Meaning without Rules: Language as Experiential Identity

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Introduction

Wittgenstein's conception of language supposes, "'I meant this by that word' is a statement which is differently used from one about an affection of the mind." (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, nt. 676, 170[e]) This is because,

> The meaning of a word is not the experience one has in hearing or saying it, and the sense of a sentence is not a complex of such experiences … The sentence is composed of the words, and that is enough. (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Part II, vi, 181[e])

How is it known "the words" form a sentence, though, same words imaginable doing or not doing so? In response,

> 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. (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Part II, ii, 176[e])

It "is wrong" because meaning *is* "an affection of the mind" in form of identity. Wittgenstein assumes meaning undistinguished within consciousness. Occurring are encapsulated qualia determining logical atomism. Inconstant within constant experience, however, qualia are derivative, not primitive, determined by abstract sense of identity immanent within all consciousness.

Imaginable, "Whereof one cannot speak" (Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, nt. 7, 108) is speakable with content. After all, although "to say something about the ultimate … does not add to our knowledge in any sense … it is … a tendency in the human mind." (Wittgenstein, "Wittgenstein's Lecture on Ethics," 12) Both being experiential, speakable and unspeakable are distinguishable only by abstract identity.

Use

Wittgenstein's "what is meant by 'the meaning of a word'" (Ambrose 48) arises because mapping set to metaset. Difficulty occurs considering meaning of a word's meaning is understandably an extension of an initial meaning contained within subsequent meaning of the word. Now set and metaset are integrated into a common set.

Approached thus, "what is meant" cannot be "about" "'the meaning of [the] word.'" Operant is Russell's hierarchy of types whereby, "all of which must also belong to the range of significance of $N(x)$, however N may be varied; and the range of significance is always either a single type or a sum of several whole types." (Russell 523) "[W]hat is meant by" and "'the meaning of a word'" together composing "a sum of several whole types" commits "a category mistake" representing "facts … as if they belonged to one logical type or category (or range of types or categories), when they actually belong to another." (Ryle 16)

Additionally, assuming a meaning of the meaning of every word assumes a meaning of the meaning of the words, "the set of all meanings." So proceeding, asserting "A sign is what can be perceived of a symbol," (Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, nt. 3.32, 15) when "No proposition can make a statement about itself, because a propositional sign cannot be contained in itself (that is the whole of the 'theory of types')," (Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, nt. 3.332, 16) Wittgenstein concludes, "the sign for a function already contains the prototype for its argument, and it cannot contain itself." (Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, nt. 3.333, 17) Thus, as the sign of the function identifying its meaning, if the set of all meanings does not contain itself, it has no meaning because it does not contain "the prototype of its argument," itself. Alternatively, as the sign for the function identifying its meaning, if the set of all meanings does contain itself, it has no meaning because it cannot contain "the prototype of its argument," itself.

Responded might be the set of all meanings is portrayed as limited and finite, when unlimited and infinite. Now the set of all meanings succumbs to Kant's first antinomy. Composing an infinity of constituents, an infinity is incomplete. The set of all meanings can be unlimited and infinite without suffering Kant's antinomy if recursive, however, such a set being unlimited because unambiguous.

False, then, is,

> *use of a word* comprises a large part of what is meant by "the meaning of a word". Understanding a word will thus come to knowing its use, its applications. The use of a word is what is defined by the rules, . . . The meaning of a word is explained by describing its use. (Ambrose 48)

Assertion is inconsistent since "*use of a word* comprises *a large part* of what is meant by 'the meaning of a word'" when "The meaning of a word *is explained by* describing its use" identifies use as both part and whole of meaning.

However resolved, use is not meaning. Just as "justified, true, belief" does not determine knowledge only when content determining it is extended, "'the meaning of a word'" has meaning only when content determining it is extended. Any two things becoming one by conjunction, extended to its limit, the meaning of the meaning of a word becomes the set of all meanings. This occurring, although the set of all meanings can be bound by a rule, its being so does not impute meaning to it without contradiction. "'The meaning of a word'" can be used in sequential location, but not meaningfully, meaning not being use.

Meaning

To have being is to have meaning, to be meaningful, it not being odd to assert, "I am, I have meaning!" And, in reply to the query, "What meaning do you have?" not unexpected is, "That I am!" Different meaning identifies different states of being. "I am" asserts being qua being, something as nothing else. "I am human" asserts being qua kind, something as something else. Because separation and integration are observationally indistinguishable, identity as

something else is as primitive as identity as nothing else. Neither being qua being nor being qua kind is more basic.

As being, meaning is emergent in any form. Assuming conservation of energy, to have being is to be distinguishable, whether a dense simple or commutative complex. Distinction occurs within Ferdinand de Saussure's "swirling cloud" of William James' "stream of consciousness" by "a somewhat mysterious process" of "segmentation" where "appears . . . a kind of jointing and separateness among the parts, of which . . . . I refer to the breaks . . . produced by sudden *contrasts in the quality* of the successive segments." (Saussure 110-111; Thayer 142)

Meaning so conceived has nothing necessarily to do with communication. Neither does it have anything to do with rule governed use. Meaning can be wholly subjective, spontaneous, and unique. Its being so is indicated by the ability of something to come to have meaning for someone in an instance and never again. Spontaneous in appearance, there is no repetition. Immediate as such, meaning is not determined by some rule. And even if it were, judgment of the application of the rule in any instance must still be particular. Meaning is irreducibly subjective, contained in the awareness of consciousness. Both meaning and language must arise in the individual, understanding among individuals occurring by some subsequent natural commonality.

As consciousness meaning is a mental state, its nature a function of mental character. This latter might be understood as material, in which case meaning as a condition of mind may be behavioral or neural. Consideration in either of these ways, however, presents a difficulty in identifying what aspect of such kinds of events is meaning. Whether simple or complex, a material state is an abstraction identifiable only by interpretation distinguishing it from all else. Experience is understandable in different ways, so what is observed is constituted by how experience is considered. Something may or may not be recognized for this reason, depending on how one understands.

Being simple identity, abstraction is non-observational awareness. Experience composes quality and abstraction, quality known by sensation, and abstraction by sense. There is a sense of abstraction, but not a sensation, although there can be a sensation of a qualitative representation of abstraction such as a word or picture or sound. Abstract identity coheres over the whole, not accumulates over the parts. Cumulative, each identity must be linked by another identity infinitely, there being no whole.

Not self-evident, determination might be sought by appeal to a standard where identification might be thought to be provided an objective basis by a constitutive standard. Conditions in which indicated elements are to be understood in one way or another are specifiable in this manner. Here a problem appears in how correspondence between rule and occurrence is determinable. A rule of correspondence can be appealed to, but this requires a rule of its own correspondence, and this another in an infinite regress. There being no ultimate standard of interpretation, meaning is unknowable in this way.

Unable to distinguish a physical condition by a rule because of the problem of infinite regress, some other criterion of meaning is necessary. Such a criterion is provided in an act of awareness, meaning only knowable in a simple phenomenal experience. Solely in this way can it be identified independently of any standard, avoiding all attendant difficulties.

Illustrating this is my recently deceased father's hammer can have a great deal of meaning for me. Wholly personal, this is not something I can expect anyone else to understand. And in what sense is the meaning of my father's hammer to me a use of that hammer or anything else? It is unclear how this meaning incorporates a rule. Meaning here is spontaneous, not controlled. "At that moment it had a great deal of meaning for me, but it has never been like that again." Not only is such meaning inadvertent, it cannot be replicated. Being uncontrolled, it does not always occur (my father's hammer does not always have meaning for me). Evoked rather than controlled, this meaning is undetermined by a rule.

Here meaning is an immediate phenomenal event, escaping the problem of an infinite regress in the identification of rules. Basic as such, it is fundamental to the identification of any material state. Consciousness is not reducible to physical characteristics because of this, these characteristics being determined by phenomenal awareness. Such experience itself is understandable as material, certainly, but this requires a phenomenal identification in turn, and so on. No material state of meaning can be certain as a result.

Language

Language is combining these elements to form new meaning. Although not inherent to consciousness, language occurs as a form of awareness, when awareness is identity, identity is being, and being is meaning. As such, language is not an enumerative linkage of elements alone, specifying one after another in a listing. Necessary is identifying the nature of the linkage of linguistic elements, the relationship by which meaning is constructed in language, an insensate abstraction. What joins its elements cannot be itself an element without introducing its relationship to the other elements.

Linkage depends on understanding linguistic components as simple or complex. Complexes or a complex and simple can be joined intrinsically, and simples or complexes can be joined extrinsically. Complexes are intrinsically joined when sharing a common member. A complex and simple are intrinsically joined when the simple is constituent of the complex. Simples and complexes with no common member are explicitly joined when members of an encompassing complex. Conjunction is implicit when knowable by identifying what is meant by its components. It is explicit when knowable only by a rule.

Judgment is fundamental in linguistic constitution, and depends on the nature of the archetypal and autotypal cases. There are two forms of identity, contingent on whether the analogical archetype is essential or criterial. A constant referent is essential identity, and an inconstant referent is accidental identity. An archetype and its recursion are distinguished as "equal." An archetype and its iteration are distinguished as "equivalent." This is manifest in analogical identity.

Such occurs by likeness to an archetype. Although ambiguous members of a language are identifiable by this means, a wholly ambiguous language is impossible. A wholly ambiguous language is self-contradictory because an analogical archetype by which its ambiguous membership is identifiable is itself unidentifiable, making it impossible to identify its membership as ambiguous. Without a criterion of linguistic membership, it is impossible to know if there is linguistic membership, so it cannot be known linguistic membership is wholly ambiguous. For there to be a language at all, there must be some unambiguous linguis-

tic membership. Dismissing this dismisses possibility of qualitative language, which dismisses possibility of empirical language.

Recursive language contains no dialect(s), constituting language with only the relational property of similarity to the constant archetype. Every constituent being like every other, any one can be the analogical membership criterion for every other, linguistic constituents being the same whichever is intensional. Thus, a recursive language is indefinable because propertyless, a property being an ambiguous member, concurrently component of domain and co-domain.

Propertyless, there is no intensional criterion by which constituents of a recursive language can be ordered. There cannot be an order to the content of a recursive language, whether limited or unlimited. There can be an order to the content of an iterative language. Propertied, there can be an intensional criterion by which constituents of an iterative language can be ordered. Only an iterative language is definable.

Constituent as a dialect, contradiction can be contained within a well-ordered language. Self-contained as a dialect, like the Euclidean parallels postulate, it can be eliminated without affecting the other constituents of the language. Constituted is the dialect of ambiguous constituents of the language, of which Wittgenstein concludes,

> No *single* ideal of exactness has been laid down; we do not know what we should be supposed to imagine under this head—unless you yourself lay down what is to be so called. But you will find it difficult to hit upon such a convention; at least any that satisfies you. (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, nt. 88, 42[e])

Conclusion

Being an axiomatic system, a language is elements in relation (sequence). Elements in and not in relation being indistinguishable, false is "In fact what solipsism *means*, is quite correct, only it cannot be *said*, but it shows itself." (Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, nt. 5.62, 89) Rather than shown, it is ascribed by abstract identity in the resolution of ambiguity. Metaphor being linguistic, language is not rule governed, for "in a metaphorical sense,— … I could not express what I want to say in any other way." (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 216[e]) Not rule governed axiom system, language is identity combining elements forming meaning. Arbitrary, constituted is ethics, dispelling determinism.

Literature

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