

Approaching the Notion of Grammar in Wittgenstein's Philosophy

“Our inquiry is therefore a grammatical one.”

PI §90

“Like everything metaphysical, the harmony between thought and reality is to be found in the grammar of language.”

Ts 228: 148

“*Essence* is expressed in grammar.”

PI §371

“I always want to show that everything that is ‘business’ in logic has to be said in grammar.”

Ts 213: 526

“[...] in philosophy, all that is not gas is grammar.”

Wittgenstein's Lectures. Cambridge 1930-1932. From the Notes of John King and Desmond Lee. Edited by Desmond Lee. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1980, 112.

“[...] I once thought that certain words could be distinguished according to their philosophical importance: ‘grammar’, ‘logic’, ‘mathematics’. I should like to destroy this appearance of importance. How is it then that in my investigation certain words come up again and again? It is because I am concerned with language, with troubles arising from a particular use of language. The characteristic trouble we are dealing with is due to our using

language automatically, without thinking about the rules of grammar.”

Ambrose, Alice (1982) (ed.): *Wittgenstein's Lectures. Cambridge, 1932-1935. From the Notes of Alice Ambrose and Margaret Macdonald.* Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 13 (§12).

“I am in a very great muddle about the way in which Dr. Wittgenstein uses the expressions ‘rule of grammar’ or ‘grammatical rule’. And all I have tried to do is to ask some questions, which puzzle me, about it. I am in such a muddle that I haven't been able even to arrange my questions well [...].”

Moore's Paper: 1. Published in: *Lectures, Cambridge 1930-33 from the Notes of G.E. Moore.* Edited by David Stern, Brian Rogers und Gabriel Citron. New York: Cambridge University Press 2016.

“After all, our grammatical investigation differs from that of a philologist, etc.; what interests us, for instance, is the translation from one language into other languages we have invented. In general, the rules that the philologist totally ignores are the ones that interest us. Thus we are justified in emphasizing this difference.

On the other hand it would be misleading to say that we deal with what is essential about grammar (and that he deals with what is accidental).

‘But that is only an external differentiation.’ I believe there is no other.

We could rather say that we are calling something else ‘grammar’ than he is. Just as we differentiate between kinds of words where for him there is no difference.”

Ts 213: 413

“I still think that he was not using the expression ‘rules of grammar’ in any ordinary sense; and I am still unable to form any clear idea as to how he was using it.”

Moore, G.E. 1993: “Wittgenstein's Lecture Notes in 1930-33”. In: James Klagge & Alfred Nordmann (Ed.): *Ludwig Wittgenstein. Philosophical Occasions.* Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing. 69

“What does it mean when we say, ‘I can't imagine the opposite of this’ or ‘What would it be like if it were otherwise?’ For example, when someone has said that my mental images are private; or that only I myself can know whether I am feeling pain; and so forth.

Of course, here 'I can't imagine the opposite' doesn't mean: my powers of imagination are unequal to the task. We use these words to fend off something whose form produces the illusion of being an empirical proposition, but which is really a grammatical one.

But why do I say: 'I can't imagine the opposite'?

Why not: 'I can't imagine what you say'?

Example: 'Every rod has a length.' That means something like: we call something (or this) 'the length of a rod' but nothing 'the length of a sphere'. Now can I imagine 'every rod having a length'? Well, I just imagine a rod; and that is all. Only this picture, in connection with this proposition, has a quite different role from one used in connection with the proposition 'This table has the same length as the one over there'. For here I understand what it means to have a picture of the opposite (and it doesn't have to be a mental picture either).

But the picture that goes together with the grammatical proposition could only show, say, what is called "the length of a rod". And what should the opposite picture be?

((Remark about the negation of an a priori proposition.))"

PI §251

"Grammar (rules and vocabulary) is the description of language, and it consists in giving the rules for the combination of symbols, i.e. which combinations make sense and which don't, which are allowed and which are not allowed."

Wittgenstein's Lectures. Cambridge 1930-1932. From the Notes of John King and Desmond Lee. Edited by Desmond Lee. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1980, 46f.

"Grammar describes how signs are used."

Ms 110: 110

"Grammar describes the meaning of signs. "

Ms 110: 176

"Grammar is the description of language."

Ts 213: 192

"Grammar describes the use of words in language."

Ms 140: 15r

"Grammatical rules are not (natural) rules according to which language has to be constructed in order to fulfil its purpose / in order to have this effect.

Rather, they are descriptions of *how* language does it - whatever it does.

That is, grammar does not describe the effectiveness of language but only the game of language, language actions."

Ts 213: 192

Grammar does not tell us how language must be constructed in order to fulfil its purpose, in order to have such-and-such an effect on human beings. It only describes, and in no way explains, the use of signs."

PI §496

"Grammar explains the meaning of words as far as it can be explained."

Ms 109: 139

"One could say now: grammar explains the meaning of signs [...]."

Ms 114: 177

"Grammar is the account book / the account books of language; in which everything must be visible that is not concerned with emotions, but facts / solid facts."

Ms 109: 129

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“Grammar must say that this proposition does not say anything without such a complementation. If it is the complete account book of language (as I call it).”

Ms 109: 138

“I always want to show that everything that is business in logic has to be said in grammar.

Such as the process of a business has to be completely visible in the account books. In a way that one must be able to say, pointing to the account books: Here! Here everything has to show itself; and what does not show itself does not count. [...] Everything really business-like - that is - must take place in grammar.“

Ms 109: 122f

“I know that my method is right. My father was a business man, and I am a business man: I want my philosophy to be business-like, to get something done, to get something settled.”

Drury, Maurice O’C. 1984: “Conversations with Wittgenstein”. In: Rush Rhees (Ed.): *Recollections of Wittgenstein*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 110.

“In how far does grammar describe language? It says that such and such word combination is allowed. Also, that this word means the same as that word. It is therefore actually a collection of rules. It consists of *conventions* about language.”

Ms 156b: 7r

“Grammar consists of conventions. It is, for example, such a convention when it says: ‘ the word ‘red’ means that colour”

Ms 114: 167

“Again it depends on the grammar of the word ‘correspondence’, on its use.”

Ms 113: 48r

“How does grammar explain the word ‘now’? Surely by means of the rules it gives about its use.”

Ms 109: 139

“It is one of our tasks here to give a picture of the grammar (the use) of the word ‘a certain’.”

Ts 310: 90 (BrB: 135)

“A main source of our failure to understand is that we don’t have an overview of the use of our words. — Our grammar is deficient in surveyability.”

PI §122

“For us, grammar is a pure calculus.”

Ms 113: 62r

“Grammar a game of chess”

Ms 109: 156

“The difference between different word categories is comparable with the different tokens in chess, but also with the even greater difference between a piece of chess and the chess board.”

Ms 114: 39

“One can explain: The position of a word in grammar is its meaning.”

Ms 114: 39

“It is not everywhere bounded by rules; but no more are there any rules for how high one may throw the ball in tennis, or how hard, yet tennis is a game for all that, and has rules too.”

PI §68

“And is there not also the case where we play, and make up the rules as we go along? And even where we alter them as we go along.”

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PI §83