

## WITTGENSTEIN'S REJECTION OF PRIVATE LANGUAGE An Orthodox Point of View

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### Private Language

'Private language'<sup>1</sup> against which Wittgenstein argues is said to be understood only by the person using it. It is, in principle, impossible to translate it into public language. Such a language is necessarily incommunicable and unintelligible to others. It is important to note here that there could be language(s) used by just one person, *e.g.* Robinson Crusoe's language. Such a language would not qualify to be a private language since it can, in principle, be made public. It would be a public language intelligible to just one person. "Had some one heard and observed him, he would have been able to learn Robinson's Language; for the meanings of the word are apparent in *Robinson's behaviour* (MS 221)." Wittgenstein says:

The individual words of this language [private] are to refer to what can only be known to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language (PI 243).<sup>2</sup>

The point to be noted here is that the number of speakers has no bearing on the definition of the private language (as is the case of Robinson's language.) It is the subject matter which has

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the important bearing on the definition of private language. The so-called Private Language must be logically or exclusively private-accessible to the speaker—the first person-alone. Understanding the nature of privacy is of cardinal importance here. In the context of the private language, the word *private* stands for what can *only be possessed and known by the speaker alone*. What are claimed to meet this demand are experiences, sensations, sense impressions, mental images etc. which are alleged to be accessible only to the first person. That is to say, in (an exclusively) private language one refers to one's private/inner mental experiences.

Wittgenstein says:

But could we also imagine a language in which a person could write down or give vocal expression to his inner experiences — his feelings, moods, and the rest — for his private use. (PI 243)

The whole question of privacy hinges on two important points. The inalienable possession and the infallible knowledge of the subject matter of the private language by nobody but the user (the first person).

To say that experiences or sensations are private means that if someone is having an experience, then, the person must be in possession of something which cannot be had by anyone else. If a person is in pain then he possesses something. The word pain, it is argued, must refer to something which is inaccessible to any body else. Another person cannot share, possess or have the same thing. Since, another person cannot possess what the first person possesses, *i.e.* the subjective experiences, it is maintained, another person cannot feel what the first person feels and consequently cannot know about it. It is important to note here that feeling a sensation, for example, is taken as knowing it.

The essential thing about private experience is really not that each person possesses his own exemplar, but that nobody knows whether other people also have *this* or something else. The assumption would thus be possible — though unverifiable — that one section of mankind

has one sensation of red and another section another.  
(PI 272)

There could be thoughts or intention which a man could keep to himself as, *e.g.*, a move in chess is kept to oneself.<sup>3</sup> This does not mean that it is private in the sense in which we are dealing with it. They are secret, not private.

Again, if private language is a language then it must have rules. Its rules cannot be the rules of the public language or derived from it, otherwise it will not be a strictly private language. The rules of a private language, if there were any private language, must be *private* in the same sense of privacy in which the language is private. The basic constituents of this language, it is assumed, are words (names, signs) which refer to the private mental objects, states etc. The question worth noting in this connection is that how is the relationship between a sign and a private mental object established. The clue to this may be found in ostensive definition. However, the following consideration must be kept in mind. Firstly, since private language as defined above does not share any rule with public language, therefore, the ostensive definition/ostension in both the cases must necessarily be different. Secondly, since the distinctive mark of the private language is its subject matter which is necessarily inaccessible to anybody except the user, therefore, the ostensive definition used in private language must also be inaccessible to anybody else. This entails that nobody else can know what the person has named through private ostensive definition-the private ostensive definition being the private analogue of ostensive definition.

We conclude from the above discussion that a private language, if any, is a language which contains the subjective experiences of the user (first person) as its subject matter. Since the subjective experiences are exclusively owned by the first person, therefore, it cannot be understood by anybody else. Again, since it cannot be translated into a public language, it must not contain anything having public use. It consists of names (private signs), it is claimed, which get their meaning by being correlated by *private ostensive definition*. The private ostensive

definition is supposed to be the foundation of the private language.

### **Wittgenstein's Treatment of Private Language**

Wittgenstein maintains that the very idea of a private language is logically incoherent. It is not possible to use language in this manner. One could not even communicate to oneself if it is by definition impossible to communicate to others. Language is always shared or shareable. It is a human product which is embedded in human actions or human form of life, therefore, it is necessarily public. Wittgenstein's arguments against the possibility of private language are given as follows.

As already argued the possibility of a private language depends on the privacy of its subject matter. This subject matter, sensation for example, is supposed to be privately owned and hence privately known. The having of the sensation determines the supposed privacy of the sensation, whereas the describing of it, it is supposed, constitutes the private language. Here sensations are construed on the pattern of physical objects. In the sentence 'I have the sensation of pain', 'have' is considered to be used in the possessive sense. It has the same sense as it is used in the sentence 'I have a pen'. That is to say that I possess the sensation as I possess the pen. The difference between the two is that they belong to different realms. My pen could be stolen but not my pain. Others can know that I have a pen but not that I have a sensation. It implies from here that sensations are necessarily private/ not shareable.

Our investigation into the possibility of private language centers around the inquiry into the supposed nature of privacy of the sensations or experiences of the speaker, the possibility of private ostensive definition, the status of first person epistemic claims regarding sensations and experiences, and the possibility of necessarily private rules.

The supposed **inalienable privacy of sensations**<sup>4</sup> results from the mistake of considering sensations on the analogy of physical objects. This category mistake, it could be seen, is embedded in the conception of language in which naming is

central. This conception of language fails to appreciate the variety of ways in which language is used and the differences regarding the types of concepts. Once it is appreciated that sensations are akin to colours and habits rather than the physical objects, it follows that it is possible for two persons to have the same pain.<sup>5</sup> Says Wittgenstein:

In so far as it makes *sense* that my pain is the same as his, it is also possible for us to have the same pain.  
(PI 253)

Moreover, the subject matter of private language cannot be said to consist of mental images, picture or whatever is experienced by the first person. The reason for this being that an image or a picture has meaning in our shared ways of living. The so called *private* image which is supposed to be the object of description of private language cannot be understood in this way. To say that there exists something presupposes some shared setting which is absent here.

If you say he sees a private picture before him, which he is describing, you have still made an assumption about what he has before him. .... Isn't it as if I were to say of someone: "He *has* something. But I don't know whether it is money, or debts, or an empty till." (PI 294)

Again, it could be maintained that the object of description of private language is what is experienced by the first person. On this view experiencing something would be the same as meaning it, since there is no other way of knowing the existence of private object.

— 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.  
(PI ii p. 175-176)

There is another proposal of considering meaning and understanding of the object of description of private language as consisting of processes occurring in one's mind. This, once again, is not the case. For the occurrence of a process does not constitute meaning or understanding.

“Yes, but there is *something* there all the same accompanying my cry of pain. And it is on account of it that that I utter it. And this something is what is important — and frightful.” — Only whom are we informing of this? And on what occasion. (PI 296)

We are not denying here the fact that sensations can be kept to oneself. In that case the other person does not know about it. We must guard ourselves from implying from here that sensations are private. For, there is a difference between secrecy and inalienable privacy of sensation. What this analysis shows is that it is impossible to have sensation concepts if there is, in principle, no publicly accessible expression of it.

This analysis also shows that concepts are always formed. They are never given in experience. The formation of concepts requires a form of life which is always out there. In the case of sensation concepts it is the expression or manifestations which provide this background.

It is clear from this analysis that entertaining an image, picture or having a sensation is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of meaning and understanding. The undergoing of a sensation is not to be equated with the definition of it. Wittgenstein says:

I have seen a person in a discussion on this subject strike himself on the breast and say: “But surely another person can't have THIS pain!” — The answer to this is that one does not define a criterion of identity by emphatic stressing of the word “this”. (PI 253)

Furthermore, the use of private in the sense in which it has been used here is not the way it is used in language. Nothing could be private unless it is public.

From the inalienable privacy of sensations follows the **epistemic privacy** of sensations. Since, sensations are the objects before my consciousness, therefore, I alone can 'know' which sensation I am having. Whenever there is an epistemic claim, it is relevant to ask that 'how do you know'? The answer is, I 'know' the sensation (I am having) by 'feeling it'. That is to say that here 'I know' is logically equivalent to 'I feel.' It is not difficult to see from here the difference between a first person and a third person claim about sensation. I know the sensation that I am having by feeling it. Since, I cannot have the sensation of others; therefore, I cannot know the sensation which the other person (third person) is having.

Wittgenstein rejects the very idea of there being an epistemic privacy regarding sensations. For Wittgenstein the grammar of knowing is very different from the grammar of feeling. They belong to different families. Whenever there is a knowing claim it is possible to doubt. Doubt, however, has no place in the case of pains and other sensation. It makes no sense to say that 'I doubt whether I am in pain'. Again, in the case of knowledge it is possible to learn and teach. As far as the sensation is concerned there is no teaching and learning of the sensation. In the case of learning there is, in principle, ignorance before learning. In the case of *epistemic privacy* there is no place of my being ignorant about my sensation. Since I cannot be said to be ignorant about my sensation, it follows I cannot be said to learn it. Moreover, in case of epistemic claims one could legitimately ask 'how do you know'? This question could not be posed in the case of sensation because of no possibility of doubt here.

In what sense are my sensations *private*? — Well, only I can know whether I am really in pain; another person can only surmise it. — In one way this is wrong, and in another nonsense. If we are using the word "to know" as it is normally used (and how else are we to use it?), then other people very often know when I am in pain. — Yes, but all the same not with the certainty with which I know it myself! — It can't be said of me at all

(except perhaps as a Joke) that I *know* I am in pain. What is it supposed to mean — except perhaps that I *am* in pain?

Other people cannot be said to learn of my sensations *only* from my behaviour, — for *I* cannot be said to learn of them. I *have* them.

The truth is: it makes sense to say about other people that they doubt whether I am in pain; but not to say it about myself. (PI 246)

It is important to note here that at times *feeling* is used in *perceptual* sense. When used this way it has an epistemic sense. There is the possibility of doubt and learning here. However, the use of *feeling* in the first person psychological assertion is not the same.<sup>6</sup>

Again we do sometime say ‘I know that I am in pain’. Here the word “know” is not used in epistemic sense since doubting and learning is not possible here. Such a statement is exclamatory rather than declarative or epistemic. Also, one needs no justification or rational explanation for saying that one is in pain. Explanations and justifications come to an end. What we have in the final analysis is a phenomenon or way(s) of living which is beyond justification and explanation. Therefore, to say that one knows or learns about one’s sensation by ‘feeling’ it is not an explanation of how does one know about one’s sensation. Instead of looking for an explanation one ‘ought to look at what happens as a “proto-phenomenon”’. (PI 625)

‘How do you know that you have pain.’ Because ‘I feel them.’ But I feel them means the same as ‘I have them.’ Therefore this was no explanation at all. (BB p.68)<sup>7</sup>

An inquiry into the question of how does a child learn sensation vocabulary will show how does the language-game regarding sensation is played. Wittgenstein holds that one of the possibilities is that:

.... words are connected with the primitive, the natural, expressions of the sensation and used in their place ....



the verbal expression of pain replaces crying and does not describe it. (PI 244)

If this be the case then others can very well know whether I am in pain. This is not to rule out, of course, that there are cases in which I can conceal the natural expression thus deceiving others. The important point here is this that the word pain is logically linked with the expression. Had there been, in principle, no natural expression we would not have acquired the concept of pain. It is only those who have acquired the skill of pretense can pretend to have pain without being in pain. We do not talk about infants and animals that their expression of pain is a lie. The reason for this is that there is no place of pretense in that form of life. The natural expression in this case is enough to be certain about their being in pain. The crucial point is that it is the form of life within which meaning and understanding is to be seen. From here it is legitimate to hold that pains and sensations are not necessarily incommunicable.

The inalienability and the incommunicability theses of sensation are connected together with the help of ostensive definition. The ostensive definition on the one hand informs about the occurrence of something before the consciousness while on the other hand it is concerned with the formation and retention of the concept (of sensation) of the so called private language. The underlying assumption here is that meaning and understanding consists in the formation of inalienable samples or pictures in one's consciousness which one defines through ostensive definition which is the foundation of language.

Let us imagine the following case. I want to keep a diary about the recurrence of a certain sensation. To this end I associate it with the sign "S" and write this sign in a calendar for every day on which I have the sensation. — I will remark first of all that a definition of the sign cannot be formulated. — But still I can give myself a kind of ostensive definition. — How? Can I point to the sensation? Not in the ordinary sense. But I speak, or write the sign down, and at the same time I concentrate

my attention on the sensation — and so, as it were, point to it inwardly. — But what is this ceremony for? for that is all it seems to be! A definition surely serves to establish the meaning of a sign. — Well, that is done precisely by the concentrating of my attention; for in this way I impress on myself the connexion between the sign and the sensation. — But “I impress it on myself” can only mean: this process brings it about that I remember the connexion *right* in the future. But in the present case I have no criterion of correctness. One would like to say: whatever is going to seem right to me is right. And that only means that here we can’t talk about ‘right’. (PI 258)

The whole question about the possibility of the possibility of a private language depends on the following crucial points. Firstly, the occurrence of something (sample) before one’s consciousness such that there is a sign which is the name of it. The meaning of the sign being the sample found in the consciousness. Secondly, the naming of the sensation (private sample) is brought about by a private ostensive definition. The private ostensive definition is considered as a private analog of ostensive definition. Thirdly, it is argued that there must be a criterion of correctness of a definition, since without which it one could not be used in language. Again, the future use is an integral part of definition or concept formation, therefore the criterion of correctness is a logical necessity of definition. The following discussion will further help us in understanding Wittgenstein’s reasons for rejecting the possibility of private language.

### **Sample-Sign Relationship**

The occurrence of a sample, we have already seen, does not constitute meaning and understanding. In order to understand one needs a concept. Concepts are given by criterion. A criterion is a description of a complex network of use of a certain concept. This network of employment is within certain context. The context of use of a word or concept is a way of living, a kind of doing or a form of life. Hence to understand a concept is to

understand ways of acting, forms of life. The forms of living, by their very nature, therefore, are public. The sign "S", it is not difficult to see, cannot have any meaning. For, meaning there must be a form of life which is shared (or share-able). There is no such thing in the supposed sign-sample (private) relationship.

The unavailability of a shared background entails that there is no network of use or criterion for the sign "S". Since, meaning is the content of understanding and understanding consists in knowing the criterion, therefore, the unavailability of criterion for the sign "S" entails the meaninglessness of it.

Again, in the case of a meaningful sign there is a possibility of making mistakes in the case of its employment. There is also the case of correcting oneself or others when a mistake is committed. In order to know whether a mistake is made or not, one has to appeal to the form of living which is absent in the case of private sign "S". The lack of the possibility of making mistakes does away with the meaningfulness of a sign.

A meaningful sign could be taught and learnt. In the case of a private sign "S" there is no such possibility. There is neither any way of teaching others, by its very definition, the use of a private sign "S" nor is the case that the first person learns the private sign "S" or teaches it to himself, since learning presupposes ignorance and doubt which is absent in the (first person's) case of sensations.

To consider the explanation of meaning as something in one's private realm, an experience or an image for example, is to consider meaning in terms of symptoms rather than criterion. To look for a criterion of any linguistic expression is to look for a complex of use of the linguistic expression under particular situation. Thus criteria are rules or conventions. Rules and conventions are concerned with human actions and judgments. They are human products and human decisions have a bearing on them. The explanation of meaning consists in the description of grammatical rules or criterion. Symptoms, on the other hand are factual experiences. They are given in experiences. Human beings experience them or not. They are not be altered at wish.

To confuse criterion with symptom is the same as to confuse human judgments with human experience or to confuse conventions with experience. Says Wittgenstein:

Let us introduce two antithetical terms in order to avoid certain elementary confusions: To the question "How do you know that so-and-so is the case?", we sometimes answer by giving '*criteria*' and sometimes by giving '*symptoms*'. If medical science calls angina an inflammation caused by a particular bacillus, and we ask in particular case "Why do you say this man has got angina?" then the answer "I have found the bacillus so-and-so in his blood" gives us the criterion, or what we may call the defining criterion of angina. If on the other hand the answer was, "His throat is inflamed," this might give us a symptom of angina. I call "symptom" a phenomenon of which experience has taught us that it coincided, in some way or other, with the phenomenon which is our defining criterion. Then to say "A man has angina if this bacillus is found in him" is a tautology or it is a loose way of stating the definition of "angina". But to say, "A man has angina whenever he has an inflamed throat" is to make a hypothesis. (BB p. 24-25)

### **Private Ostensive Definition**

Wittgenstein maintains that the idea that the private sample gets its place in a private language by private ostensive definition is a mistake. The analogy between ostensive definition in our every day language and private language is misleading, for in the context of our day to day language whenever ostensive definition is employed in order to establish meaning it is necessary to understand the language-game in which something is meant ostensively. Pointing to a thing is always done within a set convention.

.... a great deal of stage-setting in language is presupposed if the mere act of naming is to make sense. (PI 257)

This stage-setting requires a complete background within which the users of language react and the context in which they react. And this pre-supposes a practice or 'a form of life' which is a feature of public language. It cannot function in the same way in establishing a private language as the context in which ostension is done is missing. So the private ostensive definition is an empty ceremony. As Malcom Budd writes: 'Private ostensive definition cannot determine a normative practice — one in which there is a distinction between a correct and an incorrect use of words.'<sup>8</sup>

Again, one cannot give a private ostensive definition by concentrating on something (sample) in one's consciousness, since concentration belongs to our every day language and by definition a private language shares nothing with public language.

Concentrating on a thing is a skill which could be learnt and taught. This does not apply to private ostensive definition. Hence the analogy does not hold good.

### **Employment of 'Private Sign' (in Future)**

If there were a case, let us suppose, in which one manages to give a private ostensive definition to one's private sensation even then the private language would not have been possible. The reason for this is that if someone manages to define the so-called private object this way then it implies that he would be able to recognize it whenever it occurs to him again. It is also clear that there must be a time lapse between any two occurrences of sensation. The problem here is that what is the criterion for the correct identification of one's private sensation? There could be two possibilities, both being wrong. They are:

- (a) Whenever a person says to himself/thinks that he has a private sensation "S" then he has sensation "S". If this be granted then the whole question of recognition would become meaningless. A criterion must be employed in recognizing any object so much so that if there is no criterion involved then it cannot be said whether two objects, sensations or samples are same or not. The

criterion with which any thing is recognized has got to be independently known otherwise there cannot be any question of correct identification. There is no such independent criterion possible in the case of private language, therefore, there cannot be any possibility of recognizing the object of private language here. As recognizing the private object is an integral part of private language, therefore, the impossibility of a criterion for identification would mean the impossibility of private language.

- (b) It could also be thought that memory might serve as the criterion for recognizing the private object, sensation, to be the same as the previous one. It would not do either for the logic of remembering requires that the thing which one remembers must be given independently and there must be a difference between the correct and incorrect memory. This is not the case here. So memory cannot be the highest court of appeal in the case of private language. Wittgenstein writes:

Let us imagine a table (something like a dictionary) that exists only in our imagination. A dictionary can be used to justify the translation of a word X by a word Y. But are we also to call it a justification if such a table is to be looked up only in the imagination? —"Well, yes; then it is a subjective justification." —But justification consists in appealing to something independent. —"But surely I can appeal from one memory to another. For example, I don't know if I have remembered the time of departure of a train right and to check it I call to mind how a page of the time-table looked. Isn't it the same here?" —No; for this process has got to produce a memory which is actually *correct*. If the mental image of the time-table could not itself be *tested* for correctness, how could it confirm the correctness of the first memory? (As if someone were to buy several copies of the morning paper to assure himself that what it said was true.)

Looking up a table in the imagination is no more looking up a table than the image of the result of an imagined experiment is the result of an experiment. (PI 265)

### **Wittgenstein's Treatment of Private Language and Memory Scepticism**

Some thinkers have held that Wittgenstein holds memory scepticism or a version of verificationism in his denial of the possibility of private language. Malcom, for example, thinks that the distinction between following a rule and merely being under the impression of following a rule cannot be established by memory checks, hence, private language is impossible. Ayer and Mundle also maintain that Wittgenstein's denial of private language depends on the impossibility of there being private checks. Mundle, for example, writes:

.... Wittgenstein's thesis is that the diarist cannot have any use for 'E', that 'E' cannot have any meaning for him, because the diarist would not be in a position to verify the correctness of his application of 'E' on any occasion.<sup>9</sup>

Critics of Wittgenstein maintain that untrustworthiness of memory or lack of verification in the case of private diarist creates the same problem for the user of public language as well. It would also lead to the impossibility of public language. Since public language is not disputed, therefore, critics hold that untrustworthiness of memory does not reject private language. Ayer, who is a supporter of this view, argues that there is nothing wrong in holding that one memory could be checked by another. He writes:

Whatever I have to identify, whether it be an object, an event, an image, or a sign, I have only my memory and my current sensation to rely on. There is a difference only in the degree to which the memories and sensations are cross-checked.<sup>10</sup>

Commenting on Wittgenstein's simile of morning paper on PI 265 Ayer writes:

The simile of morning paper is brilliant but I am still not convinced by the argument which it is meant to serve. The crucial fact which it seems to me that Wittgenstein persistently overlooks is that anyone's significant use of language must depend sooner or later on his performing what I call an act of primary recognition.<sup>11</sup>

Elsewhere Ayer writes:

No doubt it is a necessary condition for my understanding a descriptive statement that it should be, in some way, verifiable. But it need not be directly verifiable, and even if it is directly verifiable, it need not be directly verifiable by me.<sup>12</sup>

Defenders of Wittgenstein maintain that the case of private recognition and public recognition are different matters. In the case of public recognition a person could be corrected which is not possible in the so-called private recognition. Hence private recognition is not possible.

It could be seen from here that the critics and supporters both agree that Wittgenstein mean a factual memory when he writes 'I remember the connexion right' in PI 258. Anthony Kenny has summed up this debate in the following words:

Many philosophers have taken 'I remember the connection right' to mean 'I use "S" when and only when I really have 'S'. They take Wittgenstein's argument to be based on scepticism about memory: how can you be sure that you have remembered aright when next you call a sensation 'S'?<sup>13</sup>

It is to be noted that Wittgenstein does not talk about the impossibility of factual memory in PI 258. What he tries to establish, as spelled out in this study, is the impossibility of private ostensive definition. 'I remember the connexion right in the future' must be taken as remembering the meaning correctly



rather than factual memory. Definitions serve future employment. In the case of private ostensive definition the distinction between remembering and thinking that one remembers is absent. That is to say that there is no possibility of remembering/recognizing the private object, sensation, even if we suppose the possibility of private ostensive definition. The impossibility of recognition of "S" entails the impossibility of future employment of "S". The impossibility of future recognition and employment would mean the impossibility of private ostensive definition and hence private language.

### Private Rules

Given the impossibility of private ostensive definition it could still be thought that there are private rules possessing the characteristics to fulfill the demands of private language. The private rules, it could be seen, are supposed to make a case for the possibility of private language. It is therefore necessary to prove the impossibility of such rules if one argues that a private language is logically incoherent.

The claim about the possibility of private rules depends on the analogy of public rules. In what follows we will see whether such an analogy holds good.

Rules as we have already noted are an indispensable part of language (public). If there are no rules then there is no language. They have to be kept if anything is to be meant. The observance of rules consists in practice — to obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are *customs* (uses, institutions).

To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language is to be a master of a technique. (PI 199)

The nature and the role of rules in our every day language is made more explicit if we see the parallel drawn by Wittgenstein between following a rule and obeying an order. This will also help in dispensing with the problem of private language.

Following a rule is analogous to obeying an order. We are trained to do so; we react to an order in a particular way. But what if one person reacts in one way and another in another to the order and training? Which one is right? ....

The common behaviour of mankind is the system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language. (PI 206)

Such rules are a characteristic of our day to day language. They are independently given. It is possible to disobey them. Their being obeyed or disobeyed can be established since the (common behaviour) practice is independently given. However, the so-called private rules cannot function this way. Whenever there is a rule it possible to disobey them. The observance of rules would be meaningless if we do away with the possibility of disobeying the rules. There is no way of disobeying and hence obeying a private rule.

And hence also 'obeying a rule' is a practice. And to *think* one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule. Hence it is not possible to obey a rule 'privately': otherwise thinking one was obeying a rule would be the same as obeying it. (PI 202)

It follows that there is no such thing as a necessary private practice so there is no necessarily private rules. The denial of the possibility of private practice leads necessarily to the denial of the possibility of a private language.

It may be concluded that the possibility of private language rests on a mistaken conception of privacy of experience, knowledge and language. There is nothing that could function as the subject matter of private language. The notion of private ostensive definition and (necessarily) private rules are also mistaken. There cannot be any private stipulation of meaning.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Three senses of private language could be distinguished:
  - (i) Language understood by one person or a group of persons, e.g., a codified language. Such can be made understood by others. Lets call it contingently private language.
  - (ii) Language which no one other than the speaker could understand even if the speaker's experiences are made available to others. No one has held such a language to be possible.
  - (iii) Language which cannot, in principle, be taught or learned by others as its subject matter is exclusively the experiences (private) of the first person. This is the sense with which Wittgenstein deals in the *Investigations*. For further details see O. R. Jones, *The Private language Argument*. London, Macmillan, 1970, pp. 16-17.
- 2 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*. Ed. G. E. M. Anscombe and R. Rhees, tr. G. E. M. Anscombe. Oxford: Blackwell, 1963. This work has been cited here as PI. References are to section in part-i and to page numbers in part-ii.
- 3 Peter Geach writes: 'Of course Wittgenstein did not want to deny the obvious truth that people have a 'private' mental life, in the sense that they have for example thoughts they do not utter and pains they do not show; nor did he try to analyse away this truth in a neo-behaviouristic fashion. In one of his lectures he mentioned Lytton Strachey's imaginative description of Queen Victoria's dying thoughts. He expressly repudiated the view that such a description is meaning less because 'unverifiable'; it has meaning, he said, but only throw its connexion with a wider, public, 'language-game' of describing people's thoughts; he used the simile that a chess-move worked out in a sketch of a few squares on a scrap of paper has significance through its connexion with the whole practice of playing chess.' in Peter Geach, *Mental Acts*. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957, p. 3.
- 4 Two Senses of *privacy* of sensations have been distinguished. See Anthony Kenny, *Wittgenstein*.
- 5 For a detail discussion, please see my paper 'Inalienable Private Ownership of Sensation and Sensation Vocabulary in Public Language' in *Al-Hikmat*, Volume 23 (2003), pp. 25-33.
- 6 Vohra clarifies this: The assertion 'There was a stone in my shoe but I did not feel it' makes sense, the assertion 'There was a pain in my knee but I did not feel it' makes no sense. (Vohra, p. 44)

- 7 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1958. This work has been cited here as BB. References are to page numbers.
- 8 Malcolm Budd, *Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Psychology*. London, Routledge, 1989 and 1991, pp. 62-63.
- 9 C. W. K. Mundle, 'Behaviourism and the private language argument' in *The Private language Argument* by O. R. Jones. London, Macmillan, 1970, p. 108.
- 10 A. J. Ayer, *Wittgenstein* (New York: Random House, 1998), p.76. He writes, "But why could one not rely on one's memory to furnish a criterion of correctness? It need not be confined to linking a single present with a single past sensation. To a very large extent sensations of similar types occur in groups. So one memory could be checked by another."
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 A. J. Ayer, 'Could language be invented by a Robinson Crusoe?' in *The Private language Argument* by O. R. Jones. London, Macmillan, 1970, p. 61.
- 13 Anthony Kenny, *Wittgenstein*. London: Allen, 1973, pp. 191-192.