

Philosophical Problems: A Wittgensteinian Solution

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Abstract— Most of the philosophical problems arise from the miss- interpretation of language. But it is not true that language is responsible for this problem, only user of the language is responsible. Because, if the philosopher who use language and he fail to understand the logic of language then philosophical problem comes to being. Some philosopher can say- ideal language is better to solve the philosophical problems, because ideal language is stronger in nature than the ordinary language. But, Wittgenstein proved that ordinary language is so much strong as ideal language. He said ordinary language function like exact calculus as mathematics and there are certain definite and unique rules; and ordinary language can give a precise definition of every word. Another source of philosophical problem is ‘craving for generality’ of word meaning. Wittgenstein by introduce ‘language game’ shows a word meaning is not unitary and unchangeable. He has shown language is constituted by the species of the rule like the cluster of properties as game.

In this paper, I intending to show with Wittgenstein that (i) miss-interpretation of language & (ii) Craving for generality are the two fundamental problems to philosophizing for linguistic philosopher’s. The status of language is far different between the *Tractatus- Logico- Philosophicus* and *Philosophical Investigations* but, causes of the philosophical problems remain same. The earlier Wittgenstein highlighted the importance of the ‘Picture theory of meaning’ in his book *Tractatus-Logico-Philosophicus* to abolish so called unitary meaning of a proposition and to set-up craving for unity by cross relations of properties. And, by admitting ‘Logical Atomism’ he solved the ‘miss – interpretation’ of words in a proposition. According to later Wittgenstein the problem of philosophy is the occupational disease of linguistic philosopher. He goes on to say that when a person thinks about something philosophically, he inevitably becomes puzzled. But, he hopes that a good philosopher might have managed to avoid it. To know the fullest sense, what a philosophical problem is, entails being thus settled. A philosophical problem has the form as “I do not know my way out” to a linguistic philosopher. A linguistic philosopher if never lost or suffers he will not feel the need for further philosophical investigation. He will always try to point out the puzzles and confusion into certain philosophical notion. In philosophical Investigation Wittgenstein say “My aim is to teach you to pass from a piece of disguised non-sense to something that is patent non – sense”. He farther asserts that “philosophical confusion to a person caught in a philosophical confusion is like a man in a room who want to get out but does not know how it possible”. He (the man) tries to get out by the window but it is too tight, he tries to get out by the chimney but it is too narrow. Similarly, when one thinks about sense perception of physical objects can be directly perceived or not, the same sort of thing happens when one thinks about the nature of God, about our knowledge of other mind. In the case of puzzlement, a man in the grip of a philosophical problem is a man who is intellectually sick, one who has a conceptual illness. A philosopher seeks to be free himself from this deplorable condition by developing a theory as system to deal with the puzzles. Wittgenstein prescribed about such types of

conceptually sick philosophers “show the fly (here, philosophers) the way out of the fly-bottle (here, philosophical problems)”. So, necessarily I become bound in my paper to discuss and high lighten the later wittgensteinian philosophical conception where he had introduced the concept of (i) game (ii) Language game (iii) family resemblance (iv) forms of life etc. Lastly, it is well known to all students of philosophy that the early Wittgenstein had used ‘ideal language’ to set-up philosophical discussion on the certain way. Similarly, also, he had proved the certain ways of philosophical discussion like ‘calculus’ in his later writing by dependent on the ‘usage’ theory.

Index Terms— Philosophy, Post-Fregain.

I. INTRODUCTION

If philosophy is an attempt to understand the World around us then we must know how language works would be almost the first step in studying philosophy, because all types of knowledge comes in terms of language only. We know something about the world in terms of our language which implies that thinking necessarily involves the use of language. For a long time it the established truth of a very general kind, with metaphysics and ethics, and other truths to be arrived at, is through the power of reasoning. In this scheme, philosophy of language occupied no important place. Later, in the post-Fregain period, some analytic philosophers believed that ‘philosophy of language’ in a specific sense should constitute the starting point of philosophical studies. Wittgenstein was one of the prominent figures in this group of philosophers.

Most of the philosophical problems arise from the miss-interpretation of language. But it is not true that language is responsible for this problem, only user of the language is responsible. Because, if the philosopher who use language and he fail to understand the logic of language then philosophical problem comes to being. Some philosopher can say- ideal language is better to solve the philosophical problems, because ideal language is stronger in nature than the ordinary language. But, Wittgenstein proved that ordinary language is so much strong as ideal language. He said ordinary language function like exact calculus as mathematics and there are certain definite and unique rules; and ordinary language can give a precise definition of every word.

Another source of philosophical problem is ‘craving for generality’ of word meaning. Wittgenstein by introduce ‘language game’ shows a word meaning is not unitary and unchangeable. He has shown language is constituted by the species of the rule like the cluster of properties as game.

II. THE CAUSES OF PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS

(MISS - INTERPRITATION OF LANGUAGE): According to Wittgenstein philosophical problems engages mainly by the ‘miss- interpretation’ of language.

Philosophers very often are interested to claim that a certain world denotes certain object but this claim sometimes seems to be ridiculous because it is impossible to often obtain in ordinary language. The reason is simple, ordinary language is claimed to be ambiguous, vague and receptive. Ordinary language has various uses and words may be used in different sentences differently or, different words may be used to denote some objects. So, it is not justifiable to claim that there is a monotonic function of language where every word or a name designates a unique object.

The sentence that I am going to the bank has many uses because the word 'bank' bears more than one sense. It may be used in the sense of a 'monetary establishment' or may be used in the sense of the 'bank of a river'. So, if the hearer of the sentence is false to understand the very intention of the speaker then he fails to understand the language itself. Hence, the user may misinterpret the very intention of the speaker by the language - thus a philosophical problem arises.

Again, we can mention the commitment of grammarians who believe that two or more sentences having the same grammatical structure, may also have the same logical structure but this sort of craving is not tenable because it may be the case that two or more sentences having the same grammatical structure and the logical structures also is same. Let us consider the following sentences: (1) The morning star is the evening star. (2) Ram is a man. (3) Ram is a human being.

The above sentences having the same grammatical structure such as "S is P" but very logical structure of their sentences are different because in two sentences the verb are functioning differently. In the first sentence, the verb 'is' used in the sense of identity. In the second sentence, the verb 'is' used in the sense of membership and, in the third sentence, the verb 'is' used in the sense of the subject. Thus the grammarian's view of language does not hold good.

III. THE CAUSES OF PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS:

(CRAVING FOR GENERALITY): According to Wittgenstein, one of the fundamental features of 'language-game' is that like games, language game is rule - following. Rule following is a general practice established by agreement, custom and training. Therefore, rule following establishes the 'use' in general and we understand something of language by its rule following. According to Wittgenstein, "A rule stands like a signpost". Rule following is a presupposition of custom - by employing the notion of custom Wittgenstein uses the expression 'intuition' use, practice to the same thing (rule).

According to Wittgenstein, rule - following is the public matter. Rule following is not a mysterious activity at all, it shows itself in our practice. It is manifest. To understand rule and rule - following, we remind ourselves for a familiar all our many different kinds of normative behaviors; namely: playing football - Ball, Cooking etc. The other point is that, the rule - following is essentially to a social practice --- a practice which runs in our community within a 'forms of life'. It is the existence of agreement in the community which establishes the rule - we follow. Wittgenstein says that "rules are related to one another they are like cousins". So, the fact is that, the rule following is essentially a community based activity where nothing can count as private rules.

One of the fundamental insights of the rule following is that it is determined by obeying its rule. Obeying is a rule of social practice. Obeying a rule is not to obey a rule; it is not possible to obey a rule privately. According to Wittgenstein, rule following is an habitual practice ---- a practice which is shared by the members of all linguistic community, in this sense, following a rule is similar to obeying an order.

It appears from the above consideration that, rule following is not a mysterious inner-process, it is grasping something like a calculus as we see in the 'Tractatus' which objectively imposes standard of correct rules. Rather, rule following is a practice which is an established practice of the society or, community. We acquire the ability to use expressions to follow the rule for their use by our training as members of that community.

IV. FORMS OF LIFE

Wittgenstein said in the part 19 of the philosophical investigation that to know a language it is not sufficient to know its grammatical structure and syntax only. We must know the agreement of language users other than syntax. The agreement in language forms by depending on 'Forms of life'. We cannot know the meaning of a word or a proposition unless considering of their situation of use. For example: If anybody says the word 'tape' then he has a meaning only about this word but, when a working tailor uses the word 'tape' to his assistant then the meaning of the word totally changed because, the assistant means it by a full proposition as 'Give me a tape'. So, J.M.F Hunter said, we should have known something extra other than its grammar and syntax, this extra thing is called 'forms of life'. Language becomes meaningful by the 'forms of life' but, the 'forms of life' can never be defined by language. So, the form of life is the presupposition of meaningful language. He said that grammatical structure may be doubtful but, there is no room of doubt about the forms of life. Because, the above doubt also becomes meaningful by depending on forms of life.

V. FAMILY RESEMBLANCE

Family resemblance is a metaphor for strengthening the view of 'language game'. According to Wittgenstein, language - game - like games form a family which is metaphorically said 'family resemblance'. Before discussion of the family resemblance we have to look the concept of 'game' as well as 'language game' again. In the 'Philosophical Investigation' Wittgenstein discussed the concept of game and said that there is nothing common to language game like games, only game is to be a general term by the cluster of properties, not by unitarily. Wittgenstein explained in the section 66 of 'Philosophical Investigation' that, In games there are so many species of game as - football, Cricket, polo etc. but if we look at the games then we do not see anything common to all games but we see something common and something uncommon by the criss - cross relation.

Wittgenstein asks that, are all games using. Is there any winning or losing in all games? Are there any competitions in all games? All these answers are to be negative. Because, there are winning or losing in some games but, when a child throws a ball in the wall and catches it again, there is no winning or losing. So, Wittgenstein concludes that, there is

nothing common to all games. There are only something common and something uncommon properties in the game.

This feature of games is characterized by Wittgenstein with the metaphor family resemblance. According to him, like the game we find a family that there is something common or something uncommon resemblance between the all members of a family. For example: In a family there may be found that, somebody have build finger, somebody have different colours of eye, some are tall, and some are fat etc. but all members belongs to a 'family' which is a general terms by criss – cross or overlapping relation. In this sense, Wittgenstein says that 'game' forms a 'family'.

For strengthening the concept of family resemblance Wittgenstein shows so many examples as (i) all the arithmetical numbers are different but there is a relation like the spinning thread. (ii) Suppose, there is a 10 meters long rope – it is made by innumerable short jute-fiber. Where the one short fiber ends another short fiber begins and continuously this process made the 10 meters of rope. It is called criss – cross relation which is the base of the theory of games, language games and family resemblance for Wittgenstein.

VI. LANGUAGE AND PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM

The earlier Wittgenstein highlighted the importance of the 'Picture theory of meaning' in his book *Tractatus-Logico-Philosophicus* to abolish so called unitary meaning of a proposition and to set-up craving for unity by criss –cross relations of properties. And, by admitting 'Logical Atomism' he solved the 'miss – interpretation' of words in a proposition.

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