

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN'S CONCEPT OF LANGUAGE GAME

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Abstract: The term of game is often used metaphorically about language in everyday life. Language game is a term that Wittgenstein uses in his Philosophical Investigations to emphasize the fact that language use is part of an activity or way of life consisting of language and action. Wittgenstein's Concept of Language Games is one of three important concepts in his philosophical work. Language game is a key term in Wittgenstein's philosophy. Wittgenstein's main argument about language is that the rules for using ordinary language are neither right nor wrong. Language is only useful for use according to the context in which it is implemented. Wittgenstein concluded that the meaning of a word is its use in sentences, the meaning of a sentence is its use in language, and the meaning of language is its use in various contexts of human life. However, Wittgenstein emphasizes the use of correct language, because by using the right language, we can get the true meaning. In this regard, Wittgenstein argues that the rules in language also need to be obeyed just like the rules in a game.

Keywords: language game, philosophy, Ludwig Wittgenstein

INTRODUCTION

Each period of philosophical development displays its own characteristics as a representation of the spirit of that period. This period starts from ancient Greece with the characteristic of cosmocentrism to modern times which are marked by many scientific findings as a sign of the emergence of science that stands alone, and is strictly separated from the discipline of philosophy (Gufron, 2016). Opinions and methods are raised by each philosopher in order to find the truth. Thus the new philosophical school is also a reaction to the previous philosophical school (Listiana, 2012).

In the 20th century, contemporary philosophy emerged. At this period, the analytic thought of language emerged. The emergence of analytic philosophy is a reaction to the dissatisfaction of philosophy at that time. The main reaction is directed at the idealistic tradition, dominated by theologians who emphasize the importance of metaphysics (Rahman & Hasanuddin, 2020). The language of philosophy in this period was considered redundant and difficult to understand. According to analytic philosophy, the task of philosophy is to solve the problem of not understanding the language of logic, and not to make specific statements. This is done by using a critique of language (Listiana, 2012). In this century, one of the philosophers who had an important influence on the development of further philosophy was Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) with a distinctive thought about the analysis of language.

Ludwig Wittgenstein is known as one of the greatest philosophers of the 20th century. His thinking plays an important role in analytic philosophy on the topics of logic and language, perception and intention, ethics and religion, aesthetics and culture. With his own philosophical work and the influence of his thinking on several generations of other thinkers, Wittgenstein changed the nature of philosophical activity in the world of language (Weerasekara, 2014; Jahanforouz, 2019). With his complete and

innovative thoughts and concepts, Ludwig Wittgenstein became known as a figure in analytical philosophy with his two major works *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Wittgenstein I) and *Philosophische Untersuchungen* or *Philosophical Investigations* (Wittgenstein II).

In the discussion writing, the author will briefly explain the background to the emergence of Ludwig Wittgenstein's first work on picture theory in his book *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. This explanation needs to be made to provide a historical map along with the basic arguments for the emergence of theories related to Ludwig Wittgenstein's language analysis, both picture theory and language game theory that appear in his second work *Philosophical Investigations*.

The choice of language game theory in this article is motivated by the author's interest in pragmatics, namely the use of language in various life contexts. Language is not only used by itself but is used to solve problems in the real context of human life. With language, humans can move to communicate and interact with the surrounding environment.

DISCUSSION

Ludwig Wittgenstein is one of the influential philosophers who put forward some innovative and progressive thoughts in the field of philosophy of language. Wittgenstein's thinking on the task of philosophy agrees with what Russell said. Both have the same thought about the main task of philosophy which is to provide logical analysis and is accompanied by logical synthesis. He argued that logical explanations of the mind could be provided by philosophy. Philosophy is an activity that consists of explanations and descriptions (Kaelan, 2002 in Gufron, 2016). Wittgenstein's thinking is a reaction to the complexity of the thinking of earlier philosophers which is difficult to understand logically. According

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to Wittgenstein, there needs to be clear indicators to be able to determine whether the language of philosophy is understood or not. Therefore there needs to be a language that meets the requirements of logic.

This article focuses on the concept of language games that appear in Ludwig Wittgenstein's second work, *Philosophical Investigations*. However, in order to sharpen the understanding of the background of the emergence of this work, it is necessary to present Ludwig Wittgenstein's first work which cannot be separated as two interrelated and influential works of his time until today.

Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus

The *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* is considered an important twentieth century philosophical work identifying the relationship between language and reality. This is an attempt to state in general terms the essence of all language and the essence of the relationship between language and reality (Kumar & Susmitha, 2018).

In principle, the book *Tractatus* analyzes the nature of language, which describes the nature of the reality of the factual world. According to Wittgenstein, the essence of the meaning of language is a representation of the reality of the world of facts located in a logical structure (M. Izmirli, 2014). Linguistic expressions in the form of sentences in everyday human life, if we return to the structure, we will find a series of sentences that describe a factual world reality. This image is not a figurative word, but a logical image known as the concept of logical atomism (Kaelan, 2003: 77 in Gufron, 2016). Wittgenstein's concept of logical atomism became known in 1921 in the German edition of the *Logisch Philosophischen Abhandlung*, which appeared a year later in English under the title *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*.

Wittgenstein's concept of Logical Atomism is almost in line with Russell's thinking who prefers to use the term of atomic fact and Wittgenstein uses the term atomic fact or state of affair. Wittgenstein

asserts that what is meant by atomic facts is a combination of objects, and what is meant by objects, things, entities here are human knowledge of internal qualities that include space, time, color which are the forms of objects (Wittgenstein, 1995: 33) in (Mustansyir, 2016). Russell and Wittgenstein in principle have the same direction and perspective, namely emphasizing language analysis through analytical techniques, not discussing facts or reality itself. According to Wittgenstein, the language of fact formation is conditioned by logic. The language of reason is reduced to the language of perfect logic. What remains outside the logical language is silence (Vlăduțescu, 2013).

Wittgenstein argues that in formulating philosophical problems there is a misunderstanding of the language of logic. The real task of philosophy is to explain the entire epistemology of expressions that are good but cannot be interpreted from the point of view of common sense as a mystical entity. This is because philosophy functions to explain something that cannot be said or thought by presenting and saying something logically and clearly. What *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* emphasizes in this case is the problem of language limitations (Listiana, 2012).

Wittgenstein proposed a theory called picture theory. This theory is derived from Russell's view of the concept of isomorphism. Picture theory holds that there is an absolute relationship between language and reality (the real world), and this relationship can be traced both in terms of language and reality (Listiana, 2012). With this theory, Wittgenstein argues that the essence of language meaning is a representation of the reality of the factual world that is placed in a logical structure (Gufron, 2016). For example, He is eating, so in fact he is eating, and here a correspondence occurs. With this example, it can be seen that there are two main factors in the picture theory, namely propositions which are tools in the language of philosophy and facts that exist in reality.

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Based on picture theory, the picture of reality contained in a proposition or sentence must meet the principles 1) the parts contained in the proposition or sentence must contain parts that are exactly the same as the reality it represents, 2) a sentence or proposition is a model of reality as described by people, 3) a name represents an object and the objects are combined with each other. In this way the whole group presents the circumstances of a particular event. A statement is a certain picture that is representative and contains a pictorial relationship (Kaelan, 2004).

In the *Tractatus*, the importance of language structure is underlined by the strict form of the text. All statements mentioned in a hierarchical system and aphoristic but concise style demonstrate what Wittgenstein is trying to express "what can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot speak we must pass on in silence" (Henry & Utaker, 1992; Huemer, 2004).

In addition, Wittgenstein also put forward the concept of a sign. According to Wittgenstein, signs define a logical form only together with the application of logical syntax. A sign is something that contains a logical structure, so that in its application it can be understood by humans logically as well (Mustansyir, 2016). With signs, there are opportunities for others to understand what one wants to convey.

Language Game

Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophical linguistic thought in his book *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus* did not prevent him from seeking philosophical truth. Wittgenstein realized that the language analysis technique which only aims to find the meaning of language by prioritizing the semantic aspect has created a debate about the meaning of language among thinkers. The determination of the ideal language on the basis of perfect language logic cannot accommodate all the philosophical ideas that develop in thought

(Mustansyir, 2016). In 1953 Wittgenstein published his second major work in his book *Philosophical Investigations*.

In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein criticizes his first ideas and concepts on the structure of the essence of language. On the other hand, Wittgenstein admits that language formulated by logic is very unlikely to develop in philosophy. According to Wittgenstein, in human life, it is impossible to express itself through the logical formulation of language alone for different lives with different contexts (Kaelan, 2002: 143 in Gufron, 2016).

In the second period of his work, he rejected language which only expressed logical propositions. Language is also used in various ways to express justifications, questions, commands, announcements, and many other phenomena that can be expressed in words. There are many types of language use. He is aware that, in fact, everyday language is basically sufficient to express philosophical thoughts (Kaelan, 2002: 144).

In *Philosophical Investigations*, there are three things he rejects that were used in his first work, namely: 1) Language is only used for one purpose, namely establishing states of affairs (factual circumstances). 2) The meaning of sentences can only be obtained in one way, namely by describing a factual situation. 3) Every type of language can be formulated in a perfect logical language, although at first glance it is difficult to see (K. Bertens, 1983: 47 in (Gufron, 2016: Mustansyir, 2016: 125). The limitations of language formulated through logic are then answered by Wittgenstein himself through the concept of language games in his second work, *philosophical investigation*.

The term “game” is often used metaphorically about language in everyday life (Das & Neog, 2020). Language game is a term used by Wittgenstein in *The Philosophical Investigations* to emphasize the fact that using language is part of an activity, or a form of life consisting of language and action (Peters, 2020). Wittgenstein's Concept of Language Games is one of three important concepts in

his philosophical work. Language games were a key term in Wittgenstein's later philosophy. Wittgenstein's main argument about language is that the rules for using ordinary language are neither right nor wrong. Language is only useful for use according to the context in which it is implemented. Community members, students, or rap musicians, for example; develop a way of speaking that meets their needs as a group, and this is a language game they use (Jahanforouz, 2019). Or children learn their mother tongue and acquire rules through learning to play language games (Peters, 2020). A language game reflects human activity; a form of life. Words derive their meaning from the function they perform in language games such as scientific language games, religious language games, aesthetic language games and many others. A word may have various uses (Jahanforouz, 2019).

In the practice of using language, there are some people who say the words, while others do what the words mean. In the example of language instruction, the following process will occur, namely learning the names of objects as one person pronounces a certain word (eg: chair), while the other points to an object called a chair. According to Wittgenstein, things like this occur in human daily life, so that there is a process of using language. Wittgenstein calls the process of using language a form of language game (Mustansyir, 2016: 125).

Wittgenstein's language game has more to do with language use. The main goal of the game is the realization of language. Language games begin with intentions that match the interests of their users (Das & Neog, 2020). Activities in language games will probably have a symbolic quality. A game means a set of conventions when symbols are drawn as a whole. Thus, language games are not formally defined as a concrete structure but as something abstract (Kumar & Susmitha, 2018).

According to Wittgenstein, the essence of language is its use in various contexts of human daily life. There are many language

games that are dynamic and not limited according to the context of human life. There are many uses of language, each of which has its own rules. With this basis, Wittgenstein undertook the development of the thought of a plurality of languages. Wittgenstein concluded that the meaning of a word is determined by its use in a sentence, the meaning of a sentence is determined by its use in language and then the meaning of language is its use in various contexts of human life (Kaelan, 2004). According to Wittgenstein, to get the true meaning, language must be used in the right way. In terms of playing games there are some rules that we must obey. Likewise in the use of language, there are several rules that must be obeyed (Das & Neog, 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of language games is inseparable from his first work *Tractus philosophicus* which emphasizes the logic of language. It can be said that the inspiration for language games came from *Tractus Philosophicus* which he honestly acknowledged as a work that had limitations. The concept of language games which is essentially on how to use language in various contexts of daily life, then makes this concept the basis for the purpose of analyzing language. If it is associated with linguistics, Wittgenstein's concept of language games becomes very relevant to pragmatics, namely the use of language in various contexts of human life.

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