defined by showing or pointing to a thing. The word thus defined is called a name. Sentences are defined as the combinations of names. Every name refers to some object while every sentence describes some fact. In this way 'naming and describing constitute the two essential functions of language.'

Ostensive definitions are unlike verbal definitions. In the case of verbal definition one remains within language, substituting one expression for the other. Ostensive definitions, however, it is claimed, connect words with respective things. Therefore ostensive definitions take us outside language. Thus ostensive definition lies at the very heart of any language. It is the foundation of language. For without which the words would be empty. They would lack meaning or content.

According to this picture, ostensive definitions give meaning to names by connecting them to something lying outside
language. The meaning of names, symbols or concepts must be dependent upon and derived from the things to which they refer. Again, names are combined together to form sentences which describe facts. Since the two essential functions of language that is naming and describing are internally related to things/objects and facts/states of affairs, therefore, the structure of language is determined by the structure of the world/reality. Moreover, the structure of our language, according to this picture, must be fixed and static as it is rooted in a fixed structure.

Failing to find a fixed structure/form in our day to day language, some philosophers are lead to think that our day to day language is defective/deceptive. 'Our everyday language, it is maintained by ideal language theorists, conceals a structure—an ideal structure. The ideal structure of the language is fixed, static and in harmony with the world or reality.

The case for the metaphysical harmony between language and reality, it could be seen, can only be defended if it is admitted that name-object relationship (ostensive definition)
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is the foundation of language. Wittgenstein's earlier conception of language and meaning is in conformity with it.

Tractatus and the Augustinian Picture of language:

The case of ideal language, the nature of which is fixed and in metaphysical harmony with the world, and the question of the essence of language is to be found in Tractatus. Thus Tractatus presupposes the Augustinian picture of language. The following discussion will make it clear that how does Tractarian conception of language and meaning presupposes the Augustinian picture of language. In Tractatus Wittgenstein writes:

A proposition represents the existence and non-existence of states of affairs. (T 4.1)

A state of affairs or Sacherverhalt, for earlier Wittgenstein, is a combination of objects. Objects are the metaphysical simples making the basic stuff of the world. Objects can only
exist in state of affairs. This is the internal nature of objects.

A state of affairs is a combination of objects. (T 2.01)

Objects make the substance of the world. That is why they cannot be composite. (T 2.021)

Objects contain the possibility of all situation. (T 2.014)

If all objects are given, then all possible states of affairs are also given. (T 2.124)

Possible states of affairs include both existing and non-existing states of affairs. The totalities of existing states of affairs determine the world.

The world is all that is the case. (T 1)

The world divides into facts. (T 1.2)
The totality of existing states of affairs is the world. (T 2.04)

The existence and non-existence of states of affairs is reality. (T 2.06)

States of affairs are independent of each other. (T 2.061)

From the existence or non-existence of one state of affairs it is impossible to infer the existence and non-existence of another. (T 2.062)

So far we have been dealing with the world, states of affairs and objects. Let us come to language. Language contains propositions. The simplest kind of propositions are the elementary propositions. Elementary propositions are mutually exclusive and essentially affirmative. They are concatenation of simple signs or names.

The simplest kind of proposition, an elementary proposition, asserts the existence of states of affairs. (T 4.21)
An elementary proposition consists of names. It is a nexus, a concatenation of names. (T 4.22)

Names are simple signs which cannot be further analyzed or defined. They proxy objects in the world. The objects being the meaning of names.

The name means an object. The object is its meaning. (T 3.203)

A name cannot be dissected any further by means of a definition: it is a primitive sign. (T 3.26)

Objects can only be named. Signs are their representatives. I can only speak about them. I cannot put them into words. Propositions can only say how things are, not what they are. (T 3.221)

Names have meanings. The objects being the meaning of the names. Names, like objects, do not exist in isolation. They exist only in (elementary) propositions. Propositions do not
have meaning or reference. They have sense. They are either true or false.

A proposition can be true or false only in virtue of being picture of reality. (T 4.06)

What a picture represents is its sense. (T 2.221)

The agreement or disagreement of its sense with reality constitutes its truth and falsity. (T 2.22)

From the above it is to be concluded that, according to Tractatus, language contains propositions which describe possible situations. Propositions contain names which refer to objects which are their meaning. Every sign in language (proposition) must refer to some object. (The only exceptions are the logical operators which are there in language but they do not proxy any object. Wittgenstein, in Tractatus, maintains that there are no logical objects or facts in the world. He devised a method in which logical operators in language can be completely disappeared.) Thus Tractarian account of language presupposes the gist Augustinian picture of language, i.e., naming and describing constitute the two
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essential functions of language. This is summed up
Wittgenstein in proposition 3.3:

Only propositions have sense; only in the nexus of a
proposition does a name have a meaning. (T 3.2)

THE ROLE OF MIND VIS-À-VIS MEANING:

Mind plays a very vital role in giving content (meaning) to
words and symbols. It is already discussed that according to
the Augustinian picture of language the meaning of a word is
the object it refers to. There is a gap between the word and
the object it refers to. The former belongs to language while
the latter to the world or reality. The question worth noting
is this that how is it the case that the word refers to this
object and not to the other. The proposal here is, Baker and
Hacker clarify, that 'the word is correlated with its meaning
by means of the intention that it should stand for this
thing.' If we minus the mental act of intention, the word
would be reduced to an inarticulate sound, the symbol will
seize to be a symbol. Every attempt to connect language with
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reality ultimately hinges on the role of mind i.e. the act of intention. David Stern comments:

[A]ny public act of ostensive definition is ambiguous until one establishes a private link between the word and something within experience. 6

To mean something by a symbol or a word is the same as to intend that it is understood in a particular way. Moreover, since the act of intention is a mental one, therefore, it is believed, the content of understanding, lies 'in the mind'. In other words 'meaning gets imagined as a kind of mental pointing' (Z 12). This is, as it were, a mental ostensive definition.

Meaning and understanding, according to this picture, are to be seen in contradistinction to publicly observable activities. One of the reasons for this is that it is a matter of our common experience that we, at times, understand or grasp something (meaning) in a flash. The use or employment of word is extended in time. There are instances of it. This is, it is thought, a publicly observable activity. However, understanding (or meaning) occurs in a flash, therefore, it is
thought, it occurs in the mind. Thus meaning and understanding are mental. Fogelin says:

It is important to see that Wittgenstein here notices a genuine phenomenon: we do sometimes grasp the meaning of a word in a flash or, all at once, recognize how a series can be continued. This quite naturally suggests that understanding the meaning of a word (or understanding in general) is a mental state that can be attained at a given time and, furthermore, we can recognize ourselves (at that time) as being in it.

According to the above view of language the difference between meaning or understanding one thing rather than another 'must be answered by reference to mental entities or processes occurring at the time of speaking, hearing or reading.' Meaning in the final analysis is mental pointing to and understanding mental association with a thing. Thus it is maintained that meaning and understanding take place in the medium of the mind. Wittgenstein hints to the same (mistaken view) in the Blue and Brown Books in the following words.
It seems that there are certain definite mental processes bound up with the working of language, processes through which alone language can function. I mean the processes of understanding and meaning. The signs of our language seem dead without these mental processes. – We are tempted to think that the action of language consists of two parts; an inorganic part, the handling of signs, and an organic part, which we may call understanding these signs, meaning them, interpreting them, thinking. These latter activities seem to take place in a queer kind of medium, the mind; and the mechanism of the mind, the nature of which, it seems, we don’t quite understand, can bring about effects which no material mechanism could. (BE 3)

So far we have been dealing with the view that meaning and understanding consist in having conscious mental experience, state, or process. There is another implication of the Augustinian picture of language which regards understanding and meaning as a non-conscious inner state or process. According to this version of mental theory of meaning, as
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Colin McGinn clarifies, 'meaning and understanding is a state or process of one's 'mental apparatus', i.e. of the nervous system or some other kind of subconscious mechanism.' The crucial point here is that these states or processes are conceived as non-conscious. They could be physical e.g. brain processes or 'non-conscious mental processes'.

The following theses are, as has been so far argued, embedded in the Augustinian picture of language:

1) Language is rooted in a fixed structure.

2) There is an essence of language which is 'naming and describing'. Naming is logically prior to describing.

3) Ostensive definition is the foundation of language.

4) Meaning and understanding are dependent on the mental states/processes (conscious or non-conscious) etc.

In what follows we shall critically examine these implications. In this chapter it will be examined whether language has an essence. The answer to this question will make
it clear whether language is rooted in any fixed structure. In short the nature of language will be made explicit as a result of this analysis. The issues regarding meaning and understanding will come up later in the discussion.

LANGUAGE GAMES:

Wittgenstein’s Conception of Language.

As the ‘philosophical conception of meaning has its place in a primitive idea of the way a language functions’ (PI 2), therefore it is instructive to see whether the Augustinian conception of language and meaning is supported by the way language functions. The view that language has an essence, Wittgenstein maintains, results from an over simplified view of language. Wittgenstein points out ‘Augustine, we might say, does describe a system of communication; only not everything that we call language in this system’ (PI 3). He says:

—Instead of producing something common to all that we call language, I am saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all,—but that they are related to one
another in many different ways. And it is because of
this relationship, or these relationships, that we
call them all "language". (PI 65)

Wittgenstein maintains that there are many different functions
of language which cannot be reduced to each other. Moreover,
language is not, in principle, fixed or static. New uses of
language evolve while others become obsolete. He says:

But how many kinds of sentence are there? Say
assertion, question, and command? There are
countless kinds: countless different kinds of use
of what we call "symbols", "words", "sentences". And
this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once
for all; but new types of language, new language-
games, as we may say, come into existence, and
others become obsolete and get forgotten. (We can
get a rough picture of this from the changes in
mathematics.)

Here the term "language-Game" is meant to bring into
prominence the fact that the speaking of language
is part of an activity, or of a form of life. (PI 23)

Here Wittgenstein makes it clear that there does not exist any essential function of language. Thus it cannot be said that ostensive definition is the foundation of any language. Moreover, the expression of 'language-game' brings to light that language is embedded in human action and not in any fixed structure. The following discussion will further clarify Wittgenstein's conception of language.

Language-games, for Wittgenstein, are the real or imaginary ways of using language. They may be simple or complicated. The crucial point here is that they are not fragments or parts of a more comprehensive whole. They are rather self sufficient and independent units of language. At one time Wittgenstein advocated language as calculas having fixed rules. His use of 'language-game' is the departure from calculas conception of language. The crucial point is that interactive aspects of linguistics and other activities are emphasized in Wittgenstein's use of language-game. It is dynamic whereas the calculas conception of language is rigid and does not agree with the way language functions. He writes:
'Language-games are 'based on' primitive reactions, and these primitive reactions are 'prototypes' of a way of thinking; not the result of thought.' (RPi 916)

They are rule governed activities capable of being modified thus they cannot be justified by purely metaphysical or psychological evidence. They need no justification. 'Language-game is there--like our life (OC 559). Joachim Shulte points out:

Our immediate, natural, primitive reactions and forms of behaviour are instinctive expressions; there are no reasons that we could give for them.\textsuperscript{11}

They are the 'hard bed rocks' embedded in our ways of living. This is made explicit by Wittgenstein's conception of a language-game. Wittgenstein by using "language-game" and "form of life" suggests that language is, in principle, an intersubjective phenomenon. It is a human institution which grows, develops and decays. The "language-game" expression is employed to show that the using of language is a kind of
I shall in the future again and again draw your attention to what I shall call language games. These are ways of using signs simpler than those in which we use signs of our highly complicated everyday language. Language games are the forms of language with which a child begins to make use of words. The study of language games is the study of primitive forms of language or primitive languages. If we want to study the problems of truth and falsehood, of the agreement and disagreement of propositions with reality, of the nature of assertion, assumption, and question, we shall with great advantage look at primitive forms of language in which these forms of thinking appear without the confusing background of highly complicated processes of thought. When we look at such simple forms of language the mental mist which seems to enshroud our ordinary use of language disappears. We see activities, reactions, which are clear-cut and transparent. On the other hand we recognize in these
simple processes forms of language not separated by a break from our more complicated ones. We see that we can build up the complicated forms from the primitive ones by gradually adding new forms. (Blue Book p.17)

There is an analogy between language and games. This fact is highlighted in Wittgenstein's notion of language games. Playing a game like using a language is an activity. One is trained to do in a certain way in both cases. Again, both are rule governed activities. The rules of a game determine what game it is. The same is the case with language. Someone playing a game with the pieces of chess, for example, with different rules would not be playing chess but a different game. The rules of the games like language-games are never apriori given. They can not be deduced from anything (any principle apriori given). In order to know the rules one has to see how it is played. In this way it could be independently known whether the rules are correctly followed or not. Rules, in both cases, can be modified, changed or evolved. Furthermore, language-games like games lack essence. They (language(-games) and games) are related among themselves in many different ways. Says Wittgenstein:
Consider the proceedings that we call "games". I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic-games, and so on. 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. . . .

And the result of this examination is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing; sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail. (PI 66)

Instead of essence 'games' have "family resemblance". The notion of "family resemblance" has important consequences in philosophy. Here Wittgenstein has departed from the traditional notion of "concepts" which has been in vogue in philosophy since the times of Socrates.

I can think of no better expression to characterize these similarities than "family resemblances"; for the
various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc. etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same way.—And I shall say: 'games' form a family (PI 67).

The problem with the traditional view of concepts is that there is a presupposition that concepts must be unambiguous having sharp boundaries. That a concept must state the essential properties was widely held by philosophers. Frege has brought out this tendency of philosophers regarding concepts in these words:

A definition of the concept... must be complete; it must unambiguously determine; as regards any object, whether or not it falls under the concept... the concept must have sharp boundary... The law of excluded middle is really just another form of the requirement that the concept should have sharp boundary. 12

The demand for such rigid concepts resulted in the emergence of various antagonistic schools of philosophy. The roots of realism, nominalism, and conceptualism could be traced here.
Wittgenstein maintains that the demand for the sharp boundary of the concepts as well as the essence of language is an unwarranted presupposition. The notion of family resemblance is a radical departure from the traditional view concept. It is a feature of language that it is not static. We do not understand any concept because it is fixed, it conforms to Socratic or Fregean discription but by the role it plays in actual life. Wittgenstein compares concept with a thread. The strenth of thread does not lie in a single fibre running through and through, but in criss crossing lies its strength. The following are some of the reasons for Wittgenstein's rejection of this view.

1) To demand essence, for Wittgenstein, is a preconceived notion, one that is not supported by the way language functions. To dismiss such preconceived notions Wittgenstein's reply is "Don't think but look and see". (PI 66)

2) Another reason for such a view is that we try to have an order for our convenience sake. The mistake here is our treating such an order as the order. There is what Wittgenstein calls a craving for generality which begets many problems.
Moreover, language is a complicated phenomenon. The phenomena which are generally referred to as language are related to each other in many different ways and in which there is nothing fixed, given once for all. Certain uses of language appear to be different while deep down they are not and vice versa. Again, as already stated, Wittgenstein holds that, language is a 'form of life' and, therefore, it is as complicated as life is. It is not always easy to see its complications. The complications of language is yet another reason which captivate philosophers and they fall under their prejudices i.e. of seeking essence.

Wittgenstein's answer to this prejudice is that in the actual use of language there is no essential characteristic seen. To put concepts in sharp boundaries is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for understanding it. The form of life within which a concept or language is used has the all important bearing on meaning and understanding. Even the sharpness of boundaries in defining concepts varies from context to context. One can for one's convenience sake temporarily put a concept in sharp boundaries but this
arrangement will not affect the actual use of the word. Says Wittgenstein:

If on the other hand you wish to give a definition of wishing; i.e., to draw a sharp boundary, then you are free to draw it as you like; and this boundary will never entirely coincide with the actual usage, as this usage has no sharp boundary.

The idea that in order to get clear about the meaning of a general term one had to find the common element in all its applications has shackled philosophical investigations; for it has not only led to no result, but also made the philosopher dismiss as irrelevant the concrete cases, which alone could have helped him to understand the usage of the general term. When Socrates asks the question, "what is knowledge?" he does not even regard it as a preliminary answer to enumerate cases of knowledge. (BB p. 19-20)

It has been argued in this chapter there is no essence of language, nor is it rooted in any fixed structure.
Consequently, it is a mistake that name-object relationship is, as it has been presupposed, the basis of language. Language and human actions are interwoven together.
Chapter 2

THE PROBLEM OF MEANING

Meaning, Understanding and the Conception of Philosophy

In the previous chapter it has been argued that neither language is rooted in a fixed structure nor is there any essence of it. This leads to the denial of the view that ostensive definition is the foundation of language. The important question, however, to be discussed in this connection is the role of ostensive definition in language. Connected with it are the conceptions of meaning and understanding. In this chapter we will work on these issues and their relevance with philosophy.

Meaning and Its Correlates:

Meaning, explanation of meaning and understanding are interrelated concepts. The relationship which holds among them, Wittgenstein thinks, is this: Meaning is the content of understanding and 'understanding is the correlate of explanation' (PG 45, 60). Thus a detailed analysis of these interrelated concepts is imperative in getting clear about the issues mentioned above in addition to dispensing with the false conception of meaning, understanding and language. In what follows 'explanation of meaning' and 'understanding and meaning' will be discussed.
Chapter 2

The Problem of Meaning

Explanations of meaning: (The Role of Ostensive Definition in Language).

Wittgenstein writes:

Let's only bother about what's called the explanation of meaning, and let's not bother about meaning in any other sense. (PG 69)

Elsewhere Wittgenstein draws the connection more vividly:

"The meaning of a word is what is explained by the explanation of the meaning." I.e.: if you want to understand the use of the word "meaning", look for what are called "explanations of meaning". (PI 560)

Now the crucial question is what does the "explanation of meaning" or explanation consist in? It should be borne in mind that all explanations take place within some context (conceptual scheme, framework of language or form of life) whereas for this context no rational justification can be given at all. Every 'why' question is ultimately reduced to a proto-phenomenon (language-game, this is how it is done).
So explanation in the final analysis 'comes to an end'. To elucidate this point Wittgenstein writes:

"Why do you demand explanations? If they are given you, you will once more be facing a terminus. They cannot get you any further than you are at present." (Z 315)

Here we come up against a remarkable and characteristic phenomenon in philosophical investigation; The difficulty—I might say—is not that of finding the solution but rather that of recognizing as the solution something that looks as if it were only a preliminary to it. "We have already said everything. —Not anything that follows from this, no, this itself is the solution."

This is connected, I believe, with our wrongly expecting an explanation, whereas the solution of the difficulty is a description, if we give it the right place in our considerations. If we dwell upon it, and do not try to get beyond it. The difficulty here is: to stop. (Z 314)
The very request for an explanation brings to light the fact that explanation must consist in something publicly accessible. When the explanation comes to an end there lies the action, a form of life which is public. Explanation serves its purpose only when there is an agreement in action. The subjective or psychological aspects have no bearing here. Explanation rests on description which belong to "grammar". As Peter Hacker clarifies: 'Grammar encompasses all rules for the use of words, and all explanations of meaning, including ostensive definitions, belong to grammar'.

Any explanation has its foundation in training. (Educators ought to remember this.) (Z 419).

Again, he says:

To begin by teaching someone "that looks red" makes no sense. For he must say that spontaneously once he has learnt what "red" means, i.e. has learnt the technique of using the word. (Z 418)

Grammar gives rules of language. Wittgenstein uses the term "grammar" in specialized sense. Traditional grammarians are
concerned with the rules of grammar in order to construct correct sentences whereas Wittgenstein is interested in meaning. The former may be called 'ordinary grammar' and the latter 'depth grammar'.

In the use of words one might distinguish 'surface grammar' from 'depth grammar'. What immediately impresses itself upon us about the use of word is the way it is used in the construction of the sentence, the part of its use—one might say—that can be taken in by the ear. —And now compare the depth grammar, say of the word "to mean", with what its surface grammar would lead us to suspect. No wonder we find it difficult to know our way about. (PI 664)

The depth grammar tells how a word or an expression, for example, is used. It does not, however, explain. Explanation as already stated takes place within some context. It is the task of grammar to state what the context is.

Grammar does not tell us how language must be constructed in order to fulfill its purpose, in order to have such-and-such an effect on human
beings. It only describes and in no way explains the use of signs. (PI 496)

The rules which grammar describes are contingent or arbitrary. Wittgenstein says:

The rules of grammar may be called "arbitrary", if that is to mean that the aim of the grammar is nothing but that of the language. (PI 497)

These arbitrary rules of grammar are out there. There is no hidden element to be discovered. It is important to note that in the Wittgenstein's conception of language there is 'nothing hidden' which future discovery will bring to light:

The wrong conception which I want to object in this connection is the following, that we can hit upon something that we today cannot yet see, that we can discover something wholly new. That is a mistake. The truth of the matter is that we have already got everything, and we have got it actually present; we need not wait for anything. We make our moves in the realm of the grammar of our ordinary language, and this grammar is already there'. (WWK 183)
Thus we conclude that the grammar is complete. It is autonomous and incorporates the rules for correct use of expressions. That is why all explanations of word meaning fall into grammar.

Let us now turn to the Augustinian picture of language. It has already been stated that according to the Augustinian picture of language ostensive definition forms the foundation of language. Does the ostensive definition by itself serve the purpose of the explanation of meaning?

The answer to this question is given in negative by Wittgenstein. Ostensive definition does play a part (in language) but only within contexts. Some of the reasons for Wittgenstein's rejection of this thesis are:

i) It is possible to interpret variously an ostensive definition. It needs a certain context within which ostension is done. The availability of this context presupposes language (a certain conceptual scheme).

ii) Explanation of meaning, as it has been elucidated, lays bare how a word is used. It is a conceptual investigation. The use of word is extended in the present, past as well as future. Ostensive definition by itself cannot explain as to
why should a certain connection hold in the future (even if we grant this connection to hold in the present).

iii) Again, ostensive definition like any other definition can be mistaken. It is not self explanatory. This fact, however, is not appreciated in advocating ostensive definition as the foundation of language. Wittgenstein writes:

Now one can ostensively define a proper name, the name of a colour, the name of a material, a numeral, the name of a point of the compass and so on. The definition of the number two, "That is called 'two'" — pointing to two nuts— is perfectly exact. — But how can two be defined like that? The person one gives the definition to doesn't know what one wants to call "two"; he will suppose that "two" is the name given to this group of nuts! — He may suppose this; but perhaps does not. He might make the opposite mistake; when I want to assign a name to this group of nuts, he might understand it as a numeral. And he might equally well take the name of a person, of which I give an ostensive definition, as that of a colour, of a race, or even of a point of the compass. That is to say:
an ostensive definition can be variously interpreted in every case. (PI 28)

Ostensive definition, it is to be concluded, presupposes a language rather than being the foundation of language. David Stern puts this as follows: 'Wittgenstein tries to show that ostension in particular, and language as a whole, always depend on particular context.'

Understanding and Meaning:

The thesis that understanding is a mental state or experience or process has been severely criticized by Wittgenstein. It can be divided, as already shown in the earlier chapter, into two sub-thesis.

i) Understanding as a conscious state or process.

ii) Understanding as a non-conscious mental state or process e.g. brain process.

Now let us come to the first sub-thesis i.e.,

i) Understanding as a conscious state(experience) or process;

Understanding, Wittgenstein holds, is not a state or process. The logic (grammar) of understanding and that of
mental states, experiences and process is totally different. Since their grammar is different, therefore, it entails that they belong to different categories. Their meaning and employment cannot be the same.

For neither the expression "to intend the definition in such-and-such a way" nor the expression "to interpret the definition in such-and-such a way" stands for a process which accompanies the giving and hearing of the definition. (PI 34)

Understanding as a state (experience):

There are certain experiential states which accompany when something is meant or understood. Wittgenstein does not deny this. What he repudiates is the view that meaning and understanding consists in being conscious of these experiential states, e.g. the view that meaning consists in coming before the mind of a picture or an image. (This is central to the empiricist's conception of meaning and understanding). The reason Wittgenstein argues is that our investigation is logical or conceptual rather empirical or psychological. The coming of the image or picture before the mind (or being in a certain conscious state) may be
psychologically relevant but it has nothing to do with the logical status of meaning and understanding. '—For we might also be inclined to express ourselves like this: we are at most under a psychological, not a logical, compulsion.' (PI 140)

The intention seems to interpret, to give the final interpretation; which is not a further sign or picture, but something else—the thing that cannot be further interpreted. But what we have reached is a psychological, not a logical terminus. (Z 231) (Italics mine)

Again, the image or picture which accompanies when something is meant or understood cannot by itself determine that it be taken in the same connotation in future as well. However, it is characteristic of conceptual investigation that it be used in the same connotation in all its occurrences whether in the present, past or future.

What is essential is to see that the same thing can come before our minds when we hear the word and the application still be different. Has it the same meaning both times? I think we shall say not. (PI 140)
What comes before the mind could well be a symptom of understanding. It could in no way be treated as a criterion of understanding without going through the risk of committing absurdity.

There is a logical gap between an image coming before the mind and understanding. The logical field of the two are different. This could be judged from the fact that temporal predicates are applied differently. Experiences, states of consciousness take place in "time". So is the case with understanding and meaning. But here the similarities end. States of consciousness continue or stop. They are characterized as strong or weak etc. Such predicates cannot be applied to meaning and understanding. Wittgenstein writes:

Determine how long an impression lasts by means of a stop-watch. The duration of knowledge, ability, understanding, could not be determined in this way. (Z 82)

(a) "Understanding a word": of a state. But a mental state?—Depression, excitement, pain, are called mental states. Carry out a grammatical investigation as follows: We say
"He was depressed the whole day".

"He was in great excitement the whole day".

"He has been in continuous pain since yesterday".

We also say "since yesterday I have understood this word". "Continuously", though? -To be sure, one can speak of an interruption of understanding. But in what cases? Compare: "When did your pains get less?" and "When did you stop understanding that word?" (PI p.59)

The general differentiation of all states of consciousness from dispositions seems to me to be that one cannot ascertain by spot-check whether they are still going on. (Z 72)

Understanding as a Process:

A process comprises of a sequence of events which are linked together exhibiting both change and unity. Change in successive stages, unity as a whole in the purpose it serves.

Events are internally joined together in a process. A certain sequence of the occurrence of events is necessary
in defining a process. Any change in the internal relation will change the process. Again, the sequence of events that constitute a certain process must be independently given. It is only by seeing the sequence of events that we judge whether a certain process is going on or it has stopped, it is fast or slow, etc. The case of understanding is different. Change, unity and the sequence of events are characteristic of process. They are not, however, characteristic of understanding. It makes perfectly good sense to talk about the sequence of events that constitute a certain process but it is senseless to ask about the sequence of events that allegedly constitute understanding. We say of processes that it is going to finish in ten minutes but not of understanding that it is going to finish in ten minutes. Again, had understanding been a process, the successive stages constituting it must have been independently given. There is no such series of events independently given which constitute understanding. Finally, temporal predicates do not have the same application in the case of understanding as is the case in a process. To say that understanding is going on at a rapid pace is nonsensical whereas to say that a certain process is going on at a rapid pace is perfectly all right. As the application of the two is different, therefore, Wittgenstein concludes that understanding is not a process. He writes:
Try not to think of understanding as a 'mental process' at all.—for that is the expression which confuses you. But ask yourself: in what sort of case, in what kind of circumstances, do we say, "Now I know how to go on." When, that is, the formula has occurred to me? —

In the sense in which there are processes (including mental process) which are characteristic of understanding, understanding is not a mental process.

( A pain's growing more and less; the hearing of a tune or a sentence these are mental processes.)

(PI 154)

ii) Understanding as a non-conscious state or process:

With the rise of science in this century there is a strong tendency to construe understanding as a non-conscious physical process occurring in the brain and nervous system. That is to say that an increase in our knowledge of the chemistry and chemical processes of the brain would further our knowledge of human understanding. Human understanding,
it is implied, is nothing more than the sum of processes occurring in the brain. A little thought on the matter will bring to light that here understanding is said to be causally connected with the physico-chemical processes of the brain. It is important to note that a causal process could be of a great interest but it could never define what understanding is. What it is to understand? There is a big gap between causal investigation and conceptual investigation. The former needs empirical data whereas the latter demands grammatical rules or the rules for the use language. Moreover, the empirical data with which a causal investigation is done stands in need of a theory or hypothesis grounded in our conceptual schemes. That is to say that the grammatical rules or language is a prerequisite for a causal investigation. In other words conceptual investigation is logically prior to empirical/ causal investigation. Causal connection is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for understanding.

Let's take the example of a movie we see on the screen. We know that the motion pictures we see on the screen is caused by the rotation of motionless pictures at the back. Now this knowledge of causal connection depends on our knowledge of waves and optics. This knowledge constitutes the background knowledge or conceptual scheme. We all know that how
difficult was it to convince that what we see through telescope is reliable until Kepler formulated the laws of optics. Again, the crucial point is that in order to appreciate a movie or know the meaning of a feature film one need not know this causal connection. It belongs to grammar or the 'form of life'. We need not know what process is going on in someone's head in order to appreciate the work of art.

No supposition seems to me more natural than that there is no process in the brain correlated with associating or with thinking; so that it would be impossible to read off thought-processes from brain-processes. I mean this: if I talk or write there is, I assume, a system of impulses going out from my brain and correlated with my spoken or written thoughts. But why should the system continue further in the direction of the centre? Why should this order not proceed, so to speak, out of chaos? The case would be like the following—certain kinds of plants multiply by seed so that a seed always produces a plant of the same kind as that from which it was produced—but nothing in the seed corresponds to the plant which comes from it; so that it is impossible to
infer the properties or structure of the plant from those of the seed that comes out of it—this can only be done from the history of the seed. So an organism might come into being even out of something quite amorphous, as it were causelessly; and there is no reason why this should not really hold for our thoughts, and hence for our talking and writing. (Z 608)

It is thus perfectly possible that certain psychological phenomena cannot be investigated psychologically, because psychologically nothing corresponds to them. (Z 609)

I saw this man year ago: now I have seen him again, I recognize him, I remember his name. And why does there have to be a cause of this remembering in my nervous system? Why must something or other, whatever it may be, be stored up there is any form? Why must a trace have been left behind? Why should there not be a psychological regularity to which no physiological regularity corresponds? If this upsets our concept of causality then it is high time it was upset. (Z 610)
Wittgenstein's View of Meaning and Understanding:

Wittgenstein concludes that understanding is not an experience, state or process (conscious or unconscious). These states and processes have a duration while understanding lacks duration. True, there are certain states or processes when one understands, but they are neither necessary nor sufficient condition of understanding. Understanding belongs to another logical category.

"He understands" must have more in it than: the formula occurs to him. And equally, more than any of those more or less characteristic accompaniments or manifestations of understanding. (PI 152)

If there has to be anything 'behind the utterance of the formula' it is particular circumstances, which justify me in saying I can go on—when the formula occurs to me. (PI 154)

For us it is the circumstances under which he had such an experience that justify him in saying in such a case that he understands, that he knows how to go on. (PI 155)
In order to get clear about the meaning of "understanding", we must inquire into the meaning of related terms. (As they are used in language).

The grammar of the word "Knows" is evidently closely related to that of "can", "is able to". But also closely related to that of "understands". ("Mastery" of a technique.) (p. 150)

Understanding is closely related to ability, is mastery of a technique. Abilities and skills are always acquired. The ability to play chess is to 'know how' the game is played. Knowing how here indicates that there is a certain way of doing or using something. This regularity in practice is what is called habit or custom. This regularity is the regularity in 'actions'. The regularity in action is to be seen in ways of living or forms of life. There is nothing hidden as far as way of living is concerned. What is given in the final analysis is a description how an activity is carried out. Language, for Wittgenstein, is interwoven with action. The regularity in action is what is known as the 'rules' of language/action. Since, rules constitute
language-games, therefore, understanding a language-game consists in understanding the rules constituting it.

Understanding, as we have seen, is a mastery of a technique or ability. Meaning is the content of understanding. Since understanding consists in knowing how, therefore, its content is given by the description of this knowing how. The description of this knowing how is the explanation of meaning.

By emphasizing on the fact that meaning is functional rather than definitional, Wittgenstein impresses the point that knowing the context, function or use is prior to knowing the meaning through ostensive definition. 'The use of words in practice is its meaning.' (PI 42) Again, 'the question what is a word really is analogous to what is a piece of chess' (PI). The meaning of a piece of chess is expressed by the role it plays in the game, likewise the meaning of a word is expressed by the functions it plays in various contexts.

Language is rule governed. There is a conformity in the use of language in different contexts. It is due to this that communication and understanding is possible. As already stated there is a similarity between language and games. The
place of rules in games is of great help in understanding the place of rules in language. The rules of game, say chess, constitute that game, similarly the rules for the use of a word constitute a particular language-game. Rules have to be kept whether one is playing chess or any language-game. The symbols or signs by themselves are empty. They reveal their meaning in being used in different language-games.

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. (PP 422)

A language-game may be simple or complicated. It is always complete. A language-game itself is a language (or a simplified model of it). Rules constitute language-games. As the rules are conventions or customs within certain contexts their being observed consists in ways of doing or living. That is to say that to understand a language-game is to understand a form of life.
To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to be master of a technique. (PI 199)

Wittgenstein's view of meaning as use is sometimes referred to as 'use theory of meaning'. This, however is not correct. It is beyond his project to advocate any theory in philosophy. Theories are true or false, probable or improbable. Description of use is not like this. Meaning is logically prior to theorizing.

**Wittgenstein's Conception of Philosophy:**

Closely connected with the analysis of meaning is Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy. Baker and Hacker write: "The identification of meaning with use is important not only for the philosophy of language, but for the treatment of philosophical topics in general". It is argued that "Wittgenstein's real achievement was his development of a new conception of philosophy and a new philosophical method". In what follows we will workout what this new conception is and what is the philosophical method which Wittgenstein advocates.
In order to understand Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy it is instructive to start with the nature of philosophical problems as seen by Wittgenstein.

Philosophy isn't anything but philosophical problems, the particular individual worries that we call "philosophical problems". Their common element extends as far as the common element in different regions of our language. (PG, p. 193)

What implies from the above is:

1) The subject matter of philosophical investigations is the problems of philosophy.
2) These problems are the particular individual worries or diseases and
3) they have their roots in our (ordinary) language.

The philosophical questions are, in the final analysis, embedded in linguistic practices. They are, so to say, grammatical confusions and are dissolvable by grammatical investigations. Philosophical investigations, for Wittgenstein, are strictly grammatical/conceptual investigations. As Marie McGinn writes: 'Language, for
Wittgenstein, is both the source of philosophical problems and a means to overcome them. Some of the reasons are given below.

One of the main reasons for being entangled in philosophical muddles is that philosophers have considered philosophy on the pattern of sciences or physics to be more exact.

Philosophers constantly see the method of science before their eyes, and are irresistibly tempted to ask and to answer questions in the way science does. This tendency is the real source of metaphysics and leads philosophers into complete darkness. (BB, p.13)

They have demanded that philosophy must compete with the sciences. It should also progress as the sciences do. Now the progress in sciences, as we know, depends on explanations. Scientific explanations rest on theory or hypothesis. The formulation of theories or hypotheses presupposes the possibility of propositions which are by definition either true or false. If we take philosophy on the pattern of sciences then there must be propositions in philosophy i.e. philosophical propositions. Wittgenstein, however, considers it to be a mistake. The philosopher is not a citizen of any community of ideas. That is what makes
him into a philosopher." Propositions, as we know, are
either informative or necessary. Informative/empirical
propositions belong to their respective fields of inquiry
instead of philosophy. Similarly necessary/a priori
proposition too lie outside the domain of philosophy.
"Necessary truths are product of grammar, not description of
reality." This brings us to the conclusion that philosophy
is not a cognitive discipline. There are no philosophical
proposition and theories.

And we may not advance any kind of theory.
There must not be anything hypothetical in our
considerations. We must do away with all
explanation, and description alone must take
its place. And this description gets its
light, that is to say its purpose, from the
philosophical problems. These are, of course,
not empirical problems; they are solved,
rather, by looking into the workings of our
language, and that in such a way as to make us
recognize those workings: in despite of an
urge to misunderstand them. The problems are
solved, not by giving new information, but by
arranging what we have always known.
Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment
of our intelligence by means of language. (PI 109)

The above section clarifies the nature of philosophical problems. Philosophical problems, for Wittgenstein, are not empirical problems. Consequently, it is not the task of philosophy to search for theories or explanations. We have seen that explanation comes to an end. What we have in the final analysis is the language-games which are sufficient, complete and unique. Problems arise when language-game is not played correctly i.e., when language goes on holiday. Such problems are conceptual confusions.

A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not command a clear view of the use of our words.—Our grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity... (PI 122)

Since, philosophical problems are conceptual confusions, therefore, philosophical investigations are conceptual investigations.

Philosophical investigations: conceptual investigations. The essential thing about metaphysics: it obliterates the distinction
between factual and conceptual investigations. (2 458)

Conceptual confusions give rise to mistakes in understanding. In this way our intelligence is bewitched by means of language. These conceptual confusions, for Wittgenstein, are illnesses needing treatment. One of the root causes of this, Wittgenstein diagnosed, is 'the craving for generality' which is the resultant of a number of tendencies. Theoretical attitude discussed above is one of them.

Moreover, philosophy is embedded in our language. Wittgenstein says that 'in our language a whole mythology is embodied' (MS 213). Myths have a role in our language. Philosophical problems arise only when their role in language is misunderstood. When theories are proposed to explain their nature the results are conceptual confusions of various sorts. It is the function of philosophy, Wittgenstein maintains, to work against this tendency.

The goal of philosophy is to do away with these conceptual confusions. Since these conceptual confusions are due to misunderstanding the working of our language they must be completely dissolved by actual use of language. In other words philosophy must describe how the language-game is
played. It must aim at getting perspicuous representation of every day use of words.

Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it.

For it cannot give it any foundation either.

It leaves everything as it is.

It leaves mathematics as it is, and no mathematics discovery can advance it. (PI 124)

Budd writes:

...The importance for Wittgenstein of the idea of the perspicuous representation of the grammar of words derives from the fact that philosophical confusions engendered by misunderstanding one's own language in reflection upon it are removed or discouraged by correct description of this synoptic kind...

Philosophy, for Wittgenstein, is an activity. Its task is not a theory but therapy. It is a mistake to consider it as a science. The philosophical questions are not empirical questions. They are not genuine questions but rather the manifestation of conceptual confusion".
One might think that since philosophical problems are not genuine problems, problems of question and answer sort, therefore, they are not worth studying. This, however, is not correct. The reason is this that 'the structure of our conceptual scheme is embedded in our dynamic linguistic practices, in the welter of grammatical rules and their methods of application which constitute the logical connections of language. These rules are not surveyable at a glance' as 'the 'surface grammar' of our language is deeply deceptive', so a mistake in this connection alters or corrupts our conceptual schemes. Philosophy, for Wittgenstein, is inevitable as it is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language. David G. Stern writes:

Wittgenstein did not think of philosophical problems as merely technical; he thought of them as a form of intellectual neurosis, calling for self-examination and, above all, treatment.  

Wittgenstein likens his philosophical method with psychoanalysis.
It has been shown in this chapter that ostensive definitions presuppose language. Moreover, as language is interwoven with human action, human ways of living, therefore, meaning and understanding are to be explained with respect to the actual practice/actions. According to Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy 'philosophical problems' are conceptual confusions arising due to the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language which will completely disappear by survival of language.
Chapter 3

PRIVACY AND PRIVATE OSTENSIVE DEFINITION

WITTGENSTEIN'S ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF PRIVATE LANGUAGE:

Private Language:

'Private language' is to be seen against the background of public language. It is said to be understood only by the person using it. That is to say that it is, in principle, impossible to translate it into public language. Such a language is necessarily incommunicable and unintelligible to others. It is important to note here that there could be language(s) used by just one person e.g. Robinson Crusoe's language. It would not qualify to be a private language since it can, in principle, be made public. It would be a public language intelligible to just one person. "Had some one heard and observed him, he would have been able to learn Robinson's Language; For the meanings of the word are apparent in Robinson's behaviour (MS 221)." Wittgenstein says:

The individual words of this language [private] are to refer to what can only be known to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations. So
another person cannot understand the language (PI 243).

The point to be noted here is that the number of speakers have no bearing on the definition of the private language (as is the case of Robinson's language.) It is the subject matter which has the important bearing on the definition of private language. The so called Private Language must be logically or exclusively private-accessible to the speaker—the first person-alone. Understanding the nature of privacy is of cardinal importance here. In the context of the private language, the word private stands for what can only be possessed and known by the speaker alone. What are claimed to meet this demand are experiences, sensations, sense impressions, mental images etc. which are alleged to be accessible only to the first person. That is to say, in (an exclusively) private language one refers to one's private / inner mental experiences.

Wittgenstein says:

But could we also imagine a language in which a person could write down or give vocal expression to
his inner experiences - his feelings, moods, and the rest - for his private use. (PI 243)

The whole question of privacy hinges on two important points. The inalienable possession and the infallible knowledge of the subject matter of the private language by nobody but the user (the first person).

To say that experiences or sensations are private means that if someone is having an experience, then, the person must be in possession of something which cannot be had by anyone else. If a person is in pain then he is possessing something. The word pain, it is argued, must refer to something which is inaccessible to anybody else. Another person cannot share, possess or have the same thing. Since, another person cannot possess what the first person possesses i.e., the subjective experiences, it is maintained, another person cannot feel what the first person feels and consequently cannot know about it. It is important to note here that feeling a sensation, for example, is taken as knowing it.
The essential thing about private experience is really not that each person possesses his own exemplar, but that nobody knows whether other people also have this or something else. The assumption would thus be possible—though unverifiable—that one section of mankind has one sensation of red and another section another. (PI 272)

There could be thoughts or intention which a man could keep to himself as e.g. a move in chess is kept to oneself. This does not mean that it is private in the sense in which we dealing with it. They are secret, not Private.

Again, if private language is a language then it must have rules. Its rules cannot be the rules of the public language or derived from it, otherwise it will not be a strictly private language. The rules of a private language, if there were any private language, must be private in the same sense of privacy in which the language is private. The basic constituents of this language, it is assumed, are words (names, signs) which refer to the private mental objects,
states etc. The question worth noting in this connection is that how is the relationship between a sign and a private mental object established. The clue to this may be found in ostensive definition. However, the following consideration must be kept in mind. Firstly, since private language as defined above does not share any rule with public language, therefore, a fortiori the ostensive definition/ostension in both the cases must necessarily be different. Secondly, since the distinctive mark of the private language is its subject matter which is necessarily inaccessible to anybody except the user, therefore, the ostensive definition used in private language must also be inaccessible to anybody else. This entails that nobody else can know what the person has named through private ostensive definition—the private ostensive definition being the private analog of ostensive definition.

We conclude from the above discussion that a private language, if any, is a language which contains the subjective experiences of the user (first person) as its subject matter. Since the subjective experiences are exclusively owned by the first person, therefore, it cannot be understood by anybody else. Again, since it cannot be translated into a public
language, it must not contain anything having public use. It consists of names (private signs), it is claimed, which get their meaning by being correlated by private ostensive definition. The private ostensive definition being the foundation of the private language.

Wittgenstein's treatment of private language:

Wittgenstein maintains that the very idea of a private language is logically incoherent. That is to say that it is not possible to use language in this manner. One could not even communicate to oneself if it is, by definition, impossible to communicate to others. Language is always shared or share able. It is a human product which is embedded in human actions or human form of life, therefore, it is necessarily public. Wittgenstein's arguments against the possibility of private language is given as follows.

As already argued the possibility of a private language depends on the privacy of its subject matter. This subject matter, sensation for example, is supposed to be privately owned and, hence, privately known. Here sensations are construed on the pattern of physical objects. In the sentence
'I have the sensation of pain', 'have' is considered to be used in the possessive sense. It has the same sense as it is used in the sentence 'I have a pen'. That is to say that I possess the sensation as I possess the pen. The difference between the two being that they belong to different realms. My pen could be stolen but not my pain. Others can know that I have a pen but not that I have a sensation. Others cannot know the sensations I am having because, it is held, they cannot feel my sensations. The crucial point here is that the subject matter of private language, that is sensations etc, is necessary private. It is exclusively possessed and known by the first person alone.

Our investigation into the possibility of private language centers around the inquiry into the supposed nature of privacy of the sensations or experiences of the speaker, the possibility of private ostensive definition, the possibility of necessarily private rules, and the status of first person epistemic claims regarding sensations and experiences.

The inalienable privacy of sensations: 3

The issue of the privacy of the sensation depends on the supposition of treating name-object relationship as the
foundation of any language. Sensations are mistakenly taken to be objects belonging to the first person's private realm. Wittgenstein maintains that the idea of privacy of the sensations becomes absurd with "only if we make a radical break with the idea that language always functions in one way". It is a mistake to take sensations as objects belonging to one's private realm. 'It is not a something, but not a nothing either.' Naming of sensations belong to a different language-game from the one in which objects are named/referred to. The issue of the privacy of sensation is a case of assimilating diametrically opposed language-games which leads to philosophical problems.

Again, since the sensation vocabulary is a part of our day to day language, therefore, it is not intelligible to the first person alone. We do not understand when someone utters 'I am in pain'. Had sensations been private it would not have been possible.

Our utterances have meaning within certain context. For to have meaning there must be a use which presupposes a form of life. And forms of life are always shared or shareable.
Suppose everyone had a box with something in it: we call it a "beetle". No one can look into anyone else's box, and everyone says he knows what a beetle is only by looking at his beetle. -Here it would be quite possible for everyone to have something different in his box. One might even imagine such a thing constantly changing. -But suppose the word "beetle" had a use in these people's language? -If so it would not be used as the name of a thing. The thing in the box has no place in the language-game at all; not even as a something: for the box might even be empty. -No, one can 'divide through' by the thing in the box; it cancels out, whatever it is.

That is to say: if we construe the grammar of the expression of sensation on the model of 'object and designation' the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant. (PI 293)

The subject matter of private language cannot be said to consist of mental images, picture or whatever is experienced by the first person. The reason for this being that an image
or a picture has meaning in our shared ways of living. The so-called private image which is supposed to be the object of description of private language cannot be understood in this way. To say that there exists something presupposes some shared setting which is absent here.

If you say he sees a private picture before him, which he is describing, you have still made an assumption about what he has before him. . . . . Isn't it as if I were to say of someone: "He has something. But I don't know whether it is money, or debts, or an empty till." (PI 294)

Again, it could be maintained that the object of description of private language is what is experienced by the first person. On this view experiencing something would be the same as meaning it, since there is no other way of knowing the existence of private object.

—What is the content of the experience of imagining? The answer is a picture, or a description. And what is the content of the experience of meaning? I don't know what I am supposed to say to this. —If there is
any sense in the above remark, it is that the two concepts are related like those of 'red' and 'blue'; and that is wrong. (PI ii p. 175-176)

There is another proposal of considering meaning and understanding of the object of description of private language as consisting of processes occurring in one's mind. This, once again, is not the case. For the occurrence of a process does not constitute meaning or understanding.

"Yes, but there is something there all the same accompanying my cry of pain. And it is on account of it that that I utter it. And this something is what is important—and frightful." —Only whom are we informing of this? And on what occasion. (PI 296)

The supposed privacy of the sensation implies that only the person in whose body the sensation, pain for example, is located can identify and feel it. Others cannot. My feeling of pain must satisfy the following conditions. Firstly, it must be my pain for I can only feel my pain, secondly it must be identified by me as my pain. Both of them are, however,
interconnected. The former claims that sensations are privately owned while the latter implies that there is a criterion of identity of sensation which is known to the first person alone.

For Wittgenstein both these views are mistaken. The issue about the privacy of the sensations is given a final jolt once it is shown that it is logically possible to feel pain in someone else's body. It is a matter of our day to day life that we feel sorry for or sympathize with someone in pain. We can even touch the part of the body of the other person in pain. That is to say that we are feeling the pain in another's body. As explained by Ashok Vohra, "the criterion of the ownership of the pain, therefore, is not given by the location of the pain in the body, but by the pain behaviour of the person who gives it expression. He who manifests pain is its owner. And, the pain which I manifest may single out a place outside my body."

Again, maintains Wittgenstein, in the case of ownership of objects (public), the correct identification of the owner is a necessity. The statement 'this is my pen' or the statement 'this is his pen' would be insignificant without the correct identification of the owner. Here, 'my' and 'his' are employed
as bearing ownership. However, 'my' in the case of 'my pain' is not used in this way. In the case of physical objects 'he' and 'his' perform different functions. Vohra writes 'He shows the person, whereas 'his' shows the owner, the possessor.' Had sensation been privately owned, it implies that, the identification of the owner would have been necessary. In that case 'I' in the case 'I am in bad pain' and 'my' in 'my pain is bad' should have performed different functions. The two statements say the same, therefore, 'I' and 'my' cannot be performing different functions. Hence, sensations are not inalienably privately owned. There is no question of recognizing a person when I say I have a toothache. Says Wittgenstein:

To ask 'are you sure that it's you who have pains?' would be nonsensical. Now, when in this case no error is possible, it is because the move which we might be inclined to think of as an error, a 'bad move' is no move of the game at all. (We distinguish in chess between good and bad moves, and we call it a mistake if we expose the queen to a bishop. But it is no mistake to promote a pawn to a king.) (BB 67)
Moreover, the supposed privacy of the sensations entails that it is logically impossible for two persons to feel the same pain. In the case of Siamese twins it is possible that both the twins feel the same pain if the pain induced is at a place where they are joined together. This possibility rules out the view that two person cannot have the same sensation. The example of Siamese twins is not to be considered as an exceptional case. In order to get clear whether two person can feel the same sensation, it is instructive to look into the nature of sensations. The answer to this will bring forth the criterion of identity of sensations. We have already seen that sensations, for example pains, are connected with expressions. Since "My pains" are the pains which I express (PI 302), therefore, what counts as the criterion of identity of pain is to be seen in the outward expression of pain. If the expression of pain in two different cases is alike, then there are not two different pains but the same. As pointed out by Vohra "My toothache" and "his toothache" are not two toothaches. In the case of pains one counts in a way in which one counts colours, habits gaits and the like, we count in these cases with more or less detailed descriptions. \(^6\)

The supposed inalienability of the sensations results from the mistake of considering sensations on the analogy of physical
objects. This category mistake, it could be seen, is embedded in the conception of language in which naming is central. This conception of language fails to appreciate the variety of ways in which language is used and the differences regarding the types of concepts. Once it is appreciated that sensations are akin to colours and habits rather than the physical objects, it follows that it is possible for two persons to have the same pain. Says Wittgenstein:

In so far as it makes sense that my pain is the same as his, it is also possible for us to have the same pain. (PI 253)

We are not denying here the fact that sensations can be kept to oneself. In that case the other person does not know about it. We must guard ourselves from implying from here that sensations are private. For, there is a difference between secrecy and inalienable privacy of sensation. What this analysis show is that it is impossible to have sensation concepts if there is, in principle, no publicly accessible expression of it.

This analysis also shows that concepts are always formed. They are never given in experience. The formation of concepts require a forms of life which is always out there. In the case
of sensation concepts it is the expression or manifestation which provide this background.

IT is clear from this analysis that entertaining an image, picture or having a sensation is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of meaning and understanding. The undergoing of a sensation is not to be equated with the definition of it. Wittgenstein says:

I have seen a person in a discussion on this subject strike himself on the breast and say: "But surely another person can't have THIS pain!"—The answer to this is that one does not define a criterion of identity by emphatic stressing of the word "this".

(PI 253)

Furthermore, the use of private in the sense in which it has been used here is not the way it is used in language. Nothing could be private unless it is public.

Epistemic privacy:

From the inalienable privacy of sensations follows the epistemic privacy of sensations. Since, sensations are the
objects before my consciousness, therefore, I alone can 'know' which sensation I am having. Whenever there is an epistemic claim, it is relevant to ask that 'how do you know'? The answer is, I 'know' the sensation (I am having) by 'feeling it'. That is to say that here 'I know' is logically equivalent to 'I feel'. It is not difficult to see from here the difference between a first person and a third person claim about sensation. I know the sensation that I am having by feeling it. Since, I cannot have the sensation of others, therefore, I cannot know the sensation which the other person (third person) is having.

Wittgenstein rejects the very idea of there being an epistemic privacy regarding sensations. For Wittgenstein the logic/grammar of knowing is very different from the logic/grammar of feeling. They belong to different families. Whenever there is a knowing claim it is possible to doubt. Doubt, however, has no place in the case of pains and other sensation. It makes no sense to say that 'I doubt whether I am in pain'. Again, in the case of knowledge it is possible to learn and teach. As far as the sensation is concerned there is no teaching and learning of the sensation. In the case of learning there is, in principle, ignorance before learning. In the case of epistemic privacy there is no place of my being
ignorant about my sensation. Since I cannot be said to be ignorant about my sensation, it follows I cannot be said to learn it. Moreover, in case of epistemic claims one could legitimately ask 'how do you know'? This question could not be posed in the case of sensation because of no possibility of doubt here.

In what sense are my sensations private? --Well, only I can know whether I am really in pain; another person can only surmise it. --In one way this is wrong, and in another nonsense. If we are using the word "to know" as it is normally used (and how else are we to use it?), then other people very often know when I am in pain. --Yes, but all the same not with the certainty with which I know it myself! --It can't be said of me at all (except perhaps as a Joke) that I know I am in pain. What is it supposed to mean--except perhaps that I am in pain?

Other people cannot be said to learn of my sensations only from my behaviour, --for I cannot be said to learn of them. I have them.
The truth is: it makes sense to say about other people that they doubt whether I am in pain; but not to say it about myself. (PI 246)

It is important to note here that at times feeling is used in perceptual sense. When used this way it has an epistemic sense. There is the possibility of doubt and learning here. However, the use of feeling in the first person psychological assertion is not the same.  

Again we do sometime say "I know that I am in pain". Here the word "know" is not used in epistemic sense since doubting and learning is not possible here. Such a statement is exclamatory rather than declarative or epistemic. Also, one needs no justification or rational explanation for saying that one is in pain. Explanations and justifications, as we have earlier seen, come to an end. What we have in the final analysis is a phenomenon or way(s) of living which is beyond justification and explanation. Therefore, to say that one knows or learns about one's sensation by 'feeling' it is not an explanation of how does one know about one's sensation. Instead of looking for an explanation one ought to look at what happens as a "proto-phenomenon". (PI 625)
Chapter 3

How do you know that you have pain.? Because I feel them,. But I feel them means the same as "I have them:. Therefore this was no explanation at all. (BP p.68)

An inquiry into the question of how does a child learn sensation vocabulary will show how does the language-game regarding sensation is played. Wittgenstein holds that one of the possibilities is that:

words are connected with the primitive, the natural, expressions of the sensation and used in their place. . . .the verbal expression of pain replaces crying and does not describe it. (PI 244)

If this be the case then others can very well know whether I am in pain. This is not to rule out, of course, that there are cases in which I can conceal the natural expression thus deceiving others. The important point here is this that the word pain is logically linked with the expression. Had there been, in principle, no natural expression we would not have acquired the concept of pain. It is only those who have

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acquired the skill of pretense can pretend to have pain without being in pain. We do not talk about infants and animals that their expression of pain is a lie. The reason for this is that there is no place of pretense in that form of life. The natural expression in this case is enough to be certain about their being in pain. The crucial point is that it is the form of life within which meaning and understanding is to be seen. From here it is legitimate to hold that pains and sensations are not necessarily incommunicable.

The inalienability and the incommunicability theses of sensation are connected together with the help of ostensive definition. The ostensive definition on the one hand informs about the occurrence of something before the consciousness while on the other hand it is concerned with the formation and retention of the concept (of sensation) of the so-called private language. The underlying assumption here is that meaning and understanding consists in the formation of inalienable samples or pictures in one's consciousness which one defines through ostensive definition which is the foundation of language.

Let us imagine the following case. I want to keep a diary about the recurrence of a certain sensation.
To this end I associate it with the sign "S" and write this sign in a calendar for every day on which I have the sensation. I will remark first of all that a definition of the sign cannot be formulated. But still I can give myself a kind of ostensive definition. How? Can I point to the sensation? Not in the ordinary sense. But I speak, or write the sign down, and at the same time I concentrate my attention on the sensation—and so, as it were, point to it inwardly. But what is this ceremony for? for that is all it seems to be! A definition surely serves to establish the meaning of a sign. Well, that is done precisely by the concentrating of my attention; for in this way I impress on myself the connexion between the sign and the sensation. But "I impress it on myself" can only mean: this process brings it about that I remember the connexion right in the future. But in the present case I have no criterion of correctness. One would like to say: whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can't talk about 'right'. (PI 258)
The whole question of the possibility of a private language depends on the following crucial points. Firstly, the occurrence of something (sample) before one's consciousness such that there is a sign which is the name of it. The meaning of the sign being the sample found in the consciousness. Secondly, the naming of the sensation (private sample) is brought about by a private ostensive definition. The private ostensive definition being a private analog of ostensive definition. Thirdly, it is argued that there must be a criterion of correctness of a definition, since without which it one could not be used in language. Again, the future use is an integral part of definition or concept formation, therefore the criterion of correctness is a logical necessity of definition.

1) Sample-sign relationship:

The occurrence of a sample, we have already seen, does not constitute meaning and understanding. In order to understand one needs a concept. Concepts are given by criterion. A criterion is a description of a complex network of use of a certain concept. This network of employment is within certain context. The context of use of a word or concept is a way of living, a kind of doing or a form of life. Hence to understand a concept is to understand ways of acting, forms of
life. The forms of living, by their very nature, therefore, are public. The sign "S", it is not difficult to see, cannot have any meaning. For, meaning there must be a form of life which is shared (or share-able). There is no such thing in the supposed sign-sample (private) relationship.

The unavailability of a shared background entails that there is no network of use or criterion for the sign "S". Since, meaning is the content of understanding and understanding consists in knowing the criterion, therefore, the unavailability of criterion for the sign "S" entails the meaningfulness of it.

Again, in the case of a meaningful sign there is a possibility of making mistakes in the case of its employment. There is also the case of correcting oneself or others when a mistake is committed. In order to know whether a mistake is made or not, one has to appeal to the form of living which is absent in the case of private sign "S". The lack of the possibility of making mistakes does away with the meaningfulness of a sign.

A meaningful sign could be taught and learnt. In the case of a private sign "S" there is no such possibility. There is
neither any way of teaching others, by its very definition, the use of a private sign "S" nor is the case that the first person learns the private sign "S" or teaches it to himself, since learning presupposes ignorance and doubt which is absent in the (first person's) case of sensations.

To consider the explanation of meaning as something in one's private realm, an experience or an image for example, is to consider meaning in terms of symptoms rather than criterion. To look for a criterion of any linguistic expression is to look for a complex of use of the linguistic expression under particular situation. Thus criteria are rules or conventions. Rules and conventions are concerned with human actions and judgments. They are human products, human decisions have a bearing on them. The explanation of meaning consists in the description of grammatical rules or criterion. Symptoms, on the other hand are factual experiences. They are given in experiences. Human beings experience them or not. They are not be altered at wish. To confuse criterion with symptom is the same as to confuse human judgments with human experience or to confuse conventions with experience. Says Wittgenstein:

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 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. (BB p. 24-25)

ii) Private ostensive definition:

Wittgenstein maintains that the idea that the private sample gets its place in a private language by private ostensive
definition is a mistake. The analogy between ostensive definition in our every day language and private language is misleading, for in the context of our day to day language whenever ostensive definition is employed in order to establish meaning it is necessary to understand the language-game in which something is meant ostensively. Pointing to a thing is always done within a set convention.

...a great deal of stage-setting in language is presupposed if the mere act of naming is to make sense. (PI 257)

This stage-setting requires a complete background within which the users of language react and the context in which they react. And this pre-supposes a practice or 'a form of life' which is a feature of public language. It cannot function in the same way in establishing a private language as the context in which ostension is done is missing. So the private ostensive definition is an empty ceremony. As Malcom Budd writes: 'Private ostensive definition cannot determine a normative practice - one in which there is a distinction between a correct and an incorrect use of words.'
Again, one cannot give a private ostensive definition by concentrating on something (sample) in one's consciousness, since concentration belongs to our every day language and by definition a private language shares nothing with public language.

Concentrating on a thing is a skill which could be learnt and taught which is not the case with private ostensive definition. Hence the analogy does not hold good.

iii) Retention of private sign:

If there were a case, let us suppose, in which one manages to give a private ostensive definition to one's private sensation even then the private language would not have been possible. The reason for this is that if someone manages to define the so called private object this way then it implies that he would be able to recognize it whenever it occurs to him again. It is also clear that there must be a time lapse between any two occurrences of sensation.

The problem here is that what is the criterion for the correct identification of one's private sensation? There could be two possibilities, both being wrong. They are:
3) Whenever a person says to himself / thinks that he has a private sensation "S" then he has sensation "S". If this be granted then the whole question of recognition would become meaningless. A criterion must be employed in recognizing any object so much so that if there is no criterion involved then it cannot be said whether two objects, sensations or samples are same or not. The criterion with which any thing is recognized has got to be independently known otherwise there cannot be any question of correct identification. There is no such independent criterion possible in the case of private language, therefore, there cannot be any possibility of recognizing the object of private language here. As recognizing the private object is an integral part of private language, therefore, the impossibility of a criterion for identification would mean the impossibility of private language.

b) It could also be thought that memory might serve as the criterion for recognizing the private object, sensation, to be the same as the previous one. It would not do either for the logic of remembering requires that the thing which one remembers must be given independently and there must be a difference between the correct and incorrect memory. This is
not the case here. So memory cannot be the highest court of appeal in the case of private language. Wittgenstein writes:

Let us imagine a table (something like a dictionary) that exists only in our imagination. A dictionary can be used to justify the translation of a word X by a word Y. But are we also to call it a justification if such a table is to be looked up only in the imagination? —"Well, yes; then it is a subjective justification." —But justification consists in appealing to something independent. —"But surely I can appeal from one memory to another. For example, I don't know if I have remembered the time of departure of a train right and to check it I call to mind how a page of the time-table looked. Isn't it the same here?" —No; for this process has got to produce a memory which is actually correct. If the mental image of the time-table could not itself be tested for correctness, how could it confirm the correctness of the first memory? (As if someone were to buy several copies of the morning paper to assure himself that what it said was true.)
Looking up a table in the imagination is no more looking up a table than the image of the result of an imagined experiment is the result of an experiment. (PI 265)

Wittgenstein's Treatment of Private Language and Memory

Scepticism:

Some thinkers have held that Wittgenstein holds a memory scepticism or a version of verificationism in his denial of the possibility of private language. Malcom, for example, thinks that the distinction between following a rule and merely being under the impression of following a rule cannot be established by memory checks, hence, private language is impossible. Ayer and Mundle also maintain that Wittgenstein's denial of private language depends on the impossibility of there being private checks. Mundle, for example, writes:

Wittgenstein's thesis is that the diarist cannot have any use for 'E', that 'E' cannot have any meaning for him, because the diarist would not be in a position to verify the correctness of his application of 'E' on any occasion.
Critics of Wittgenstein maintain that untrustworthiness of memory or lack of verification in the case of private diarist creates the same problem for the user of public language as well. It would also lead to the impossibility of public language. Since public language is not disputed, therefore, critics hold that untrustworthiness of memory does not reject private language. Ayer, who is a supporter of this view, argue that there is nothing wrong in holding that one memory could be checked by another. He writes:

But why could one not rely on one’s memory to furnish a criterion of correctness? It need not be confined to linking a single present with a single past sensation. To a very large extent sensations of similar types occur in groups. So one memory could be checked by another...\textsuperscript{10}

Commenting on Wittgenstein’s simile of morning paper on PI 265 Ayer writes:

The simile of morning paper is brilliant but I am still not convinced by the argument which it is meant to serve. The crucial fact which it seems to me that Wittgenstein persistently overlooks is that
anyone's significant use of language must depend sooner or later on his performing what I call an act of primary recognition.\textsuperscript{11}

Elsewhere Ayer writes:

No doubt it is a necessary condition for my understanding a descriptive statement that it should be, in some way, verifiable. But it need not be directly verifiable, and even if it is directly verifiable, it need not be directly verifiable by me.\textsuperscript{12}

Defenders of Wittgenstein maintain that the case of private recognition and public recognition are different matters. In the case of public recognition a person could be corrected which is not possible in the so called private recognition. Hence private recognition is not possible.

It could be seen from here that the critics and supporters both agree that Wittgenstein mean a factual memory when he writes 'I remember the connexion right' in PI 258. Anthony Kenny has summed up this debate in the following words:
Many philosophers have taken 'I remember the connection right' to mean 'I use "S" when and only when I really have 'S'. They take Wittgenstein's argument to be based on scepticism about memory: how can you be sure that you have remembered aright when next you call a sensation 'S'?...

Critics of Wittgenstein have found the argument, so interpreted, quite unconvincing. Surely, they say, the untrustworthiness of memory present no more and no less a problem for the user of a private language than for the user of a public language. 13

It is be noted that Wittgenstein does not talk about the impossibility of factual memory in PI 258. What he tries to establish, as spelled out in this study, is the impossibility of private ostensive definition. 'I remember the connexion right in the future' must be taken as remembering the meaning correctly rather than factual memory. Definitions serve future employment. In the case of private ostensive definition the distinction between remembering and thinking that one remembers is absent. That is to say that there is no possibility of remembering / recognizing the private object, sensation, even if we suppose the possibility of private
ostensive definition. The impossibility of recognition of "S" entails the impossibility of future employment of "S". The impossibility of future recognition and employment would mean the impossibility of private ostensive definition and hence private language.

Private Rules:

Given the impossibility of private ostensive definition it would still be thought that there are private rules possessing the characteristics to fulfill the demands of private language. The private rules, it could be seen, meets the demands of language as well as privacy. Thus making a case for the possibility of private language. These private rules, it would be thought, meet the demands of language as language is rule governed and at the same time being incommunicable to others peculiar to private language. It is therefore necessary to prove the impossibility of such rules if one argues that a private language is logically incoherent.

The claim about the possibility of private rules depends on the analogy of public rules. In what follows we will see whether such an analogy holds good.
Rules as we have already noted are an indispensable part of language (public). If there are no rules then there is no language. They have to be kept if anything is to be meant. The observance of rules consists in practice.

—to obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are customs (uses, institutions).

To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language is to be a master of a technique. (PI 199)

The nature and the role of rules in our every day language is made more explicit if we see the parallel drawn by Wittgenstein between following a rule and obeying an order. This will also help in dispensing with the problem of private language.

Following a rule is analogous to obeying an order. We are trained to do so; we react to an order in a particular way. But what if one person reacts in one
way and another in another to the order and training? Which one is right? . . .

The common behaviour of mankind is the system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language. (PI 206)

Such rules are a characteristic of our day to day language. They are independently given. It is possible to disobey them. Their being obeyed or disobeyed can be established since the (common behaviour) practice is independently given. However, the so called private rules cannot function this way. Whenever there is a rule it possible to disobey them. The observance of rules would be meaningless if we do away with the possibility of disobeying the rules. There is no way of disobeying and hence obeying a private rule.

And hence also 'obeying a rule' is a practice. And to think one is obeying a 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 as obeying it. (PI 202)
It follows that there is no such thing as a necessary private practice so there is no necessarily private rules. Since no one can claim / know whether the so called private rule is obeyed or not. The denial of the possibility of private practice leads necessarily to the denial of the possibility of a private language.
neither any way of teaching others, by its very definition, the use of a private sign "S" nor is the case that the first person learns the private sign "S" or teaches it to himself, since learning presupposes ignorance and doubt which is absent in the (first person's) case of sensations.

To consider the explanation of meaning as something in one's private realm, an experience or an image for example, is to consider meaning in terms of symptoms rather than criterion. To look for a criterion of any linguistic expression is to look for a complex of use of the linguistic expression under particular situation. Thus criteria are rules or conventions. Rules and conventions are concerned with human actions and judgments. They are human products, human decisions have a bearing on them. The explanation of meaning consists in the description of grammatical rules or criterion. Symptoms, on the other hand are factual experiences. They are given in experiences. Human beings experience them or not. They are not be altered at wish. To confuse criterion with symptom is the same as to confuse human judgments with human experience or to confuse conventions with experience. Says Wittgenstein:

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 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. (BB p. 24-25)

ii) Private ostensive definition:

Wittgenstein maintains that the idea that the private sample gets its place in a private language by private ostensive
definition is a mistake. The analogy between ostensive definition in our every day language and private language is misleading, for in the context of our day to day language whenever ostensive definition is employed in order to establish meaning it is necessary to understand the language-game in which something is meant ostensively. Pointing to a thing is always done within a set convention.

...a great deal of stage-setting in language is presupposed if the mere act of naming is to make sense. (PI 257)

This stage-setting requires a complete background within which the users of language react and the context in which they react. And this pre-supposes a practice or 'a form of life' which is a feature of public language. It cannot function in the same way in establishing a private language as the context in which ostension is done is missing. So the private ostensive definition is an empty ceremony. As Malcom Budd writes: 'Private ostensive definition cannot determine a normative practice - one in which there is a distinction between a correct and an incorrect use of words.'
Again, one cannot give a private ostensive definition by
concentrating on something (sample) in one's consciousness;
since concentration belongs to our everyday language and by
definition a private language shares nothing with public
language.

Concentrating on a thing is a skill which could be learnt and
taught which is not the case with private ostensive
definition. Hence the analogy does not hold good.

iii) Reception of private sign:

If there were a case, let us suppose, in which one manages to
give a private ostensive definition to one's private sensation
even then the private language would not have been possible.
The reason for this is that if someone manages to define the
so-called private object this way then it implies that he
would be able to recognize it whenever it occurs to him again.
It is also clear that there must be a time lapse between any
two occurrences of sensation.

The problem here is that what is the criterion for the correct
identification of one's private sensation? There could be two
possibilities, both being wrong. They are:
a) Whenever a person says to himself / thinks that he has a private sensation "S" then he has sensation "S". If this be granted then the whole question of recognition would become meaningless. A criterion must be employed in recognizing any object so much so that if there is no criterion involved then it cannot be said whether two objects, sensations or samples are same or not. The criterion with which any thing is recognized has got to be independently known otherwise there cannot be any question of correct identification. There is no such independent criterion possible in the case of private language, therefore, there cannot be any possibility of recognizing the object of private language here. As recognizing the private object is an integral part of private language, therefore, the impossibility of a criterion for identification would mean the impossibility of private language.

b) It could also be thought that memory might serve as the criterion for recognizing the private object, sensation, to be the same as the previous one. It would not do either for the logic of remembering requires that the thing which one remembers must be given independently and there must be a difference between the correct and incorrect memory. This is
not the case here. So memory cannot be the highest court of appeal in the case of private language. Wittgenstein writes:

Let us imagine a table (something like a dictionary) that exists only in our imagination. A dictionary can be used to justify the translation of a word X by a word Y. But are we also to call it a justification if such a table is to be looked up only in the imagination? —“Well, yes; then it is a subjective justification.” —But justification consists in appealing to something independent. —“But surely I can appeal from one memory to another. For example, I don’t know if I have remembered the time of departure of a train right and to check it I call to mind how a page of the time-table looked. Isn’t it the same here?” —No; for this process has got to produce a memory which is actually correct. If the mental image of the time-table could not itself be tested for correctness, how could it confirm the correctness of the first memory? (As if someone were to buy several copies of the morning paper to assure himself that what it said was true.)
Looking up a table in the imagination is no more looking up a table than the image of the result of an imagined experiment is the result of an experiment. (PI 265)

Wittgenstein's Treatment of Private Language and Memory

Scepticism:

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Chapter 4

Kripke’s Interpretation of Wittgenstein’s Private Language

Argument:

The Problem of Rule-Following:

'Rule' enjoys a very important position in the philosophy of Wittgenstein. Its implications on philosophy of language, meaning, mathematics, mind, logic etc. is immense. With Saul Kripke's very influential, provocative, and controversial book, Wittgenstein On Rules And Private Language, the question of rule following has become one of the most controversial themes in the philosophy of Wittgenstein. Since, Kripke thinks that this issue is a central one and has far reaching implications regarding private language, therefore, it is instructive to discuss it in some detail.

Kripke notes that sections 143-242 are the most original and significant part of the Philosophical Investigations. He further claims that at the core of the Philosophical Investigations is a sceptical problem. Wittgenstein is confronted with, Kripke maintains, a sceptical paradox which is 'perhaps the central problem of the Philosophical Investigations'. (K.7) Wittgenstein does not only invent the
sceptical paradox, Kripke holds, but offers a solution – sceptical solution – of it. Kripke writes:

Wittgenstein has invented a new form of scepticism. Personally I am inclined to regard it as the most radical and original sceptical problem that philosophy has seen to date, one that only a highly unusual cast of mind could have produced. Of course he does not wish to leave us with his problem, but to solve it: the sceptical conclusion is insane and intolerable. It is his solution, I will argue, that contains the argument against ‘private language’; for allegedly, the solution will not admit such a language. (Kripke, p.60)

Kripke’s reading of Wittgenstein is that the notion of rules or rule following is central in the Philosophical Investigations. He finds the question of rule following very problematic. Kripke is of the opinion that in this context Wittgenstein offers a sceptical paradox of Humean nature and then puts forward a sceptical solution of the same sort. The sceptical paradox, which Kripke thinks Wittgenstein offers, is that there is nothing, no fact, that could constitute meaning
so much so that language is impossible. A sceptical solution, which Kripke attributes to Wittgenstein, is that he rejects the sceptical conclusion while accepting the premise(s).

Kripke rejects the widely held view that the 'private language argument' begins in section 243. He is of the opinion that the real private language argument lies 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." (K. 3)

Sections 243-315 which are generally refereed to as the 'private language argument' 'deal with the application of the general conclusions about language drawn in 138-24 to', Kripke maintains, 'the problem of sensations' (K 79). This according to Kripke runs contrary to the Wittgenstein's conclusion regarding language. Let us see the paradox and its solution.
Chapter 4  
Kripke's Interpretation of Wittgenstein's Private Language Argument  

The Wittgensteinian Paradox:  

According to Kripke section 201 of the Philosophical Investigations contains the sceptical paradox. He quotes Wittgenstein:  

In 201 Wittgenstein says, "this was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. (K p.7)  

Kripke implies from here the impossibility of linguistic meaning and hence language, since language is rule governed. The following discussion will show how Kripke presents the alleged Wittgensteinian paradox.  

Kripke maintains that if I use a certain word or function now it must accord (cohere, be consistent) with what I had meant by it in the past, i.e., if I now give the answer of '58 + 67' then it must be assumed that I am interpreting '+' in the same manner as I used it in the past. I give '125' as the answer by adding the two arguments. As I perform this operation it must be assumed that in the past I have meant
addition or plus by ‘+’. Kripke’s sceptic challenges this assumption. There is no fact to guarantee this assumption. It could be the case that in the past I did not mean addition by ‘+’ but another function, quuaddition whose answer is ‘5’ instead of ‘125’. He argues:

In the discussion below the challenge posed by the sceptic takes two forms. First, he questions whether there is any fact that I meant plus, not quus, that will answer his sceptical challenge. Second, he questions whether I have any reason to be so confident that now I should answer ‘125’ rather than ‘5’. (Kripke, 11)

The sceptical paradox has two aspects, Colin McGinn clarifies Kripke’s position, ‘an epistemological aspect, and a metaphysical aspect. Epistemologically,... nothing can now be cited to justify my assumption of semantic constancy; constitutively (metaphysically), ... there is no fact about me which could constitute my meaning addition rather than quadition.’ 1. The epistemological aspect is given as follows. Kripke says:
Let me repeat the problem. The sceptic doubts whether any instructions I gave myself in the past compel (or justify) the answer '125' rather than '5'. He puts the challenge in terms of a sceptical hypothesis about a change in my usage. Perhaps when I used the term 'plus' in the past, I always meant quas: by hypothesis I never gave myself any explicit directions that were incompatible with such a supposition. (Kripke, 13)

The metaphysical aspect that there is no fact which could constitute my meaning addition rather than quaddition is related to the epistemological one. It is the metaphysical aspect around which the whole issue centers. Here Kripke argues that there is nothing in my past history, no formulae, no brain state or process, or mental fact, to settle this problem. He maintains:

Now Wittgenstein's sceptic argues that he knows of no fact about an individual that could constitute his state of meaning plus rather than quas. (Kripke, 39)
In such a case any answer is correct some interpretation. This means that there is no question of correctness or incorrectness here. Every attempt is a leap in the dark. He argues:

The sceptic argues that when I answered '125' to the problem '68+57', my answer was an unjustified leap in the dark; my past mental history is equally compatible with the hypothesis that I meant quus, and therefore should have said '5'. . . . Nothing justifies a brute inclination to answer one way rather than another. (K. 15)

The last sentence refers to what Kripke calls the paradox. He says:

This, then, is the sceptical paradox. When I respond in one way rather than another to such a problem as '68+57', I can have no justification for one response rather than another. Since the sceptic who supposes that I meant quus cannot be answered, there is no fact about me that distinguishes between my meaning plus and my meaning quus. Indeed, there is no fact about me that distinguishes between my meaning a definite function by 'plus' (which
determines my responses in new cases) and my meaning nothing at all. (K 21)

It is to be noted in the celebrated example cited by Kripke, one is seeking to interpret the present case, without success, in accord with the past one. The same thing holds good for the past case as well. That is to say that the use of '+ ' in the past must accord with the use of it in remoter past. But we have seen that it is not possible in the present case, therefore, it must not be possible in the past case as well. Thus there is the paradox. So far a brief outline of the sceptical paradox has been made with the help of the mathematical example. Kripke generalizes it in the following words:

The sceptical argument, then, remains unanswered. There can be no such thing as meaning anything by any word. Each new application we make is a leap in the dark; any present intention could be interpreted so as to accord with anything we may choose to do. So there can be neither accord, nor conflict. This is what Wittgenstein said in 202. (k 55)
The Sceptical Solution:

The solution (sceptical) to this paradox, according to Kripke, consists in accepting the premise and denying the conclusion. 'The sceptical solution does this by persuading that we do not need to supply the account of meaning the sceptic shows to be unavailable; we can take a radically different view of the significance of statements about meaning, namely that such statements do not purport to state fact at all.' McGinn clarifies Kripke's view. It consists in replacing 'truth-condition' with 'assertability-condition'. Kripke thinks that 'Wittgenstein proposes a language based, not on truth condition, but on assertability conditions or justification conditions.' (K 74) This, Kripke further maintains, on the one hand 'offers a new approach to the problem of how language has meaning', while on the other hand 'it can be applied to give an account of assertions about meaning themselves, regarding as assertions within our language (K 77). Wittgenstein's solution, according to Kripke, is sceptical in so far as it accepts the sceptic's negative claims that no fact or truth condition corresponds to statements, yet it is a solution as far as it shows that the impossibility of meaning can be done
away with if we shift from truth conditions to assertability
conditions.

Wittgenstein’s sceptical solution concedes to the
sceptic that no ‘truth conditions’ or
‘corresponding facts’ in the world exist that make a
statement like “Jones, like many of us, means
addition by ‘+’” true. Rather we should look at how
such assertions are used. (Kripke, 86)

Kripke notes here that this shift from truth condition to
assertibility condition will not encounter sceptical problem.
He says:

Now if we suppose that facts, or truth conditions,
are of the essence of meaningful assertion, it will
follow from the sceptical conclusion that assertions
that anyone ever means anything are meaningless. On
the other hand, if we apply to these assertions the
tests suggested in Philosophical Investigations, no
such conclusion follows. ... the game of
asserting them under such conditions has a role in
our lives. No supposition that ‘facts correspond’
to *those assertions is needed.* [Italics mine] (K 77-78).

This shift from truth-conditions to assertibility-conditions leads to a shift from correspondence to facts to coherence with the community. The assertibility-conditions of my meaning something by a word or function involves that I am inclined to use it in accordance with the linguistic community. According to Kripke:

> Any individual who claims to have mastered the concept of addition will be judged by the community to have done so if his particular responses agree with those of the community in enough cases, . . . (Kripke, 91-92)

The lack of accordance with the linguistic community will exclude the person from having any language at all. That is to say that to posses a language one must be judged to cohere in use with the rest of the community. He further argues:

> A deviant individual whose responses do not accord with those of the community in enough cases will not be judged, by the community, to be following its rules; he may even be judged to be a madman,
following no coherent rule at all. When the community denies of someone that he is following certain rules, it excludes him from various transactions such as the one between the grocer and the customer. It indicates that it cannot rely on his behavior in such transactions. (Kripke, 93)

Since to mean something involves community therefore Kripke’s interpretation of Wittgenstein implies a sort of verificationism. The agreement with rest of the community entails that it is checkable. Kripke maintains:

Wittgenstein’s sceptical solution to his problem depends on agreement, and on checkability - on one person’s ability to test whether another uses a term as he does. (Kripke, 99)

The issue is, according to Kripke, linked with the private language argument. Since my following of rules must accord with the rest of the community, therefore, it is impossible to have private rules. The impossibility of private rules implies the impossibility of private language. Kripke says:

A sceptical problem is posed, and a sceptical solution to that problem is given. The solution
turns on the idea that each person who claims to be following a rule can be checked by others. (Kripke, 101)

Kripke’s interpretation of private language argument is this that a physically isolated person can follow a rule, ‘but a person considered in isolation cannot’. Thus there is nothing wrong in saying that Robinson Crusoe, isolated on an island, follows rules, provided, Kripke maintains, we take him into our community and apply our criteria of rule following. Kripke writes:

What does follow is that if we think of Crusoe as following rules, we are taking him into our community and applying our criteria for rule following to him. The falsity of the private model need not mean that a physically isolated individual cannot be said to follow rules; rather that an individual, considered in isolation (whether or not he is physically isolated), cannot be said to do so. (K 110)
A Critical Analysis of Kripke:

Kripke's interpretation of Wittgenstein has been put to severe criticism by the thinkers dealing in this tradition during the last decade and a half. The claim that Wittgenstein puts forward a sceptical paradox and offers a sceptical solution in the Humean manner, critics believe, is not supported by the text. In what follows I would inquire whether or not the letter or interpretation of the Wittgenstein's text could lead to the problem which Kripke has pointed out.

According to Kripke sec 201 is the core of the PI in which Wittgenstein puts forward the paradox. On Kripke's interpretation the solution of the paradox—sceptical solution—involves community which renders private language impossible (which according to Kripke is established in 202). Let us examine this i.e. whether 201 offers a paradox and whether 201 is the core of the Philosophical Investigations and whether 202 states the conclusion of private language argument.

The sec. 201-2 of the Investigations run as follows:

This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. The answer
was: if everything can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can also be made to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here.

It can be seen that there is a misunderstanding here from the mere fact that in the course of our argument we give one interpretation after another; as if each one contended us at least for a moment, until we thought of yet another standing behind it. What this shews is that there is a way of grasping a rule which is not an interpretation, but which is exhibited in what we call "obeying the rule" and "going against it" in actual cases.

Hence there is an inclination to say: every action according to the rule is an interpretation. But we ought to restrict the term "interpretation" to the substitution of one expression of the rule for another. (PI 201)

And hence also 'obeying a rule' is a practice. And to think one is obeying a 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. (PI 202)

Whether 201 is the core of PI:

In order to answer the questions whether 201 is the core of the *Investigations*, the historical evolution of the *Investigations*, Baker and Hacker recommend, is to be seen. They point out that in the earlier draft of the *Investigations* the sec. 201 is missing. Now, had 201 been the core of *PI* such omissions would not have resulted.

Furthermore, the context of occurrence of 201-3 in MS 129 is not the same as that of *Philosophical Investigations*. In MS Sec. 201-3 has a bearing on 'recognition as mediating between saying and seeing'.

Again, they write 'the manuscript contexts has nothing to do with scepticism', rather 'in their original context they [sec 201-3] quite explicitly build upon [sec]198 and upon the senselessness of private ostensive definition,' Further they say:
The 'private' following of a rule, e.g. a mental ostensive definition, that is presupposed by the supposition that recognition intervenes between seeing and saying, is a sham, in which following a rule and thinking one is following a rule collapse into each other.

Whether 201 offers a paradox:

In order to determine whether Wittgenstein offers a paradox as suggested by Kripke the context of 201-202 is to be seen. There is a thematic unity in sec. 143-242 of PI. In these hundred sec. Wittgenstein aims at dispensing with the view that meaning and understanding consist in being guided by a rule— a mental rule. Wittgenstein's target is the rejection of the concept of being guided by a rule. Nowhere in these hundred sections or anywhere else in the PI does Wittgenstein reject or doubt rule following. Hence the context of the text does not provide any ground to attribute a sceptical paradox to Wittgenstein. Let us fill this argument a bit.

Immediately before 143 Wittgenstein introduces the issue of the relation of the act of meaning and understanding, which
happens (in a flash) at any instance, and the use of it which is extended in time. 'Can what we grasp in a flash accord with a use, fit or fail to fit? And how can what is present to us in an instant, what comes before us in an instant, fit a use?' (PI 139) The answer to this question involves a correct appreciation of what it is to grasp the meaning of a word or to understand it. Wittgenstein rejects that the use or application of a word means the occurrence of something before one's consciousness. He argues:

What is essential is to see the same thing can come before our minds when we hear the word and the application still be different. Has it the same meaning both times? I think we shall say not. (PI 140)

Wittgenstein here is pointing to the fact that the mental sample could not serve the purpose of explaining the relation between the act of grasping the meaning and its use i.e., Marie McGinn comments '. . . our infinite ability to use language cannot be explained in terms of a, finite generative base;' and consequently the difference between understanding and failing to understand language 'does not lie in the
presence or absence, respectively, of the finite internal state which is the source of infinite capacity."

Wittgenstein, in connection to the question of relation of grasping the meaning and its correct application in an infinite number of cases, investigates the possibility of occurrence of formula coming before one's mind. Wittgenstein rejects this also on the pretext that the coming of the formula before one's mind does not guarantee the correct application of it. Thus understanding does not consist in the occurrence of a picture or formula before one's mind. These are, for Wittgenstein, the common misconceptions. Understanding (or meaning) is akin to ability or a mastery of a technique. Wittgenstein argues:

If there has to be anything 'behind the utterance of the formula' it is particular circumstances, which justify me in saying I can go on—when the formula occurs to me. (PI 154)

The above section hints that it is the actual circumstances which must be the focus of attention in dealing with the issues regarding meaning and understanding. As understanding is mastery of a technique we are lead to the problem of
following a rule. The crucial questions addressed in 185-242 are related to the issue of what it is to follow a rule, what is the relation between rule following and interpretation, and rule following and action/practice.

Here Wittgenstein rejects the idea that there is something in the rule which somehow compels one to obey a particular rule in certain determinate way/ways. There is no mysterious process, state, formula, according to Wittgenstein, which determines the pupil to write 1002 instead of 1004 when given the order to add +2. It is only the practice of using a rule that determines what it is to follow a rule and going against it. It is not the case that there exists a conflict between a rule (+2) and the reaction of the pupil (when he writes down 1004, 1008, instead of 1002, 1004) which would lead to rule scepticism as thought of by Kripke. It is rather a conflict between the pupil’s reaction and the trainer’s reaction, and which one is the correct application could only be resolved by referring to the actual form of life within which the training and the application are done.

True, there are cases in which one knows the answer to a particular question in advance but that too must be explained in terms of practice. As Marie McGinn explains ‘it is practice
that is invoked by these words, and not a mysterious mental act.' As Wittgenstein writes:

When you said "I already at the time . . ." that meant something like: "If I had then been asked what number should be written after 1000, I should have replied '1002'." And that I don't doubt.

(PI 187)

There remains another tempting misconception, which Wittgenstein rejects, that there mediates an act of interpretation between a rule and its application. That is the pupil's writing down 1000, 1004, 1008,.. depends on his interpretation of the rule (+2). But this is absurd since in that case the distinction between correct and incorrect application of rule would be lost. The matter is referred to in sections 196 and 201. Wittgenstein clarifies:

"But how can a rule shew me what I have to do at this point? Whatever I do is, on some interpretation, in accord with the rule."—that is not what we ought to say, but rather: any interpretation still hangs in the air along with what it interprets, and cannot give it any support.
Interpretations by themselves do not determine meaning. (PI 198)

It is to be noted that in the above paragraph what Wittgenstein rejects is that one cannot talk about correct interpretation of a rule without paying any heed to the actual practice. The last sentence of the above quotation when read with the section 201 would resolve the supposed charge of sceptical paradox.

This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. The answer was: if everything can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be neither accord nor conflict here... (PI 201)

In the above section Wittgenstein is clearly stating a reductio ad absurdum. To put the case precisely we can reframe the argument in this way. If interpretation mediates between rule and its application, then it is both the case that interpretation accords with the rule and does not accord with
the rule (which is absurd). Hence, Interpretation does not mediate between a rule and its application. This is a perfectly valid argument. To conclude from here that rule following does not occur is to argue besides the point.

Again, Wittgenstein nowhere claims that rule following does not occur. The long chain of argument of which 201 is the terminus aims at dispensing with the confusions regarding, understanding, knowledge and rule following etc., hence it cannot be validated that Wittgenstein subscribes to a sceptical paradox.

Moreover, defective conceptual schemes beget scepticism and paradox. Wittgenstein's sole interest is the grammar of following the rules (PI 199). Here he does not propose any theory or analysis of rule following. What he says is that rules are connected with regularity and practice, which is, as Marie McGinn puts, 'observable in the structure of our language, in how our concepts actually function.' Since he is not interested in giving any theory or philosophical analysis about rule following, therefore, one cannot attribute sceptical paradox to Wittgenstein. The following section substantiates this view:
Let me ask this: what has the expression of a rule—say signpost—got to do with my actions? What sort of connexion is there here? —Well, perhaps this one: I have been trained to react to this sign in a particular way, and now I do so react to it.

But that is only to give a causal connexion; to tell how it has come about that we now go by the sign-post; not what this going-by-the-sign really consists in. On the contrary; I have further indicated that a person goes by a sign-post only in so far as there exists a regular use of sign-posts, a custom. (PI 198)

Introduction of the community:

Kripke's claim that Wittgenstein, after realizing the impossibility of rule following, replaces Truth conditions with Assertability conditions. The latter involves a community and hence it is impossible for the individual in isolation to obey a rule and possess a language. This in turn leads to the impossibility, according to Kripke, of private language.
This suggestion of replacing truth condition with assertability condition is also not correct. For, in the first place Wittgenstein nowhere offers a theory of meaning. When dealing with meaning Wittgenstein tells to look at the explanation of meaning, use, practice, particular concrete cases. This does not agree with the view which Kripke attributes to Wittgenstein i.e. Wittgenstein puts forward an assertability theory of meaning involving community.

A note on the Grammar of rule-following:

This discussion will aim at clearing the dispute that whether community is necessarily involved in rule-following and whether it is possible to follow a rule in isolation.

For Stuart Shanker Wittgenstein conception of rule-following involves a social practice. But for Gordon Baker and Peter Hacker, Rule-following is a practice which need not necessarily be social. I think Hacker's suggestion implies from (PI 190) quoted above, that practice here refers more to theory and practice rather than individual and social practice.
Moreover, there must be, Colin McGinn maintains, more than one occasions of regularity of action (rule-following). This means that it is possible to obey a rule in isolation. This would not amount to saying that one is obeying a rule privately, since 'private' means that which pertains to consciousness—to the first person subjective experiences. Rule-following is characterized by regularity and not necessarily by community. One man can be said to follow a rule when on a number of occasions he pursues a regular course of action (including linguistic action). As Wittgenstein argues:

Is what we call "obeying a rule" something that it would be possible for only one man to do, and to do only once in his life?—This is of course a note on the grammar of the expression "to obey a rule".

It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which someone obeyed a rule. It is not possible that there should have been only one occasion on which a report was made, an order given or understood; and so on. —To obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are customs (uses, institution).
To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to be master of a technique. (PI 199)

It is possible for me to invent a card-game today, which however never gets played. But it means nothing: in the history of mankind just once was a game invented, and that game was never played by anyone. That means nothing. Not because it contradicts psychological laws. Only in a quite definite surrounding do the words "invent a game" "play a game" make sense.

In the same way it cannot be said either that just once in the history of mankind did someone follow a sign-post. Whereas it can be said that just once in the history of mankind did some walk parallel with a board. And that first impossibility is again not a psychological one. (RFM p. 346)

Wittgenstein does talk about agreement but from here one cannot make a case for community, since the agreement is essential for communication with others and not for rule-following. It is to be noted that rule-following is an action
and not merely an event, it is contingent and is exclusively pertains to human ways of living. Rule-following makes sense when there is a possibility of not following rules and that relates to human ways of acting and living. Wittgenstein writes:

We say that, in order to communicate, people must agree with one another about the meanings of words. But the criterion for this agreement is not agreement with reference to definitions, e.g., ostensive definitions—but also agreement in judgments. It is essential for communication that we agree in a large number of judgments. (RFM p. 343)

Moreover, the above discussion shows that there does not exist any mythical, metaphysical, mathematical, or mechanical connection between a rule and its application. Rule-following relates to ways of living and acting. One need not have any
justification for it. Rule-following is blind. It has also been made evident that rule-following is possible in isolation. Hence, Kripke is wrong in arguing that rule-following is not possible in isolation. I can be as certain that I have followed a rule as others could be about me. As Shanker argues:

It is not that the rule mechanically determines its application, but rather, that we determine, in our practice of using the rule as a paradigm, what is it to count as complying with a rule. ¹¹

Does PI 202 state the conclusion of the private language argument:

In section 202 Wittgenstein rejects the possibility of private rules (private ostensive definition). This has a bearing on the private language argument. Since the impossibility of private rules would necessarily reject the possibility of private language. But the real private language argument is not in 202. It is rather introduced in 243 as discussed in this study. The reason for this is that the context of 202 is different from 243. In 202 Wittgenstein rejects the possibility of there being private rules after rejecting the
false picture of being guided by interpretation whereas in what is known as the private language argument he rejects the philosophical confusions regarding 'the conception of the mental underlying the mainstream European philosophy since Descartes.' Hence the conclusion of private language could not be found in 202. Hacker argues that the relation between 202 and private language argument is like the connection between Kant's Transcendental Analytic. Baker and Hacker write:

The private language argument is indeed built on the previous discussions, not only of rule-following but also of ostensive definitions, samples, meaning, understanding, and explanation. So too Kant's 'Dialectic' is built on the 'Analytic', but that does not mean that the 'real "Dialectic"' is the 'Analytic'."
Chapter 5

PRIVATE OSTE NSIVE DEFINITION AND PHILOSOPHICAL CONFUSIONS

The Private Language Argument and the Traditional Problems of Philosophy:

Wittgenstein’s treatment of the private language is aimed at dissolving some of the traditional problems of philosophy especially regarding self-knowledge and the knowledge of other minds. There are several other problems in epistemology, ontology, and the philosophy of mind connected with this issue. Several theories have been proposed to solve these problems. Wittgenstein considers the whole enterprise of the traditionalists to be mistaken. For Wittgenstein, it is not the task of philosophy to propound any theory or formulate any proposition. The task of philosophy is to dispense with the philosophical problems. Since these problems arise due to abuse of language they can only be dissolved/dispense with by the correct use of language. The proper task of philosophy, therefore, is to command a clear view of language.

The problems regarding ‘mind’ is very old but it gains prominence with Descartes. For Descartes, as we know, there are two substances, mind and body. They do not have any property in common. What one has the others lack. The essence
of mind is thinking while that of body is extension. Thus I am a thinking substance as well as extended substance. The two substances, Descartes maintained, interact on each other.¹

Moreover, it could be noted that there are two worlds. The internal world of consciousness and the external world of senses. The knowledge of the internal world of consciousness is certain while there is a scepticism about the knowledge of the external world.

Again, it follows from the above that one knows that one is a thinking being by being conscious or directly aware of one's mental acts (doubting, willing, etc.,). Since I cannot be aware of another person's mental experiences in the same way as is the case with me, therefore, I cannot know other minds.

The empiricist found the Cartesian notion of mind as a substance implausible. Hume brings out a detailed criticism of this view. He argues that because there is no impression of a self substance available, therefore, it is not legitimate to maintain that there exists one.
Hume thinks that self is no more than a 'bundle' of perceptions. Mind is a 'collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in perpetual flux and movement.' Elsewhere he writes:

The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, repass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. There is properly no simplicity in it at one time, nor identity in different; whatever natural propension we may have to imagine that simplicity and identity.

Hume further maintains that one knows about this theatre by introspection. Introspection which is said to be an internal observation is exclusively accessible to the first person.

For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception and never can observe anything but the perception.
Introspection is different from Cartesian consciousness or direct awareness of the thinking substance. The difference consists mainly in this that internal observation is said to be voluntary at particular times whereas the direct awareness is not.

The problems that the bundle theory encounters is much the same as encountered by the Cartesian self substance theory. Here again knowledge of the internal realm is certain, is of a higher level than that of the external world. Whether the external world exists is a genuine question for the introspectionists. It is now easy to see the roots to solipsism and idealism. The solipsist is captured in the world of self-consciousness. For him there is no ground to believe in the existence of other minds and the external world. The idealist, however, reduces every thing to minds and what pertains to minds. For them the world apart from minds does not exist. It is to be remembered that Berkeley denied the existence of matter and thus maintained that there is nothing but minds and ideas in the minds. Hume was a phenomenalist. Furthermore, the problem of other minds would always be in currency once it is maintained that one knows about mind by introspection (or direct awareness) which is exclusively possible to the first person alone.
These problems have a special commitment to private language. Philosophically one is committed to such a view only if one holds that first person psychological assertions are reports of the inner realm, that language has its foundation in the subjective experiences, and meaning and understanding are mental states and processes. Foundationalism, the dualism of the inner and outer, Scepticism about the external world, self certainty and the problem of other minds all are committed to a private language. As it has been earlier argued the notion of private language implies the notion of private ostensive definition, therefore, in all such questions the private ostensive definition, the given, the sample plays the key role.

In the problems mentioned above there is a commitment to the view that it makes sense to talk about self-knowledge. It is maintained, as discussed above, that there are conscious states, processes, and experiences given to the individual of which one learns by introspection or by direct awareness. One is aware of one's self as a thinking substance. The self-knowledge one gets is certain and all other knowledge is built on it. Searle says:
Chapter 5  Private Ostensive Definition and Philosophical Confusions

Traditional epistemology of the sort one finds in Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, for example, is based on the idea that we should build knowledge of the world from the inside out. We start with our inner private sensations and then construct public language and public knowledge on the basis of our inner experiences.  

First Person Epistemic Claims and the Problems of Philosophy:

The above problems of traditional philosophy presuppose the private language which in turn presupposes private ostensive definition. It is private ostensive definition, it is maintained, with which one defines one’s private mental objects / experiences. This is done, maintained further, by concentrating one’s attention on them and giving them names. In this way the first person knows them. Since other persons cannot do this, therefore, they cannot know them. Accordingly, to say ‘I know my moods, sensations or experiences etc. which others cannot ‘ make perfectly good sense. This, Wittgenstein maintains, is a mistake and various problems in the philosophy of mind are embedded in this misunderstanding. The mistakes committed here are the mistakes regarding the nature of sensation (Experience) and the nature of language. The former being that sensations are

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private object and the latter being that one learns them by private ostensive definition. The task of Wittgenstein's arguments regarding the impossibility of there being a private language is to point out these mistakes and hence dissolve the problems in epistemology, ontology, and the philosophy of mind.

On this view, one can say, in an epistemic sense, 'I know my pain.' Here the following points are to be noted: i) It is assumed that there are private objects which are exclusively owned by the first person. ii) one learns them by internal observation. This internal observation is immune to error. And iii) there is the knower i.e. "I" which knows the given private object by internal observation, private ostensive definition. Wittgenstein in his treatment of private language showed that these assumptions are mistaken. The reasons are given below.

**Private Objects:**

I) The notion of private object rests on the mistake that language functions on the model of name and object named. Failing to find an object (public) as referring to sensation
e.g., pain, one is lead to maintain that there must essentially be a private object.

...if we construe the grammar of the expression of sensation on the model of 'object and designation' the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant.

(PI 293)

2) Pains and sensations are not essentially private objects. Had they been so they could not be used in language. The very nature of language is foreign to private samples and the myth of the given.

3) Pains and sensations are internally connected with expression.

Internal Observation:

Internal observation is a mistaken idea. Observation involves the possibility of making mistakes which could not be the case with internal observation.

Observation can be minute, crafty, systematic etc. Such predicates are not applicable in the case of internal observation.
In the case of observation one's background knowledge plays a part. It is not the case with internal seeing. Hence internal observation is impossible.

Moreover, since the grammar of sensation is totally different from the grammar of knowledge, Wittgenstein concludes that it is illegitimate to say 'I know I am in pain' as a knowledge claim. 'I know that I am in pain' literally means 'I am in pain.'

Further, there is asymmetry between first person ('I know I am in pain') and third person psychological utterances (I know that he is in pain). In the former case one does not employ any criteria whereas in the latter one does. As discussed in the previous paragraph 'I know that I am in pain' is equivalent to 'I am in pain' which is equivalent to an expression of pain e.g., crying. One does not say 'I doubt whether I cry, grimace' so one cannot say 'I know that I am in pain' as an epistemic claim. The reason being that knowing implies doubting, learning, teaching, and possibility of making mistakes. The third person statements 'I know that he is in pain', however, are epistemic claims since they are uttered on the basis of criteria.
"I" as the Subject:

The first person pronoun is uncritically thought of as a subject which is the owner of a private world. It thinks, experiences etc. It is a subject which is aware of itself through direct awareness, introspection, internal observation etc. If the first person pronoun is a subject which is aware of itself, or which could be said to be aware of itself then ex hypothesi it involves the recognition of itself as itself. That is to say that it involves the recognition of the subject as the same (personal identity) at two distinct points of time. The crucial point then, for philosopher holding this view, is that what does this personal identity consist in. Philosophers have proposed various theories regarding personal identity.

For Wittgenstein, as mentioned above, the first person psychological utterances are unlike reports and description. He is not of the opinion that one perceives something when one utters a first person psychological statement. Moreover he rejects that the "I" in "I see, I dream, I am depressed, I feel a pain etc.," refers to a subject/person. The following discussion will further clarify this point.
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When there is a subject, person or self there is a question of recognition. The possibility of recognition entails the possibility of misrecognition. The question of recognition is settled on the basis of a certain criteria. It makes sense to say 'I thought that person to be Mr. X but I was mistaken. He was someone else.' Now this is not the case with the first person pronoun. One does not employ any criteria to say "I" in 'I am in pain.' One does not refer to a person when one utters a first person pronoun, maintains Wittgenstein, since it ("I") is immune to mistakes, errors, or misidentification. What cannot, in principle, be said to be misidentified, according to Wittgenstein, cannot be said to be identified either.

The first person pronoun "I" has a typical use which begets philosophical problems. It is sometimes used as an object, Wittgenstein maintains, and sometimes as a subject. When used as an object it is prone to identification and misidentification whereas when used as a subject it is immune to it. In the statement 'I am six feet tall' the first person pronoun "I" is used as an object. Here one can err. But in 'I am in pain' the first person pronoun "I" is used as a subject. One cannot err here and no criterion is involved in making
this statement. Failing to notice this will result in many a philosophical problems. Wittgenstein says:

One can point to the difference between these two categories by saying: The cases of the first category involve the recognition of a particular person, and there is in these cases the possibility of an error, or as I should rather put it: The possibility of an error has been provided for... On the other hand, there is no question of recognizing a person when I say I have tooth-ache. To ask "are you sure that it's you who have pains?" would be nonsensical. (BE p.67)

Philosophers are lead to the view that the first person pronoun refers to a person by considering first person psychological assertions as epistemic claims. But this would be nonsensical. As Shoemaker writes:

if being aware of a pain were observing a pain and therefore involved being in such a position, it would have to be the case that it can be an open question, to be settled empirically, whether a person who is in pain and thinks that he is in pain is in fact aware of pain;... and that being
aware of a pain is one of several possible ways of knowing that one is in pain. But none of these things is the case. Again, a first person psychological utterance e.g., 'I am in pain' cannot be reduced to a statement about one's body. This is a grammatical rule. But since the conception of language is thought to be on the pattern of 'name and designation', therefore, one thinks that pains and aches etc., are objects in some realm, the mental realm and since it is "I" which has access to them, therefore, "I" must be a person radically different from a bodily being. Wittgenstein argues:

in the case in which "I" is used as subject, we don't use it because we recognize a particular person by his bodily characteristics; and this creates the illusion that we use this word to refer to something bodiless, which, however, has its seat in our body. In fact this seems to be the real ego, the one of which it was said, "Cogito, ergo sum." (BB, p.69)

Wittgenstein maintains that "I" as a subject does not refer to body. 'I am depressed the whole day' does not mean 'my body is
depressed the whole day.' As Findlay clarifies Wittgenstein's position:

'The kernel of the proposition that that which has pains or sees or thinks is of a mental nature is only that the word "I" in "I have pains" does not denote a particular body, for we can't substitute for "I" a description of body.\(^7\)

What Wittgenstein rejects is the view that the use of the first person pronoun is reflective. It is rather reflexive. 'I know I am in pain' is equivalent to 'I am in pain' which is the same as a natural expression of pain (since, pain is conceptually connected with natural expression eg. groaning or crying etc.). The 'I' in 'I am in pain' does not refer to a person. As pointed out by Findlay:

The word 'I' no more means the actual speaker than a groan means the actual sufferer: it merely shows who is the speaker or sufferer.\(^8\)

It is our biological nature which is part of the framework of our language which shows that human beings feel, and
experience etc., Form of life is out there which shows what it is to be a human being. What it is to be a human being cannot be properly answered by propounding theories or hypothesis. It is expressed in human ways of acting, living. The question regarding Self-knowledge and Other minds etc. cannot legitimately be asked. Such questions rest, as it has been shown, on misunderstanding regarding the nature of language and nature of experience.

My attitude towards him is an attitude towards a soul. I am not of the opinion that he has a soul.

The human body is the best picture of the human soul. (PI, ii, p.178)

the concept of a person is not to be analyzed as that of an animated body or of an embodied anima. This is not to say that the concept of a pure individual consciousness might not have a logically secondary existence, if one thinks, or finds, it desirable. We speak of a dead person as a body and in the same secondary way we might at best think of
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a disembodied person, retaining the logical benefit of individuality from having been a person. 9

Since the traditional problems presuppose the first person psychological utterance as epistemic claims and the private language argument dispenses with it as epistemic statement, therefore, all the traditional problems philosophy which presuppose the coherence of private language are dissolved. One need not postulate any theory for self-knowledge, other mind, and external world. Such views, including foundationalism, solipsism, idealism, etc., are dissolved when one casts a perspicuous view of language and sees the form of life.

FOUNDATIONALISM:

There are various versions of foundationalism. They can be put under a broad scheme which is: knowledge is a true justified belief. Justification of beliefs rests on certain foundations. A belief is either mediately or immediately justified. The mediate justification of beliefs consists in their being based on some other belief/s. These (other) beliefs are either immediately justified or are derived from still other
still other belief/s. The mediate justification of beliefs cannot go ad infinitum. All mediate beliefs, according to this view, must be based on beliefs which are immediately justified. A belief is immediately justified if its justification does not depend on other beliefs. The self justification of a belief consists in its being impossible to doubt. Traditionally beliefs are said to be immediately justified when they are self evident or based on experience.

Wittgenstein has been hostile to foundationalism. His discussion of meaning, philosophy, and grammar does not leave any room for such a view. The private language argument is especially aimed at resolving a version of foundationalism or a dominant theme in this connection which has been embraced by the various schools of modern philosophy. What he is interested in routing out is the view of the given. As it has already been pointed out that historically the immediately justified beliefs included beliefs that record what is immediately given in experience. What is given in experience was thought to be the foundation of knowledge as well as the foundation of language. It is so because it is infallible, incorrigible, and indubitable. What is immediately given in experience, it is thought, is the foundation on which all knowledge is built up. Thus Descartes’ clear and distinct ideas, and Locke’s representations in the
mind form the foundation of knowledge. It is further entailed that what is recorded in experience is learnt or reported by introspection or private ostensive definition. That is to say that according to this view all knowledge ultimately rests on Private experience. Oswald Hanfling clarifies:

In Descartes’ writings we are invited to develop a system of knowledge from the standpoint of a disembodied mind (the existence of our bodies being, so far, unproved); and in the works of the empiricists knowledge is treated as something that is ‘given’ to a passive receptacle, the mind.  

The empiricists and the rationalists differ in their account of the source of knowledge. That is to say that for the rationalists it is to be sought in reason while for the empiricist in experience. They both agree on the point that all knowledge rest on certain foundations. Moreover the following points are worth noting:

a) That introspection provide the secure foundations of knowledge.
b) For both the schools the rejection of the foundation of knowledge would inevitably lead to scepticism.

It is to be noted that the sceptics and the foundationalists are one in so far as postulating fundamental propositions without which the edifice of knowledge could not be built. The sceptics express failure to do so while the foundationalists claim success in meeting this demand.

Wittgenstein's denial of the first person psychological utterances as reports of the inner and the rejection of the myth of the mental sample does away with the view that all knowledge rests on whatever is given in experience. Wittgenstein's treatment of private language rejects introspection as a source of knowledge. Thus no ground is left for the traditional epistemology, foundationalism. The rejection of the private sample was necessary to do away with the view which hitherto had an appeal. It was a hard nut to crack. The reason being that it was so presented so as to make it both logically and psychologically compelling. The logical support being the conception of language- the Augustinian picture of language. While the psychological support being the impossibility of doubting one's experience. It is one of the special tasks of the private language argument to dispense with the view that
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there are mental sample and the first person psychological utterances are reports of them for which private ostensive definition is needed.

Knowledge, for Wittgenstein, is akin to understanding and ability rather than states of consciousness and experiences. It has already been argued that understanding is a mastery of technique which is learnt rather than possessed or experienced.

The grammar of the word "knows" is evidently closely related to that of "can", "is able to". But also closely related to that of "understands". ('Mastery of a technique',) (PI 150)

It could be seen from here that Wittgenstein does not leave any ground for the traditional epistemology in general and foundationalism in particular. The traditional epistemology strives certainty which is arrived at when a belief is justified. Thus justified belief is certain and is knowledge. For Wittgenstein 'form of life' is central regarding which there cannot be any doubt. Since language is a form of life (vis Pi 23), therefore our language begins with certainty rather than uncertainty. Hence the search for certainty in
traditional epistemology is unwarranted. For Wittgenstein certainty resides in the language-game and one doubts within certain context.

Do I want to say, then, that certainty resides in the nature of language-game? (OC 457)

One doubts on specific grounds. The question is this how is doubt introduced into the language-game? (OC 458)

It is part of the language-game with people’s names that everyone knows his name with the greatest certainty. (OC 579)

Now knowledge, for Wittgenstein, is not a justified belief. The reason for this being that, according to Wittgenstein, all believes are groundless.

"Here I have arrived at a foundation of all my beliefs." "This position I will hold" But isn’t that, precisely, only because I am completely convinced of it?—What is 'being completely convinced' like? (OC 246)
At the foundation of well-founded belief lies belief that is not founded. (OC 253)

Knowledge, according to Wittgenstein, is not rooted in any foundation as beliefs are groundless. Hence to look for the foundations of knowledge is hopeless. States of consciousness and the propositions of logic do not provide the foundation of knowledge. Knowing implies understanding, therefore, knowing implies that one is able to answer the question that 'how does one know'. The answer to this question is the description of the proto-phenomenon, this is how the language-game is played.

If someone believes something, we needn't always be able to answer the question 'why he believes it'; but if he knows something, then the question "how does he know?" must be capable of being answered. (OC 550)

One says "I know" when one is ready to give compelling grounds. "I know" relates to a possibility of demonstrating the truth. Whether someone knows something can come to light, assuming that he is convinced of it.
But if what he believes is of such a kind that the
grounds that he can give are no surer than his
assertion, then he cannot say that he knows what he
believes. (OC 243)

That is to say that 'states of consciousness' and 'knowledge'
belong to two different language-games and confusing them
would result in philosophical muddles. Thus the empiricists
mistake of taking experience as knowledge is a philosophical
mistake. This is not to deny that one does not learn by
experience. Rather one learns by experience within certain
context. The setting of this context is the task of language-
form of life. Thus acquisition of language is prior to
knowledge.

The Cartesian proposal of grounding knowledge on private
experience is a classical case of what Wittgenstein calls
philosophical confusion. Descartes lead himself to this
position as a result of casting his famous doubt - the
Cartesian Doubt. Now whatever the nature of this doubt may be,
one thing is for sure from the Wittgenstein's perspective
i.e., doubting presupposes a convention -a language, a form of
life. There cannot be any doubt regarding this convention in
which someone is doubting.
Goldstein's Criticism:

Recently Irwin Goldstein has challenged the view that the above mentioned problems have any special commitment to the private ostensive definition. That is to say that the denial of private language by rejecting the private ostensive definition does not lead one to deny the ontological and epistemological views.

Other minds skeptics, external world skeptics, and foundationalists have no special commitment to private ostensive definitions.¹¹

One could maintain, on other grounds, the cogency of the problems of other minds, egocentric foundationalism, scepticism about the external world, solipsism, and immaterialism even though one refrains from committing oneself to private ostensive definition. Let us examine Goldstein's arguments in this connection.

Goldstein maintains that learning involves one's having sensory experience. Hence whatever one learns is ultimately dependent on one's having his own sensory experience. This is self evident truth for both the skeptics as well as non-skeptics. One cannot learn except from one's own case.
There are words a person can learn only through his own (sensory) experience is an innocent truth. Even a non-skeptic, who entertains no doubts about other minds or an external world, must admit there are words a person can learn only from his own sensory experience.  

I think here Goldstein has not got Wittgenstein correctly. Wittgenstein does not deny that one learns by experience. Rather one learns by experience within certain context. The setting of this context is the task of language - form of life. Thus language is prior to knowledge. Again, he says.

It is not only names for sensations that a person can learn 'only through his own sensory experience.' To learn any word in English and other national languages a person must rely on his sensory experience to indicate what the word means.

It is true that eyes, mouth, and tongue are used in acquisition of language. Now if these sensory organs are used then surely sensory experiences play a part in the acquisition of language. The crucial point here is whether Wittgenstein anywhere denies this self evident fact? The point to be noted
is that Wittgenstein is nowhere concerned with the steps through which one learns a language. Whether one learns this sound or that sound first, or in which way the mouth is used in saying the words or ear is used in listening. He deals with the issue at a deeper level. He is concerned with the nature of language. For Wittgenstein the question whether language has an essence or not is to be answered by looking into the functions of language. This shows that language is a tool and its concepts are tools. Language, therefore, is a 'form of life' rather than pictures or images. The meanings of tools are in their employment, in the same way, meaning and hence understanding are revealed in practice rather than pictures, images, and experiences.

Moreover, animals do have sensory experiences, perhaps more or less as we have, but they do not have, at any rate, the language that we have. 'If a lion could talk, we could not understand him' (PI ii, p. 223).

We say a dog is afraid his master will beat him; but not, he is afraid his master will beat him tomorrow. Why not? (PI 650)
Chapter 5

Private Ostensive Definition and Philosophical Confusions

Why can't a dog simulate pain? Is he too honest?
Could one teach a dog to simulate pain? Perhaps it is possible to teach him howl on particular occasions as if he were in pain, even when he is not. But the surroundings which are necessary for this behaviour to be real simulation are missing. (PI 250)

Again, Goldstein thinks that Wittgenstein or his colleagues for that matter err by supposing that other minds and external world are conditions for a person acquiring language. Goldstein is of the opinion that for Wittgenstein there cannot be a single-user-language and '[t]o use a language a person must be subject to checks that originate from other people.' 14

Goldstein concludes:

A person who rejects other minds skepticism and external world skepticism for the reason given here does not rest his rejection on the argument from private ostensive definition. He detaches the no single-user-language thesis from the no private ostensive definition thesis and uses only the former. This critic concedes, what I contend, that other minds skeptics and external world skeptics
have no special need for private ostensive definitions.\textsuperscript{15}

Here again it is a mistake, I believe, that for Wittgenstein there cannot be a single-user-language and that there should be others to check my use of language. As it has been argued above that language, for Wittgenstein, is a form of life. Form of life is given out there. It is shareable. This does not entail a single person cannot use a language. All it implies is that if a solitary person (living on some planet) uses a language then it in principle understandable by others. It would be, in principle, a public language which is contingently accessible to one person. Though there may not be other persons living there yet he need not commit himself to the Cartesian ontology.

In order to see whether there is any commitment to private ostensive definition with reference to the problems mentioned above one needs to settle it by seeing whether or not private samples, images, or experiences forms the paradigm in this connection. Whether it makes sense to speak about self-knowledge in strictly epistemic sense. If yes then one is committed to private ostensive definition. By implication in all such cases one is committed to this view.
We are not bothered if someone holds any of the above mentioned views without trying to prove with the help of theories. If, however, one tries to prove it with the help of theories one is necessarily committed to private ostensive definition. In the history of modern philosophy there is a strong emphasis that all such question rests on secure foundations, therefore, there is commitment to private ostensive definition.

The upshot of this chapter is that the traditional problems of philosophy presuppose the coherence of private ostensive definition and hence private language. The incoherence of private ostensive definition dissolves these problems. Thus it is established that Wittgenstein’s treatment of private language is a device for dissolving some of the questions in philosophy.
Conclusion

In this study it is shown that the notion of a private language which presupposes the existence of private signs which refer to private samples/objects/the given through private ostensive definition is logically impossible. The crucial point here is that such a language is impossible even to the first person, if it is, in principle, inaccessible to others. Our discussion of private language entails:

i) The incoherence of private ostensive definition which, as argued here, is the basis of private language. Private ostensive definition is the private analog of ostensive definition. It is mistakenly held that there is an essence of language which further entails that name-object relationship is the foundation of language. In the case of private language it is held that private ostensive definition connect private signs with private objects-objects supposed to be existing in one's private realm.

Language, for Wittgenstein, is a rule governed activity embedded in ways of living rather than in rigid metaphysical/logical/psychological structures. Language and actions are interwoven together. Language is a human
institution having no essence at all. Thus name-object relationship is not the foundation of language.

ii) There does not exist any sample, the given, in the mind which could be said to bestow a private sign with a meaning. Sensations are internally connected with their outward expressions. There is no need to posit ideas, impressions, sense data etc., as the immediate objects of mind, the objects which mediate between us and the physical objects. Instead, we see physical objects.

iii) The very idea of there being essentially private rules is absurd.

It is further argued that Wittgenstein in his treatment of private language does not hold 'memory skepticism' or 'rule skepticism' as alleged by some of his commentators.

Private ostensive definition has been shown here to be a myth. Private language too is a myth as it presupposes the coherence of private ostensive definition. It is this myth building tendency of philosophers with which Wittgenstein is at odds in
his later period. Wittgenstein's treatment of private language question is a special case of it.

Wittgenstein's treatment of Private language is a testing ground for his conception of philosophy which is, as it has been shown in this study, a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language. Various Philosophical problems in ontology, epistemology, and the philosophy of mind presuppose the coherence of private ostensive definition and hence private language. These problems are completely dissolved by showing the incoherence of private language. In this way Wittgenstein's treatment of private language is loosely a reductio ad absurdum of some of the philosophical puzzles/muddles.

In the philosophy of mind Wittgenstein's treatment of private language shows how our intelligence is bewitched by our language and leads to over theorize our ordinary experiences ending up in philosophical muddles. The cause of these philosophical muddles is the assumption that the first person psychological assertions are reports of the inner realm and the use of 'I know' in such statements is intended to make knowledge claims/reports. This view is held by different
confronting schools in the philosophy of mind. For both Cartesianism and Behaviourism 'I know that I am in pain' is a knowledge claim. Wittgenstein establishes that 'I know that I am in pain' is not a knowledge claim. Hence the schools which maintain the above view are mistaken.

For Wittgenstein mind/mental is not to be seen on the pattern of subject or object. It is not to be known by introspection/intuition or observation. It is shown in human ways of living. So there is no room for the problems of self knowledge and the knowledge of other minds. Moreover, language and knowledge have no foundation. Wittgenstein's treatment of private language is a denial of the view which reduces language and knowledge to subjectively given states/experiences.

By making the problems of self-knowledge and the knowledge of other minds vanish from the philosophical scene, Wittgenstein opens a space for the science of psychology to grow and progress. Psychology, Wittgenstein's treatment of private language attempts to prove, should not begin with an apology to the philosophers. It must start with certainty that resides in the language-games-language-games with mental vocabulary.
Wittgenstein has been the major figure behind two revolutions in philosophy. His philosophies of both earlier and later periods, have been important contributions to philosophy. Thinkers, however, disagree on the influence of Wittgenstein in philosophy. For some Wittgenstein's influence has been immense but for others it has been minimal.

Those who claim that Wittgenstein's influence has been minimal argue that philosophers in general have not accepted the Wittgenstein's view of philosophy as an activity to dissolve philosophical problems by getting a surview of language in use.

Those who claim Wittgenstein's influence to be immense argue from the fact that he was the author of two revolutions in philosophy, something which is unparalleled in the history of philosophy. There has been an immense secondary literature on Wittgenstein. There have been more than 7000 entries on Wittgenstein ranging from the philosophy of language, logic, mathematics, mind to as diverse fields as religion, mysticism, politics etc. Despite Wittgenstein's abhorring of forming a school, a school has been formed (called Wittgensteinian), correctly or incorrectly, after him. Some of his views have
Conclusion

become truisms. The issue of intersubjectivity, which is in vogue in contemporary scene, has to do with the Wittgenstein's treatment of language. Some of the thinkers in the Analytical Philosophy share Wittgenstein view that philosophy must not be confused with the sciences. Some apply Wittgenstein's method and views on various fields.

Wittgenstein's treatment of private language enjoys a very distinct position in philosophy. It is not only helpful in understanding his overall conception of philosophy, philosophical method, conception of language, meaning and mind but also significant in gaining insights in the traditional problems of philosophy. It is for this reason that the fifteen pages of the Philosophical Investigations in which the issue of private language is discussed has been the subject of immense debate. The issue is still very alive and with the publications of Saul Kripke's controversial book new dimensions have been added to the debate. Thus, at least, it cannot be said that private language issue has not been influential.

As already shown that a whole mythology is embedded in our language. Myths when seen as myths are to be understood as
part of language. But when they are identified as literally true and start dictating our lives they result in philosophical absurdities. Wittgenstein's treatment of private language should be seen as a myth demolishing activity—an activity that does the purging and cleansing job for mental vocabulary.

As observed by Cavel: 'Kant undid Hume's psychologizing of knowledge, Frege (and Husserl) undid psychologizing of logic, Wittgenstein in the Investigations tried to undo the psychologizing of psychology.' Wittgenstein's treatment of private language is a pre-requisite to an understanding of his undoing of the psychologizing of psychology. It is an important device against psychologism.
Chapter 1


2 ibid p. 34

3 ibid p. 33

4 For Russell ordinary language is defective. Thus creating an ideal language which conforms to the thesis of extensionality is a necessity. For Wittgenstein, ordinary language is deceptive and conceals an ideal structure. This has been the keynote of Tractatus.


References & Notes


10 ibid


Chapter 2


Chapter 3

1 Three senses of private language could be distinguished:

i) Language understood by one person or a group of persons e.g. a codified language. Such a language can be understood by others. Let's call it contingently private language.

ii) Language which no one other than the speaker could understand even if the speaker's experiences are made available to others. No one has held such a language to be possible.

iii) Language which cannot, in principle, be taught or learned by others as its subject matter is exclusively the experiences (private) of the first person. This is the sense with which Wittgenstein deals in the Investigations. For further details see O.R. Jones, Private language Arguments (London: Macmillan,
2 Peter Geach writes: 'Of course Wittgenstein did not want to deny the obvious truth that people have a 'private' mental life, in the sense that they have for example thoughts they do not utter and pains they do not show; nor did he try to analyse away this truth in a neo-behaviouristic fashion. In one of his lectures he mentioned Lytton Strachey's imaginative description of Queen Victoria's dying thoughts. He expressly repudiated the view that such a description is meaningless because 'unverifiable'; it has meaning, he said, but only throw its connexion with a wider, public, 'language-game' of describing people's thoughts; he used the simile that a chess-move worked out in a sketch of a few squares on a scrap of paper has significance through its connexion with the whole practice of playing chess.' In Peter Geach, Mental Acts (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957), p. 3.

3 Two Senses of privacy of sensations have been distinguished. See Anthony Kenny, Wittgenstein.

4 Ashok Vohra, Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Mind (Kent, Croom Helm Ltd., 1986), p 47.
Vohra clarifies this: The assertion "There was a stone in my shoe but I did not feel it" makes sense, the assertion "There was a pain in my knee but I did not feel it" makes no sense. (Vohra p.44)


ibid p. 76.


Chapter 4


2 ibid. p. 62.


4 ibid. p. 15. See below:

In Ms 129 the context of the occurrence of [sec] 201-3 of how I know that this is red, i.e., what is now Philosophical Investigations [sec] 377-81 (which also does not occur in the Intermediate Version). The argument is concerned to
establish that judgments such as 'These images are identical' or 'This is red' do not rest upon recognition. p. 12.

5 ibid. p. 15.


9 ibid. pp. 102-103.


ibid. p. 23.

Chapter 5

See R. Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy. Tr. J. Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986 (Reprinted)).


ibid. p. 252.


ibid. p. 150

Peter Strawson, *Persons*,


ibid. p. 141.

ibid. p. 142.
14 ibid. p. 146.

15 ibid. p. 146.
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