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Language Game Concept in Wittgenstein's Philosophy and Modern Physics

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ملخص: يتناول هذا المقال فلسفة فيتغنشتاين المتأخرة عن اللغة ويركز على نظريته الجديدة حول المعنى من وجهة نطر علمية لا سيما من منظور الفيزياء المعاصرة. والهدف هو تحديد وتوضيح دور النتائج العلمية الرئيسية التي أسهمت في إحداث تغيير عميق في رؤية فتغنشتاين تجاه المعنى. بأسلوب أخر، كيف أثر هذا العامل العلمي في إنشاء هذه الرؤية الجديدة؟ من أجل الوصول إلى إجابة معقولة لهذا الإشكال، من الضروري إعطاء المزيد من الاهتمام للمفاهيم المهمة الأخرى المتعلقة بمفهوم الألعاب اللغوبة مثل الاستخدام اللغوي ومنطق اللغة وأشكال الحياة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة ، لعبة اللغة ، المعنى ، فتغنشتاين ، فلسفة اللغة ، الفيزياء الحديثة

Abstract: This article deals with Wittgenstein's late philosophy of language. It focuses on his new theory about meaning from scientific perspective especially from the field of physics. The aim is to determine and clarify the main scientific results that contribute in deep change of Wittgenstein's view towards meaning. In other word, how does this scientific factor affect the establishment of this new vision? In order to find a reasonable answer to this problem, it is so necessary to give more attention to other important concepts which are related to language games concept such as, language use, language logic and life forms.

Keywords: language, language game, meaning, Wittgenstein, philosophy of language, Modern Physicsof.

1.Introduction:

Wittgenstein accepts, in his late philosophy, that the role of logic is relative and limited, for a reason that language has its own logic. "So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?" - What is true or false is what human beings say; and it is in their language that human beings agree. This is agreement not in opinions, but rather in form of life."1

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However, the philosophical debate that he leads after his return to Cambridge with his colleagues, especially with Frank Ramsey and Piero Sraffa On theory of language, contributed greatly in enriching Tractatus logico-philosophicus (TLP), as well as in getting over many of its hypothesis. This was achieved after a transitional step which had started from the beginning of the thirteen in "Blue Book", "Philosophical Grammar", especially in its first part, and finally in the "Brown Book". In such writings, he becomes concerned by new philosophical perspective towards the problematic of meaning. This Article is concerned with main scientific results that have a deep influence on Wittgenstein's view towards meaning. It means, how does the scientific factor, mainly in modern physics, affects the establishment of this new vision?

2. New Approach to Meaning:

2.1. The Turning Point:

After years of intellectual efforts, Wittgenstein admitted that descriptive theory included many difficulties. In pursuit of clarity, he searches for the source of philosophical propositions that contain odd conceptions. These latter "spring from a tendency to sublimate the logic of our language". It means that philosophical problems arise when we misuse language. "The confusions which occupy us arise when language is, as it were, idling, not when it is doing work". "We eliminate misunderstandings by making our expressions more exact; but now it may look as if we were aiming at a particular state, a state of complete exactness, and as if this were the real goal of our investigation."

In order to achieve this accuracy, words and phrases must perform their full function, which could be identified through philosophical analysis method that could provide an accurate description of language. "Philosophy must not interfere in any way with the actual use of language, so it can in the end only describe it." Its main goal is to rid language of what does not make sense. The significant question is how we can determine the validity of use or how

to distinguish between what has meaning and what has no meaning? The appropriate criterion is the way of using words in ordinary language. "When I talk about language (word, sentence, etc.), I must speak the language of every day."

2.2.Philosophical Investigations:

The beginning of "Philosophical Investigations" dates back to the autumn of 1936, when Wittgenstein set about revising the Brown Notebook, which he had previously dictated at Cambridge. The results of this work appeared in the German version under the title "Eine Philosophische Betrachtung" "Philosophical consideration". Finally, he retracted, considering that the attempt to revise was worthless.⁷

Wittgenstein had kept on revising his manuscript until the end of his life without ever reaching a final accepted version. He devoted himself to present further accurate modification. The result was, after months, a first drafting of the first third of "Philosophical Investigations.". Later, he edited another manuscript that corresponds roughly to the first part of "Notes on the Foundations of Mathematics". Then he copied these two manuscripts, without ceasing to revise them constantly, although it had been written with great efforts, in respect that it had required a long, continuous effort to be achieved. It was as if Wittgenstein's ambition was to be a complete feat that overcame past mistakes. Its hope realised somehow two years before his death.

Wittgenstein's new philosophy is presented in "Philosophical Investigations" in a surprising and unique way, as we find for the first time brief descriptions of situations in which linguistic expressions are employed, characterized by simplicity in referring to tangible things rather than to what is abstracted. Regardless of the intended purpose of this simplified method, it poses a kind of philosophical challenge. The first example includes descriptions of linguistic verbs by a builder and an assistant. Thus, Wittgenstein wanted to show the actual

use of language, without paying attention to the meaning of the words at this stage of the research.

In fact, Wittgenstein denied many of the ideas in the TLP and focused his criticism mainly on the assumption he ascribed to Augustine (354-430 A.D.), that every word is the thing it represents or refers to. Philosophical Investigations started with a passage from "Confessions" that includes this assumption. The function that Augustine ascribes to language is the same function that Wittgenstein proposes in TLP. It is a limited function, since it relates to one side of naming but does not consider other sides. For this reason, it was be so necessary for him to reconsider his earlier position concerning language and its functions.

Philosophers - and even non philosophers - have often tried to use quite familiar terms and expressions such as: "place", "time", "thing", "characteristic property", "thought"...etc., in a way that has a limited relation to the ordinary use of words, but sometimes it has nothing to do with it. Those who ask for examples about this should review the first steps in history of philosophy. In such cases, the philosopher concentrates on giving a precise definition without ascertaining the significance that he gives to the term. The definition remains belonging to the realm of "what is intended by saying". The philosopher tries, as if he were capable, to give specific meaning to the word or to grant life for it, depending only on his own conscious effort. It is so easy to find ourselves in such situation, when confusing between "what is meant by saying" and linguistic connotation, which is already existing, it means the linguistic connotation which has been acquired and asserted by use, in other words between subjective and objective meaning. This is what Wittgenstein tries to clarify through a set of examples.

There is a sure method to remind ardent metaphysicians that the significance they conceive in mind is beyond the reach of others. It consists in describing the ordinary or everyday use of words before comparing it with which is not assimilated by others, or the use

which validity has not been confirmed. When philosophers use terms such as "knowledge", "existence", "name", "something" ... "and try to grasp the essence of the thing, one must always ask oneself: is the word ever actually used in this way in the language in which it is at home? What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use." ⁸

Whoever is not guided rightly to find his path does not try to search in darkness and unknown. His main concern will become to reach a known place, then he designates a landmark to guide himself, and he can systematically, without losing consciousness of everything that is known to him in a certain context, probe new depths., then to see if he was able there to carry out a work using means he possesses. In order to clarify this matter, Wittgenstein compares the language to an ancient city. "Our language can be regarded as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, of houses with extensions from various periods." As it appears, this comparison is very essential in understanding the nature of linguistic problem.

In this context, Wittgenstein considers that his particular role is similar to that of a guide in an unknown city or country, trying to highlight the philosophical difficulties that result from being in a strange city; it means to face the difficulties of a given subject. It is a kind of practice that must be repeated until we succeed in identifying any place quickly, or in blink of an eye, no matter where we are. This is a complete picture, for each of us to be an excellent guide, he should perhaps show others the main ways. However, Wittgenstein considers himself a bad guide, as he changes direction spontaneously to interesting places, as he willingly passes through secondary alleys before the appearance of main roads.

2.3. -Misuse of Language:

Philosophical research has to restore words of language from their "metaphysical use" in order to employ them according to the way are used in daily life. Wittgenstein provides in "Philosophical Investigations," as in TLP, examples illustrating cases that give rise to

philosophical problems, but this time he focuses on Misuse of language, such as the following:

A- The belief that a single word has a fixed meaning, that is one of the main causes of philosophical diseases—as he put it - that is, when thinking is nourished only by one type of examples or when it is limited to specific use, which leads to the use of one word instead of another or the use of one word in two different contexts with the belief that its meaning is fixed and does not change.

B-Separation between word and meaning on the basis that each is independent of the other, while the meaning of speech is the way it is actually used in the language and is not separate from the speech itself. The meaning of a word is determined according to different circumstances of linguistic usage. Thus, it varies depending on the context, even if it has only one external appearance.

As if the meaning were an aura, the word brings along with it and retains in every kind of use. 10

C- Conceiving that there is a total correspondence between words and things in the external world, even though there are words that have no equivalent. "One can't shake oneself free of the idea that using a sentence consists in imagining something for every word." "If we say, "Every word in the language signifies something", we have so far said nothing whatever; unless we explain exactly what distinction we wish to make." "12"

D- Wrong interpretation of words, which leads to a wrong understanding of the meaning, as he emphasizes: "When we philosophize, we are like savages, primitive people, who hear the way in which civilized people talk, put a false interpretation on it, and then draw the oddest conclusions from this." ¹³

A possible justification for the transformation of Wittgenstein's position lies in scientific and historical context of his philosophy. From Wittgenstein's second prescriptive, we can say

that radical transformations in some scientific fields such as linguistics, psychology, furthermore more deep changes in social and political life of the European community led to a new position towards meaning problem. The crisis of western societies manifests in fierce and destructive conflicts during the two world wars. The impact of this situation upon modern culture appears in tolerance and admitting acceptance of others as first necessity in multicultural societies; it means the necessity of cultural coexistence in light of difference. Thus, adopting a new vision, which means on linguistic level, the existence of more than one Linguistic logic or variations of grammatical rules that determine the meaning according to specific conditions of usage?

2.4.. Physical Background:

Scientifically speaking, language is seen in modern physics, not only as a tool for objective and clear expression that describes things but also as means of research and demonstration. Furthermore, in certain sciences as means of communication, sharing and influencing others. Such view towards language expresses a dialectical development in science. For instance, within the principles of quantum physics, we can choose the principle of mutual complementarity of the scientist Niels Bohr (1885-1962).

This principle stems from the fact that man is active and passive, observer, subject to observation, Influencer, and subject to influence. These two cases involve a kind of dialectical contradiction that is manifested in the linguistic phenomenon. The more the linguistic expression is objective, effective and clear, the more it becomes limited by fixed and static concepts, and therefore far away from the objective and dynamic test and from self- consciousness. Hence, the language should not be limited to an objective and clear description of the world, nor only to describe our objective actions and observations, but on the other hand, it should describe our psychological life, mainly emotional and affective states and be as means of communication and participation.

Hence, the physicist Niels Bohr (1985-1962) considers that the traditional scientific and philosophical expression refers to a limited aspect of the physical reality, which is the static aspect it means the macro physical, while the microphysical world is not comprehended by our observations and measurements. The more the latter is accurate and objective, the more we move away from the familiar traditional concepts and expressions. According to the principle of mutual complementarity, Bohr emphasizes that scientific language should take into account the interaction and mutual complementarity between the two sides of physical reality in the same way that Wittgenstein really focuses, that is, in his second philosophy on The functional integration of language as a tool for depicting the world and as means of communication and sharing.

Another principle in atomic physics can shed light on the idea of "language games" that interprets meaning according to usage. To illustrate this idea, as Wittgenstein sometimes employs examples of games, showing how they are based on rules but are not governed by fixed and absolute mechanism, let us take for example the game of chess. There are rules governing this game, but no predetermined path for any piece, yet there is a special path for each piece, which cannot be occupied by another, so that no two pieces can be in the same place and at the same moment, the same analysis is given in "language games" to clarify the way of using words.

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place and at the same moment, the same analysis is given in "language games" to clarify the way of using words.

3. Language Game concept and Meaning:

3.1.Language Game:

With such examples, Wittgenstein wanted to assert two things. The first consists in emphasizing the link of significance to the context of linguistic use, while the second is highlighting the importance of psychological conditions such as mental functions and processes in determining meaning. This is what he tried to explain by employing the concept of "language games". The concept of "language game" sheds light on much of what Wittgenstein wanted to say in his new linguistic philosophy project. It seems that this concept constitutes an alternative to the concept of truth table in the theory of propositional calculus, because they represent the linguistic context in which a phrase is inserted in order to determine its connections to other sentences. The difference is that the expression in first case is symbolic; in the second one is part of ordinary language.

According to the new perspective, talking about a language means performing a game using words, based on specific grammatical system. The latter cannot be understood outside the sum of conditions in which it was used. "Language game", as a basic term appeared in several contexts. It denotes different meanings that can be distinguished, according to Ernst Konrad Specht's analysis of this concept as follows ¹⁴

A- Some forms of primitive and simplified language, such as those used by children when acquiring speech or every linguistic achievement.

B- It also refers to the daily or current language in its entirety, as well as the totality of activities related to it.

C- Wittgenstein speaks also of a "language game" to denote certain linguistic systems and the various functional units that represent an element in its components. In this case,

language games are inserted in an activity so that words have a special meanings, this includes the following:

A- Verbs of language or performative language: to request, to thank, to congratulate... ¹⁵

b- Language games cannot be considered as verbs of language in strict sense, but through them language could play crucial or decisive roles, for instance: translate, read, composing of something from a specific description, formulating plausible hypothesis and testing them, give a specific sermon, and so on.¹⁶

C- Within linguistic activities, language use as in speech remains in which the use of language, such as speech, remains implicit or withdraws to the background in comparison to the activities themselves.

3.2.Language and language game:

It so important here to ask about the reason for comparison between language and game. Do we not use the term "language" in a specific sense, such as chess game? The meaning is very broad when it comes to language games, that is, so different from what the word "game" denotes in usual context. However, Wittgenstein introduces several times the comparison between them, trying to determine the aspect of resemblance that allowed him to use this concept, which can be summarized as follows:

A- The first common feature lies in expressing the intention to perform something, it means that there is a sort of conscious tendency, which precedes and accompanies the moment of achievement with different degrees. "An intention is embedded in a setting, in human customs and institutions. If the technique of the game of chess did not exist, I could not intend to play a game of chess. To the extent that I do intend the construction of an English sentence in advance, that is made possible by the fact that I can speak English". ¹⁷ Language is a game for the reason it is similar to an institution in which, one has the intention of playing or forming sentences.

B- Acquiring a game or a language, according to Wittgenstein, is related to cultural circumstances, where mastering them is the necessary condition for playing perfectly. 18

C- The significance of the part in relation to the total, as the game shows us that the part performs its function within the scope of the whole, and what is meant here is the significance of a chess piece in relation to the total in this game and the significance of the word within the language.¹⁹ However, this does not mean the similarity in the nature of conditions or laws governing semantics.

D- Both of language and game are not restricted, as there are many types of games and the different ways of playing them, despite the presence of certain rules (for example, rules of sounds and structures in relation to language), "But how many kinds of sentence are there?

Say assertion, question and command? A There are countless kinds; countless different kinds of use of all the things we call "signs", "words", "sentences". This diversity 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." In this context, Wittgenstein adopts a particular approach, as the significance changes over time with the change of games, thus it takes in its transformation new dimension. Sentences have meaning, in the representative theory, according to what their logical picture dictates, which is consisted of constant signs. Whereas, in language game theory, meaning is continuously in change according to illimitable contextual conditions.

As a result, we can say that similarities between language and game, taken as various rules, are the sum of firm conditions that determine the role of each element in the game and that allow the individual to adopt new strategies every time or in every game. However, Wittgenstein reduces comparison to external analogies in referring to all that may be stands for a game.

The concept of language does not have an independent meaning, but rather it is a term to denote a similarity between elements or members, as it represents a family resemblance. Thus, what permits using the same word 'language', 'game' is not what they have in common, but rather complex connections of similarities concerning the whole as well as the parts. The reticence in giving the exact meaning of the game is due to the fact that the game cannot be reduced to the rules of its use, because of generating new meanings and the creation of linguistic structures within different life forms, and that implicates the necessity to determine links between language game and rules, and also between language game and the forms of life.²¹

Wittgenstein first employed the similarity between language and chess for many purposes, and then he realized that chess, for its precise rules, is not a model for all games and that other games with less limited rules are more suitable to be compared with language. Despite this, he did not find among all games a specific game that summarizes all similarities between them.²²

Since the beginning of 1932, the concept of "language game" has been synonymous with the concept of "arithmetic», thus he wanted to emphasize the different similarities between language and games, just as symmetry in arithmetic stresses the similarities between language and formal systems. However, the expanding of game concept as directed activity by rules prompted Wittgenstein to neglect arithmetic model in which rules constitute a strict and precise system, so the concept of "game" is gradually adopted instead of "arithmetic". ²³

In introducing this topic, Wittgenstein employs examples of verbs, related to what can happen during a dialogue between two people in a building workshop. Let us imagine a language that agrees with Augustine's description: language is meant to serve for communication between the builder "A" and his helper "B". "A" performs his activity using building stones and various materials designated for construction: blocks, pillars, slabs and

beams. Such words are used in their communication, "A" pronounces the names of the materials, and B has to pass him what he needs.²⁴

What is so surprising in this description is that Wittgenstein, although his assertion that his intent is to describe a complete language, he was preoccupied with distinguishing the circumstances in which linguistic expressions are used. The attention he paid to linguistic verbs and the circumstances surrounding them is an indication of his new linguistic orientation. Wittgenstein calls a "game of language," a "perfectly primitive game," as he describes in the second paragraph. He has employed this concept since the beginning of the thirties and subjected it, over time and according to changes in the context, to subsequent modifications.

A main characteristic of the concept of a "language game" in the" Blue Book" is that "language games" are "methods of using signs, and they are much simpler than those by which we use signs within our complex everyday language. We can call these language forms "language games" Through which the child begins to use words. Wittgenstein inspected the matter, considering that these "primitive" forms of language are not fundamentally different from the complex and difficult ways of using linguistic expressions in everyday language or in a specialized language in a given field.

Wittgenstein deduces the possibility of approximating what appears simple to what may be more complex, since "we can construct shapes from primitive forms by adding gradually new forms," which allows and even facilitates a successful description of the way we use a complex phrase. He moves the description of language games in the "brown notebook" to a deeper level. This text is mainly composed of descriptions or explanations of language games. Each one of these latter is numbered and followed by a comment, from this; we can understand why "language games" are seen as "communication systems".

3.3. Meaning of language:

By employing this concept, Wittgenstein wanted to identify basic characteristics of language that can be summarized as follows:

A- Language is an activity linked to life form in a specific linguistic environment. "I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the activities into which it is woven, a "language-game". 26 "Ask yourself: On what occasion, for what purpose, do we say this? What kinds of action accompany these words? (Think of a greeting.) In what kinds of setting will they be used; and what for?" 27

B-Language is someway a means or a tool, and speaking a language is to employ symbols according to clear rules and for specific purposes. "Regard the sentence as an instrument, and its sense as its employment." ²⁸

C- Language is a complex structure of different functional units (symbols, actions, goals, incentives...). "To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to have mastered a technique." Hence, the language in the new vision is related to the life and practice of a linguistic group. The meaning of the linguistic symbol is not independent, but linked to the manner of speech. The only way to comprehend the meaning of a word is to study the methods of its use in a concrete linguistic game, which means the connection of language with speakers and their intentions, here lies the main contribution or specific addition of this philosophy.

We might ask what all these activities have in common to be language games. It is assumed that some common characteristics of certain activities have the same name as a specific game. Wittgenstein replies that we can neither know "language games" nor count their common signs, as there are no general characteristics associated with all of them. Its grouping comes from the fact that they have common feature, the same as that of family members. Hence, Wittgenstein employed the concept of "family resemblance", as although

members of the same family do not share the same characteristics identically, they share a common feature that allows their identification.³⁰

The special activities practiced by individual constitute the language games that he expresses, as they are embodied in his language; each individual has specific activities: a specific field, interests, ideas, goals, aspirations... to the extent that it can be said that he speaks a special language. The importance of the concept "language games" is in showing that each game is governed by specific rules of definition concerning this game, for the rules of poetic language are not like the rules of ordinary language, nor as the rules of scientific language. The study of language games is the study of the rules that govern the correct use of words and sentences in a particular language game. For each well-formed language game, there are consistent rules, and the same is true for language games in their totality.

There could be a confusion among language games sometimes; this happens, for example, when using definition rules of another game within a given language game. Such confusion, according to Wittgenstein, is the source of the difficulties that have been discussed for a long time without getting reasonable solutions. However, they are in fact either pseudo problems or problems posed in wrong way.

4.Conclusion:

Hence, the concept of "language game" remains one of the central concepts in Wittgenstein's last philosophy, and it can be understood clearly when dealing with it according to different contexts, or when exposing its relation with essential concepts such as "family resemblance" and "life forms". The main context that has a deep influence on Wittgenstein's new approach is, as we have discussed, new physical discoveries in the field of modern physics. Thus one can through a systematic analysis find a significant relationship between "atomic phenomenons" and "language games" and that could give us a clear interpretation to his new vision about meaning. The possible result could help in deducing

KADRI Abderrahmane

the effective role of "language game", as an alternative to the concept of "logical arithmetic", in establishing Wittgenstein's late philosophy.

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