

# How Language Expresses the World after Early Wittgenstein

NOOR BANU KHATUN

Research Scholar in Philosophy, University of Gour Banga, Mokdumpur, Malda, West Bengal. India

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## ABSTRACT

In twentieth century philosophy, Ludwig Wittgenstein holds a unique position as far as his development of linguistic philosophy is concerned. We know his philosophy as early (T.L.P) and later (P.I) Wittgenstein. His both philosophy is very important for us. Language is the universal medium of communication. Only language can reveal the world. Ludwig Wittgenstein is the most proponent of ideal language philosophy. He proposes the ideal language in his early philosophy in *Tractatus logico-Philosophicus*. He says that language is the picture of the world or reality. Wittgenstein also holds that language always is corresponding to the world and he also prefers in T.L.P the semantic relationship between picture and reality, where picture is a model of reality.

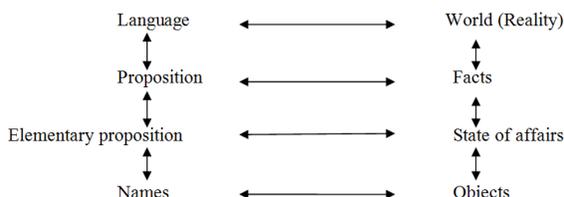
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## Introduction

During twentieth century philosophy, most of the analytic philosophers conceived that philosophical problems are linguistic, because philosophical problems arise due to the misinterpretation of language or misuse of language or ambiguity of the words or expressions or definitions of language. Since Ludwig Wittgenstein emphasizes on language. Language is the most important medium of our communication in our life. Only language can express the world. There are two types of language viz. ideal language and ordinary language. However, in twentieth century philosophy, most proponents of ideal language philosopher are ...viz. Frege, Russell, Carnap and Early Wittgenstein and so on. On the other hand, the most campaigners of ordinary language philosopher are...viz. Strawson, Moore, Austin, Gilbert Ryle and later Wittgenstein and so on. Wittgenstein emphasizes in his early position on ideal language. Because he thinks that the ordinary language is ambiguous and vague. That is why he admits ideal language in his *TLP*. He says that ideal language is best language for resolve all philosophical problems. Because, this type of language is completely free from ambiguity or vagueness. The ideal language is logical best language.

## How Language Expresses the World

How do we know the world? In response to the question Ludwig Wittgenstein argues that only through the language we can know the world. But the question is how does language enable us to present the world? In the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, he said language ought to represent the world. Besides it is said that what is uttered should be logical and consistent. But it should also produce the picture of the world. It is called picture theory of meaning. Wittgenstein was inspired and influenced by a model which was used in a court to represent a traffic accident. Picture theory takes the semantic relationship between the model and the situation (accident). This theory of meaning requires that elements of the model should correspond to the elements of the situation. However, this theory attempts to locate the connection between language and the world in relation of picturing. For him, the basic goal of a linguistic act is to represent the world (reality) accurately. He believes that language also acted as a picture or model or mirror. Beyond the picture, there is no other cognitive meaning in language. A proposition is either true or false. If it is true, it depicts state of affairs correctly. In saying, 'The cat is on the mat', I am trying such that there is a cat is on the mat. This relationship (one to one) is also called as Isomorphism. It can be also define as relation of mapping or relation of resemblance. Isomorphism (one to one corresponds) is established between language and the world, and this is the essence of the picture theory of meaning. Language overall is equal to the set of possible propositions, which in turn corresponds to the totality of possible facts-"the world". Here, the relation between language and reality is as follows:



Reality is expressed through the language and this language consists of propositions and in turn a proposition consists of elementary propositions. A proposition corresponds to a fact and where an elementary proposition denotes a state of affairs. Again a state of affairs consists of objects. Object is denoted by a name. However, an object is the ultimate ingredient of reality. On the other hand name is the ultimate ingredient of language. Both are unanalysable. In order to be meaningful at all, the proposition must mirror the logical properties of the possible state of affairs; it must share its internal structure. Every picture, Wittgenstein claims is also a logical picture. For a picture must have something in common with what it pictures in order to be capable of representing it at all – rightly and falsely – and this common property is termed “logical form”. For the picture is itself “fact”.

In order to say that picture theory of meaning or picture theory of language plays a main role in *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Wittgenstein describes in his *T.L.P* one to one correspondence relation between language and reality (world). According to him, a picture is a proposition. A proposition pictures a fact. Proposition is the constituent of language and fact is the constituent of reality. So Wittgenstein picture theory set to be a representational model of reality. For him the relationship between proposition and fact is to establish relationship between language and reality. An elementary proposition corresponds to state of affairs, which are combined by names. Again the proposition corresponds to facts, which is combined to form the reality. And finally language corresponds to reality, which is composed by proposition. Thus the language describes the world as well as we understand the world through language. According to him without language world cannot be expressed. It is also relevant to say that world cannot be the totality of things, but the totality of facts. For *T.L.P*, fact is a something which makes a proposition as either true or false. Fact is constituted by states of affair as well as states of affair are constituted by objects. Fact has a definite structure and proposition also has a definite structure. When fact exists correspondingly proposition is true otherwise it is to be a false proposition. In this way a proposition pictures a fact. There is a logical space as well as a specific similarity between the elements of the proposition and the elements of the fact. It is also said that there is a one to one correspondence relation between the elements of the proposition as well as the elements of the fact. However, there is a one to one correspondence relation in every of the structure of reality. In *T.L.P* Wittgenstein also says that a picture depicts reality by representing a possibility of existence or non-existence of states of affairs. The same totality of existence and non-existence of states of affairs is called reality. He also says that a picture is a model of reality.

### Conclusion

From the above discussion it is clear that Wittgenstein explained the relationship between language and reality very well. *Tractatus* shows the representational view of the world through logical analysis of language. He clears the vagueness of words. But his logical and ideal position was so much rigid that he understood it himself. So he went for use theory of meaning and preferred ordinary language in his later position. Therefore he had taken a different approach by departing from ideal language to the language which is used in community or form of life. In *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein holds the pragmatic view. In this view a sentence or word is meaningful if it is used in ordinary day-to-day life. Here meaningfulness is in terms of using. That is why; this view is so much supported and popular among the common people. In order to discuss the criteria of meaningfulness, he mentioned some notable concepts in his later position like language game, forms of life etc. Forms of life denote the habitual activities of common people in which word or sentence becomes meaningful. In this position he vehemently criticized his own previous conception regarding the language and meaning. He started to believe make other believe so that private language is not a language in proper.

The method changed, though the query regarding the relationship between language and reality did not stop. Wittgenstein has taken in his later work in *Philosophical Investigations* language as a game, as an activity which is governed by rules. Here language becomes meaningful not by corresponding to the fact, rather by its use in community, society or in Wittgenstein term ‘form of life’. According to Wittgenstein there is no philosophical problem as such, only due to the misinterpretation the confusion arises. In later Wittgenstein, the task of philosophy is to treat illness; it is more of a therapeutic use. However, he is well and unique in holding two different and totally opposite views in his own life.

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