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# Use theory of meaning

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- ❑ Wittgenstein states that philosophical problems arise out of the misunderstanding of logic of language
- ❑ Once the logic ('logic' in the *Tractatus* is the associate of 'grammar' in the *Philosophical Investigations*) of language is grasped, the philosophical problems get resolved
- ❑ The philosophical problems are not genuine problems but kind of illusions arising out of this misunderstanding
- ❑ Such misunderstanding occurs because of the failure in differentiating the surface grammar from the deeper grammatical form
- ❑ Surface grammar lacks appropriate analysis of language and the meaning of word in a proposition is drawn without synthesis and discrimination

# Use theory of meaning

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- ❑ In philosophy, we are prone to be misguided by the surface grammar of expression when uses of the words are seen at the first glance
- ❑ Surface grammar is a grammar which operates the apparent structure of the language in everyday life
- ❑ Depth grammar gives a real meaning to the words by unfolding the possibilities of its various usages
- ❑ When we look for meaning of words in sentence, we just understand their use at the surface level and fail to understand the deeper grammar
- ❑ We remain unconscious of the prodigious diversity of all the everyday language-games because the clothing of our language makes everything alike
- ❑ Philosophical confusions, according to Wittgenstein arise when meaning of a word is arrived at out of the context of its use

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- ❑ The diseases Wittgenstein discussed in his both writings are same
- ❑ Difference lies only in the kind of treatments he suggests there
- ❑ Misunderstanding this distinction leads to the confusion between ‘what can be expressed’ and ‘what cannot be expressed’ in language
- ❑ Our grammar is lacking in perspicuity
- ❑ The perspicuity in grammar can be attained once we understand how language works in everyday life
- ❑ There is nothing hidden in philosophy, everything lies in open to view
- ❑ The philosophical problems are not solved by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known (*PI* 109)
- ❑ The result of philosophy is descriptive rather than explanative

# Use theory of meaning

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- ❑ The *a priori* logical structure of language in the *Tractatus* gets replaced in later writings by the *a posteriori* method of assigning meaning by looking into the working of language
- ❑ There is no rigid syntactical structure rather the distinction between the propositions is made based on the criteria of ‘use’, ‘practice’, ‘purpose’, etc
- ❑ The move is from essentialism of *Tractatus* to pluralism of *Philosophical Investigations*
- ❑ In the *Tractatus*, language is used in a very narrow sense whereas in his later writing, language is conceived as dynamic and is related to multiple activities and usages
- ❑ The ‘form of life’ comes to replace the ‘logical form’ in carrying out the meaning of propositions in everyday language

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- ❑ *Tractarian* proposal of a pictorial relation between language and the world was found to be limited in its scope to explain the functioning of language
- ❑ Wittgenstein's later writings break away from such rigid representation and suggests 'use theory' which gets the center stage in determining the meaning
- ❑ Now language is seen as a series of games that is played out, each with its own rules
- ❑ Meaning of a word is in its use in language. A word does not have an underlying essence or unitary meaning
- ❑ It may have different meanings depending on the difference in the context of its use.

# Use theory of meaning

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- ❑ For Wittgenstein, cause of Philosophical Problems is – “a *one sided diet*”
- ❑ When language is looked at, what is looked at is a form of words and not the use made of the form of words
- ❑ When we look for meaning of words in sentence, we just understand their use at the surface level and fail to understand the deeper grammar
- ❑ The applications of the words are not clearly presented to us
- ❑ It is like looking into cabin of locomotives
- ❑ We see all the handles more or less similar and ignore the various possible ways of the handles works
- ❑ When we are doing philosophy we are confused by the uniformity nature of language or uniform appearance of words

# Use theory of meaning

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- ❑ Language is not something complete and autonomous
- ❑ Language is woven into all human activities and behaviour
- ❑ *The meaning of a word* comes from the social context in which it is used
- ❑ The meaning of a word is not an object which it stands for but it is determined by its application
- ❑ If we know the use of words then we must know its meaning
- ❑ The meaning of a word depends on its use in a context which is guided by the conventional rules
- ❑ The meaning of a word may not depend on whether the word denotes to something that actually exists to.
- ❑ A word or name can still have meaning even if its referent for that thing does not exist

# Use theory of meaning

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- ❑ Meaning and use are inter-related
- ❑ We have to understand meaning of a word in a particular context by the way it is used
- ❑ A word is used in multifarious way
- ❑ There is not logic of language but many:
  - language has no single essence, but is a vast collection of different practices each with its own logic.
- ❑ Meaning does not consist in the denoting relation between words and objects or in a picturing relation between propositions and facts: rather, the meaning of an expression is its use in the multiplicity of practices which go to make up language
- ❑ Don't ask for the meaning; ask for the use in the language.
- ❑ The meaning of a word is its use in the language” (*PI* 43)

# Conclusion

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- ❑ Meaning of a word is in its use in the diversity of practices
- ❑ The meaning of a word in language is defined or determined by the grammatical rules with which it is used in that particular language-game
- ❑ language is not a picture of reality any more rather it is conceived as a tool which is usually served for multiple proposes
- ❑ Language is a vast collection of the different practices each with its own rules
- ❑ Meaning of a word in a sentence can be understood in relation to the context of its employment
- ❑ Language is conceived as a tool which can be used for various purposes depending on the situations
- ❑ Speaking of language means speaking human activities