LINGUISTIC TURN
AND PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS

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1. Introduction

Language-use is such an impressive and fascinating human capacity that human beings are called *homo loquens* – speaking beings. Speaking is not only natural for human beings but also distinctive of human species, in fact, so distinctive that human being is defined in terms of the speaking: "man shows himself as the entity which talks."[1] Language enables human beings, thus, to be precisely that living being which they are: as the speaking beings, human beings are human. Language provides a determinative characteristic to human nature: "the ability to speak is what marks man as man" and, according to Heidegger, language is the "foundation of human being."[2]

Human languages are strikingly powerful and complex systems and are studied extensively by linguists, sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and philosophers. When studying a human language, linguists seek systematic explanations of its syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Semantics developed in the 20th century applied formal, mathematical models for characterizing linguistic form and meaning. Psychology studies neuro-linguistic behaviour. Philosophical interest in language, while ancient and enduring, has blossomed anew in the 20th century so much so that the 20th century philosophy is characterised by a linguistic turn. Paying tribute to Gustav Bergmann, Richard Rorty used the

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[1]Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, New York: Harper Collins, 1962, 208.

[2]Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. P. D. Hertz, New York: Harper and Row, 191, 112.

expression, 'linguistic turn' as the title of his 1967 anthology of essays.[3] He included members of the Vienna Circle, Wittgenstein and his followers, Oxford philosophers, and American philosophers associated with these groups (including Quine), as participants in "the most recent philosophical revolution."[4] The intense interest in, and meticulous attention to language and its uses are the dominant features of their philosophical speculations. According to them, philosophical problems are problems which may be solved (or dissolved) either by reforming language or by understanding more about the language we presently use. Philosophy became predominantly a "critique of language."[5] This is to be distinguished from the philosophy of language that tries to give a general account of what language is and how it functions, and show how meaning and truth are situated in the practices of linguistic communication.

It was traditionally held that "the study of philosophy has as its purpose to know not what people have thought, but rather the truth about the way things are."[6] This view, however, was replaced by the linguistic turn that philosophical problems are philosophers' problems -- how philosophers speak about reality rather than reality itself. To put it succinctly, philosophical questions are questions about language. Philosophy began to dismiss its aspirations to disclose truths about reality, and insisting upon its restriction to the clarification of conceptual confusions. Philosophical problems were not about the extra-linguistic world at all; but about the meanings of words and disentangling of concepts through linguistic and logical analysis. The goal of philosophy is to understand the structure and articulations of our conceptual scheme, and the primary method of philosophy is to examine the uses of words that caused philosophical problems in the first place. Philosophy, in this view, does not contribute to human knowledge about reality like empirical sciences. According to Wittgenstein,

The object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thoughts.

Philosophy is not a theory but an activity.

A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations.

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[3]G. Bergmann, *Logic and Reality*, Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964, 177, cited in Rorty, *The Linguistic Turn*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967, 8f. (Introduction).

[4]Rorty, *The Linguistic Turn*, 13.

[5]L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, London: Routledge, 1922, 4.0031.

[6]Aquinas, *De caelo* I.22.228.

The result of philosophy is not a number of 'philosophical propositions', but to make propositions clear.[7]

This is a contribution to a distinctive form of understanding.

Philosophers who are considered to have taken the linguistic turn held that advance in philosophical understanding is possible only with the propaedeutic of investigating the use of the words relevant to the problem at hand. The methodological role that language plays is applicable in various fields of philosophy such as epistemology, aesthetics, ethics, metaphysics, philosophy of religion, philosophy of science, and philosophy of mind. For example, language enters in the philosophical discussion on goodness when we observe that goodness is what is attributed when we say of a thing that 'it is good'. Tools from the philosophy of language make available quite a number of views about what various value statements mean and in general about how they do their expressive and communicative work; these views inform and support philosophical positions on respective topics of philosophical interest.

2. Progress in Science and Logic

Two reasons could be ascribed for the linguistic turn in the 20th century philosophy. First, due to the enormous success of science and technology, philosophers felt that the traditional philosophical territories were overtaken by science. Accordingly, the questions of metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of mind seemed to be better addressed by physics, physiology, and psychology, respectively, and the concerns of social and political philosophy were better left to sociology and political science. Since the task of acquiring knowledge about the world had been taken over by science, the only task that remained for philosophy, it was suggested, was to clarify meaning. According to Dummett, "Because philosophy has, as its first if not its only task, the analysis of meanings, and because, the deeper such analysis goes, the more it is dependent upon a correct general account of meaning, a model for what the understanding of an expression consists in, the theory of meaning, which is the search for such a model, is the foundation of all philosophy, and not epistemology as Descartes misled us into believing."[8] Accordingly, science is defined as the pursuit of truth and philosophy as the quest for meaning. In this regard, it was held that

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[7]Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*, 4.112.
[8]Dummett, *Frege: Philosophy of Language*, London: Duckworth, 1973, 669.

philosophical investigations are, in fact, grammatical investigations as semantics exhausts ontology.

Second, new and more powerful methods of logic had been developed in the twentieth century, which promised to solve or dissolve some of the perennial philosophical problems more objectively and scientifically. For the first time since the Middle Ages, there was a revival of interest in, and a philosophical preoccupation with the nature of formal logic. The invention of the first-order predicate calculus with identity was a stimulus both to further logical invention, e.g., of modal, tense, and deontic logics, and to philosophical investigation into the relationships between logic, language, and philosophy.

Following the lead by Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, philosophers tried to construct systematic and logically rigorous accounts of thoughts and language. These philosophers found that everyday language is to be purified and refined before subjecting to the method of analysis. With an objective and universal grammar and dictionary, philosophers were in search of constructing a language of thought as opposed to ordinary languages. What is aimed at was a logically perfect language where the correspondence between word and reality could be set out clearly. In a logically perfect language, the words in a proposition would correspond one by one with components of the corresponding fact. By using such a language and asking exact questions, linguistic philosophers tried to solve or dissolve philosophical problems. As language is considered a human construct and true philosophical problems are linguistic problems, philosophers were confident that the problems could be solved/dissolved.[9]

3. Language and Philosophy: A Historical Review

Interest in language was not a twentieth century philosophical phenomenon. Throughout the history of Western Philosophy (and in the East as well) language always remained a fascinating topic of philosophical discourse and investigation. A brief historical survey is undertaken here in view of clarifying the similarities and differences of the twentieth century linguistic turn.

Language, during the ancient Greek period, was largely used for the purpose of philosophical argumentation. The analysis of language

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[9]In fact, Wittgenstein left philosophy claiming that he has solved all philosophical problems in essentials, in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, and engaged himself as a gardener, teacher, and architect in and around Vienna.

consisted in (1) how words acquire their semantic values and refer to objects and ideas, (2) how words combine to form larger semantic units – sentences, statements, or propositions, (3) how these units come to be truth-evaluable, and (4) how these units are related to the language-independent world. The dialectic between conventionalism and naturalism dominated the philosophical investigations on these questions. Plato agreed with the naturalists that there must be some natural relation between a name and the thing named; but he equally agreed with the conventionalists that convention is relevant to determining names. According to Aristotle, conventional semantic units (written marks and spoken sounds) receive their semantic significance from those things of which they are symbols: "words are signs of concepts."[10] A name is a significant sound according to convention; because no name is by nature significant, but only when it has become a symbol, and something is a symbol only when it stands in an appropriate relation to a non-conventional mental representation. Besides Plato and Aristotle, the Stoics, the Epicureans, and the Academics discussed language, meaning, and understanding, often reverting to earlier debates about natural versus conventional signification.

Medieval thinkers produced a vast literature on aspects of linguistic theory, following the ancient Greek and Latin authors: words acquire their meaning by an act of 'imposition' when a sound is marked as the name of some thing. Usually, three key ingredients are identified in signification: the word, a concept, and the thing signified. Concepts are understood as mental words. Because of the importance given to theology in medieval philosophy, special attention was paid to terms that referred to God and spiritual substances. Words have different contents when used as predicates of creatures and when predicated of the Creator. It was realized that speaker, listener, and context must be taken into account in order to explain how words can communicate something different from their primary sense, and how it is possible for a listener to grasp the intended sense of an ambiguous message. Words to have the relation of signification to things, they must also be related in a certain way (subordinated) to concepts. If concepts were what our words signify, then it seemed we would always be talking about mere psychological entities.

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[10]Aristotle, *De interpretatione*, 16a 3-4.

The link between word and significate was generally held to be conventional.

Renaissance philosophy of language is a continuation of medieval philosophy of language with certain changes. First, humanism shifted the emphasis to the practical study of languages and, as a result, literary analysis and eloquent discourse were emphasized. Second, there was little discussion in logic texts of how words relate to each other in propositional contexts, and how sense and reference are affected by the presence of such logical terms as 'all', 'none', 'only', 'except', and so on. Finally, concepts themselves came in for more attention so that many of the topics discussed by logicians overlapped with what would now count as philosophy of mind as well as with metaphysics. The spoken language is thought to be conventional and the institution of language is guided by reason. To say that spoken words have signification by convention or agreement, however, does not mean that their signification is random and unmotivated.

The precise nature of the word-concept-thing relation was the focus of the long-standing debate whether spoken words signify concepts or things. Both concepts and things were made known by words. Some authors, following Aquinas, held that words primarily signified concepts and only secondarily signified things. Others, following William of Ockham, held that words signified things alone in virtue of being subordinated to concepts. According to Locke, interpersonal spoken communication works by speakers' translation of their internal mental vocabularies into sounds followed by hearers' re-translation into their own internal vocabularies. Descartes considered himself as a 'thinking thing' who is able to talk to himself about his experiences. He held that while he may be wrong in his judgments about the external world, he is infallibly correct on his judgements about his own sensations. It follows that one cannot apply with certainty sensation-words to other human beings other than oneself. In all such cases, the implication is that meaning is internal and language-use could in principle be private. The doctrine that the concept is a formal sign went hand-in-hand with the notion of mental language, a language of thought that is naturally significant and common to all human beings and all spoken language was subordinated to it.

4. Language of Thought
The 'language of thought' is a formal language that is postulated to be encoded in the brains of intelligent creatures as a vehicle for their thought.

According to this hypothesis, thinking consists in performing computations on sentences whose logico-syntactic parts are causally efficacious. Similar to the process of theorem-proving in logic, the language of thought proponents hold that the rules are applied by virtue of the causal structure of the brain. For example, where, in elementary logic, we follow the rule modus ponens – "From 'p' and 'If p then q' derive 'q'". According to the hypothesis, the brain is so constructed that, if it is in a state that represents the premises, then it enters a state that represents the conclusion. The different propositional attitudes of an agent involve different computational relations borne by the agent to sentences in a language of thought that express the various thought contents of the agent. Language works more like calculus.

The hypothesis is supported by the following properties. (1) People can, in principle, think all permissible combinations of the primitive syntactic elements. (2) Anyone who can think p can think any logical permutation of p. Both deductive reasoning and many common fallacies are 'structure-sensitive', involving the scopes of operators, for example, negations, conditionals, and quantifiers. Quantifier scope is what distinguishes, for example, 'Everyone loves someone' form 'There is someone whom everyone loves'. (3) Propositional-attitude ascriptions are 'intensional': terms that (even necessarily) refer to the very same thing cannot be substituted for one another without risking a change in the truth-value of the whole. There is a difference between thinking 'Water is wet', thinking 'H_2O is wet', and thinking 'The stuff of rain is wet', despite the fact that water = H_2O = the stuff of rain. (4) Different attitudes can be directed at the same thoughts. People often wish for the very same thing that they believe does not presently obtain; they often come to think what they previously only feared.

Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus* used an *a priori* logical method with the assumption that language must be purified and analysed to conform to the logician's ideals. Wittgenstein who had thought that problems of philosophy rested on "the misunderstanding of the logic of our language" and used the new logic as the depth grammar of any possible language was later to observe on such logical inventions: "Philosophers often behave like little children who scribble some marks on a piece of paper at random and then ask the grown-up 'What's that?."[11] In contrast, the *Investigations*

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[11]Wittgenstein, MS 112, 58r, see The Big Typescript, 430.

used a descriptive method: "One cannot guess how a word functions. One has to look at its use and learn from that."[12] According to the *Tractatus*, philosophical problems arise because "the logic of our language is misunderstood." We have these problems, according to the *Investigations*, because "we do not command a clear view of the use of our words."[13] Though in both works he was concerned to find the limits of language and thought, in the *Investigations*, he moves from the realm of logic and form to that of ordinary language and actual use as the centre of the philosopher's attention and from an emphasis on definition and analysis to description of 'language-games', 'family resemblance', and 'stream of life'. According to later Wittgenstein, philosophical problems result mainly from linguistic confusions and are to be solved by clarification of the uses of words, not by logical reconstruction by a language of thought. So, the methods of philosophy shift from analysis to description. What philosophy should describe is the ordinary use of words: "Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it. For it cannot give it any foundation either. It leaves everything as it is."[14] Such a method of philosophising was attempted in post-war Oxford philosophy, often referred to as ordinary language philosophy.

5. Ordinary Language Philosophy

Ordinary language philosophy is a method of philosophising, which has as its principal goal the clarification of concepts by describing features of relevant words in ordinary or non-philosophical context. The uses in non-philosophical contexts are taken to be paradigmatic; it is in them that meaning has its original home. Though flourished between 1940 and 1965, at the University of Oxford, ordinary language philosophy goes back to Socrates. In order to understand what a cause is, or what truth or knowledge is, it makes sense to look at how people use the words 'cause', 'truth', and 'knowledge'. "When philosophers use a word – 'knowledge', 'being', 'object', 'I', 'proposition', 'name' – 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-game which is its original home? – What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use."[15] Wittgenstein's point is that philosophers should investigate the meaning of

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[12]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1953, 340.
[13]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 122.
[14]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 124.
[15]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 116.

something by investigating the use of words. This requires looking closely at language-games in which such words are actually used, and when they can and not be used, in order to understand the scope and limits of the concepts they express. Because ordinary language had to function efficiently for people in a vast variety of contexts and also because it had evolved over a very long period of time, over a vast number of people, it has many more uses than philosophers seem to limit. Wittgenstein thought that one of the big problems with classical philosophy was that philosophical language did not do any real work: "philosophical problems arise when language goes on holiday."[16]

A general objection to the ordinary language philosophy is that it talks only about words and not things. The claim that we find out something about a non-linguistic phenomenon by knowing more about linguistic phenomena is either an idle ceremony or a tautology that statements about 'X' can often be paraphrased as statements about X's, and conversely. According to Austin, however, "When we examine what we should say when, what words we should use in what situations, we are looking again not merely at words... but also at the realities we use the words to talk about: we are using a sharpened awareness of words to sharpen our perception of, though not as the final arbiter of, the phenomena."[17] Another complaint targeted the Oxonian ideal that philosophers should speak clearly and precisely. It was summarized in the slogan 'Clarity is not enough'. Ordinary language philosophers thought that one of the chief pitfalls of philosophy was the belief in and desire for systematization, a defect attributable to the desire to make philosophy a science. Wittgenstein always held that philosophy is not like science; it is either higher or lower. Ordinary language is the expression of a common sense view of the world that cannot be wrong in its basic components.

That we are *homo loquens* is not just a homely reminder of an empirical fact but an existentially fundamental fact of life that is given showing who we are and how we live. This is fundamental, meaning, it has something to do with the way we live. It is tempting to think that a human being first exists in himself and, then, for the sake of his growth and development, start using a language to enter into social contacts with others. Language use is, then, seen as something consequent and

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[16]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 38.

[17]J. L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers*, eds. J. O. Urmson and G. J. Warnock, London: Oxford University Press, 1970, 182.

contingent – an important addition – to being an individual. Such an approach tends to speak of *der Mensch* – an individual complete in itself and separate from others (things and persons). It is true that living human beings, like other animals, interact directly in a physico-biological way within the spatio-temporal environment. Human subjectivity is shown in the spatio-temporal world through one's substantial and creative presence and engagement with objects in the world. One is to be reminded, however, of the obvious fact that we are not just solitary individuals.[18] We are in collaboration and conversation with other human beings in an inter-subjective world. This is not just something additional and consequent, but something constitutive and existential of being human. A method that is suitable for matter-in-motion cannot capture things human and the language of physics is not sufficient for expressing the characteristics of being human. One has to see the fundamental similarities and differences in our engagement with things and other living human beings. Both of them constitute and shape our streams of life. Living human beings are not only rooted in the world of things but also formed by and extended to the world of persons. Language plays a fundamental role in this project and process.

Language, as we use it, is a fundamental human practice that is rooted in nature and developed in collaboration and conversation with fellow human beings. Language-use is neither an invention by an individual nor a gift from society. It is the development of natural propensities of living human beings, a joint venture of nature and nurture. Language-use is also neither a finished product nor is it unfinished; it is an open-ended process, like human beings who use language in various ways in the stream of life in conversation and collaboration with fellow human beings.

It is in the stream of human life, our common ways of acting that a rule and the act in accord with it make contact; a rule is described and the corresponding act is explained. For words have meaning only in the stream of life. Life in its variety and complexity is the conceptual framework of anything that is significantly human and this background is beyond a complete theoretical articulation. The simile of the stream shows the

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[18]According to Wittgenstein, "The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice something – because it is always before one's eyes)." Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 129.

dynamic shape of our complicated forms of life. The stream is formed as it flows on and our concepts stand in the middle of it. Wittgenstein also uses the analogy of a weave: "Seeing life as a weave ... where one pattern is not always complete and is varied in a multiplicity of ways ... and is interwoven with many others."[19] The necessary stability of our lives is provided by the interweaving of the many patterns rather than by any one single pattern. Our language-use is both dynamic and stable and rests on agreement in our form of life,[20] which includes both agreements in actions and judgements. In learning language, thus, we do not merely learn the pronunciation, spelling and syntax of words, but the forms of life which make those sounds and ink marks the words they are, play their role in the respective language-games – asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying, etc.

6. "Language Relates to a Way of Living"[21]

The use of language is characteristically human. It relates to a way of living, how human beings live, move, and have their being in the world. It is a practice with characteristic elements of objectivity, regularity, and normativity. "Only in the practice of a language can a word have meaning."[22] What Wittgenstein wants to get across is that language-use takes place in the sphere of actual behaviour of living human beings and its foundations are in the stream of our lives. Neither the Cartesian *res cogitans*, nor the Platonic Ideas, nor even the world of objects provides the foundations for our language use. The bedrock of our practices, including language use, is the regularity of practice and agreement in acting and judgement. Unless there is regularity in the use of a word, it cannot function as a word in any language. "The phenomenon of language rests on regularity, on agreement in acting."[23] It is a regularity of our lives that is based on the regularity of nature. Though regularity of nature is necessary for language, it is not sufficient. For example, the sound of thunder is not the name of lightning. Some animals do make sounds in

[19]Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, eds. G. E M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967, 568, 569.

[20]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 241.

[21]Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, eds. G. H. von Wright, R. Rhees, G. E. M. Anscombe, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978, 335.

[22]Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, 344.

[23]Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, 342.

relation to eating and courting. Yet we hesitate to call it a language; it is certainly very different from human language. Our language capacity, according to Wittgenstein, belongs to our nature as animals of a certain kind. "I want to regard man here as an animal; as a primitive being to which one grants instinct but not ratiocination... Language did not emerge from some kind of ratiocination."[24] Once language-games are established there are reasons. Though reasons are not the source of language-games, they are not without reasons. Moreover, children learn language from the grown-ups by being trained to its use. Language is, thus, a product of nature and nurture and could be seen as part of our second nature, after Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein's point is that the bedrock of our linguistic use is our regularity and agreement in actions rather than ratiocination. "It is our acting, which lies at the bottom of the language-game."[25] The crucial point is the normativity that is shown by the agreement in acting and in judgements. "Here it is of the greatest importance that all of us, or the overwhelming number, agree on certain things. For example, I can be sure that the colour of this object will be called 'green' by most people who see it."[26] "If there was no agreement in what we call 'red', etc., etc., language would come to an end."[27] Without agreement the words would be meaningless; they would not be words but just sounds and ink marks. That is the problem for the private linguist. For him, "The sounds and marks would not have a meaning independent of his production of them – which comes to saying that would not have meaning in the sense that words have meaning."[28] If there were no overwhelming agreement in applying a word, it would have no role in a language. "If language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definitions but also (queer as this may sound) in judgments."[29] Communicability is a necessary characteristic of a word.

Both regularity and overwhelming agreement in judgements are to be seen as part of the framework on which the working of our language is

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[24]Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, eds. G. E M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969, 475.

[25]Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, 475, 204.

[26]Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, 342.

[27]Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, 196.

[28]N. Malcolm, *Wittgenstinian Themes: Essays, 198-89*, ed. G. H. von Wright, New York: Cornell University Press, 1995,165.

[29]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 242.

based. They provide a system of co-ordinates for the practice of a language. This is not merely an epistemological point but a metaphysical aspect of there being any language use. Wittgenstein wrote: "Our language-game only works, of course, when a certain agreement prevails, but the concept of agreement does not enter into the language-game."[30] It is part of the framework of having any language. This is true also about regularity of practice. Regularity and agreement are not inserted between a word and meaning to bridge them. Meaning is not a Platonic, Cartesian, or social entity. It is our use of the word that is highlighted by drawing attention to the role of regularity and agreement of the members of a community. A community is not external to the word use; it is part of the characteristic surrounding and framework of language use.[31] They are interdependent.

First of all, if there are no similarities in the world, human beings could not see similarities and classify them; there would not be any language. Secondly, if there is no human being with capacities to see and judge similarities, there could not be any seeing of similarities and classification without which there could not be any language. "The seeing of similarities underpins patterns of language use" and these "patterns of word use ... emerge from our ongoing practice."[32] This is something fundamental to human living. Thirdly, if there are no human beings who quietly agree on a vast variety of judgements concerning regularity in nature and in human actions, there would not be any language because language as we have seen is a human practice and practices are by nature objective, regular, and normative. Languages are not human inventions or discoveries but practices that evolved as a joint venture of nature and nurture. Things are similar and they are seen and judged as similar, not by

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[30]Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 430.

[31]"It is of the greatest importance that a dispute hardly ever arises between people about whether the colour of this object is the same as the colour of that, the length of this rod the same as the length of that, etc. This peaceful agreement is the characteristic surrounding of the use of the word 'same'. And one must say something analogous about proceeding according to a rule. No dispute breaks out over the question whether a proceeding was according to the rule or not. It doesn't come to blows, for example. This belongs to the framework, out of which our language works (for example, gives a description)." Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, 323.

[32]M. Luntley, "Patterns, Particularism and Seeing the Similarity" in *Philosophical Papers*, November 2002, 274, 271.

just one individual but all of us or the vast majority of us who share in a form of life. Our concepts, in general, depend on the fact that human beings would respond in the same way (correspondingly or almost correspondingly) under the same circumstances, pressing for which (similarities, seeing similarities or judging similarities) is basic or reducing one to the other is a philosophical obsession rather than philosophical investigation. It is futile to separate between elements of nature and nurture in human practices. They are interwoven to give shape to our complicated forms of life.

"Wittgenstein's position is simply this: what I mean is determined by my natural use of words, so that we cannot sensibly ask whether my use really conforms to what my words mean."[33] My natural use of words is interwoven with the rest of my life. It is formed by nurture and becomes my second nature. Calibration is made possible by my regularity in patterns of use. Given the same training, human beings respond in certain regular ways; we agree in acting and in our judgements. Other beings may respond in different ways. It is also possible that a particular human being or a group of people may respond differently. "Such a case would present similarities with one in which a person naturally reacted to the gesture of pointing with the hand by looking in the direction of the line from finger-tip to wrist, not from wrist to finger-tip."[34] In such situations, there cannot be normative practices including language use.

Since language is a practice, regularity is essential to language use. "In order to describe the phenomenon of language one has to describe a practice, not a one-time occurrence, whatever it might be."[35] Of course, new words, like new rules, can be invented which are perhaps never used and yet could be understood. It would not be possible, however, if there were no use of words at all. Moreover, concepts are not for use on a single occasion; they must be repeatable. That does not mean that each word is actually used on a number of occasions by a number of people. There is an important distinction between regularity over time and place by repeatability of instances and regularity across persons who participate in a form of life. It is contingently possible that at a given time there is only one single person who is using a language. It can be taught and learned by other human agents. Possibility for multiplicity of instances is fundamental

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[33]C. McGinn, *Wittgenstein on Meaning*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984, 87-88.
[34]Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 185.
[35]Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, 335.

to our language use. Language use cannot be logically restricted to one human being. A language that could not be shared (logically) is a philosophical chimera. For actual linguist use, we need at least the possibility of not only multiplicity of instances but also multiplicity of agents agreeing in judgements and sharing in a form of life. The participating agents must be able to see and judge similarities and act accordingly to form, what Wittgenstein calls, "the bustle/web/stream/form of life." We judge an action according to its background within the bustle of human life.

To the question, "How could human behaviour be described?" Wittgenstein answered: "Surely only by showing the actions of a variety of humans, as they are all mixed up together. Not what one man is doing now, but the whole hurly-burly, is the background against which we see an action, and it determines our judgment, our concepts, and our reactions."[36] Applying it to linguistic use, Malcolm wrote:

> To speak a language is to participate in a way of living in which many people are engaged. The language I speak gets its meaning from the common ways of acting and responding of many people. I take part in a game... To follow the rules for the use of an expression is nothing other than to use by those many people who take part in the activities in which the expression is embedded. Thus, the meaning of the expression is independent of me, or of any particular person; and this is why I can use the expression correctly or incorrectly. It has a meaning independent of my use of it.[37]

Wittgenstein himself admitted: "One can of course imagine someone who lives alone and sketches pictures of the objects around him (say on the walls of his cave), and his picture language could be easily understood."[38] According to Malcolm, Wittgenstein rejected the view that if a human infant grew up, by some strange chance, in complete isolation from any human society, this human being could, in his solitary existence, devise a language, a system of signs, which he could use to record observations, make predictions, set down rules for action for his own guidance and so on. If a rule is followed, it must be followed correctly. There must be a use

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[36]Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 567.

[37]Malcolm, *Wittgenstinian Themes: Essays*, 198-89, 164.

[38]"*Man kann sich doch einen Menschen vorstellen der allein lebt und Bilder von den Gegenständen um ihn her zeichnet (etwa an die Wände seiner Höhle) und seine Bildersprache ließe sich leicht verstehen.*" Wittgenstein, MS, 165, 105.

of the rule which is independent of this particular individual user, if correctly is to mean anything. In his view, this independent source of normativity is given by the community: "Any use of language at all presupposes a community in which there is agreement in the application of words and signs."[39] For our language use, according to his view, we need not only multiplicity of instances, "the whole hurly-burly of human actions" but also "the actions of a variety of humans, as they are all mixed up together."[40] Language, thus, relates to a way of living. Wittgenstein's remarks on language use and rule following, thus, form part of a philosophical anthropology showing how we live, move, and have our being.

7. Conclusion

"Know thyself!" is a fundamental philosophical quest and philosophy aims at providing an account of our own place in the world. The question is about the meaning of life and the answer is given in relation to nature, community, and often God. As this is given in language, philosophers of language focus on the interrelations and logical connections of mind, language, and the world. Philosophers who see understanding and use as the keys to linguistic meaning have held that the meaningfulness of language in some sense derives from mental content, perhaps including the contents of beliefs, thoughts, and concepts. If mind assigns meaning to language, so also language enables and shapes mind. Having language is so crucial to our ability to frame complex thoughts that many doubt whether language is prior to mind. Since language is the vehicle of our descriptions and explanations of reality, philosophers are concerned about what makes a true or apt characterization of reality.

The linguistic turn in the twentieth century initiated a new way of investigating philosophical problems. The Cartesian subjective turn to mental entities as philosophical data was a philosophical turn that produced more problems than it claimed to resolve. The linguistic turn also should not be seen as replacing concepts. *Homo loquens* do not replace *homo sapiens*. Both thinking and speaking are fundamental facts of a living human being. Philosophy has to see the living human being as the fundamental without reducing or denying other constitutive dimensions of human living. Linguistic turn made it imperative that philosophical

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[39]Malcolm, *Wittgenstein: Nothing is Hidden: Wittgenstein's Criticism of His Early Thought*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986, 157.

[40]Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 567.

questions are interrelated with questions on language. Metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, philosophy of mind, philosophy of religion, philosophy of science, etc., are interwoven with questions of language. Language is something fundamental: "Language is language."[41] It is not to be defined in terms of something other than itself, i.e., as human activity, in terms of phonetics and conventions, rather it is *saying* that shows.[42] The language use is not merely an external expression that requires intelligibility by appeal to something internal, because in that case the intelligibility of internal ideas and feelings requires the same kind of retrogressive explanation, and such regress, once started, could never find a final resting place. "Let language be experienced as language."[43]

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[41]Heidegger, *Poetry, Language and Thought*, trans. A. Hofstadter, New York: Harper Collins, 1962, 191.

[42]"*Des Wesende der Sprache ist die Sage als die Zeige.*" Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. P. D. Hertz, New York: Harper and Row, 1971, 123.

[43]Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, 119.