

Chapter-IV

Wittgenstein's concept of Private Language Argument

4.1 Wittgenstein on Private Language Argument:

Wittgenstein's discussion of private language is an attack of Descartes' concept of mind. According to Descartes, sensations are essentially private process. Descartes holds that each person to be infallibly acquainted with his own sensation. A person apprehend no difficulty about how one may give one's sensation names. Descartes states that words like "pain" is connected with the inner processes of which they are the names. But Wittgenstein raises his voice against the view of Descartes. According to him, words and phrases for sensations belong to common natural language, their use stand in need of a justification which everybody understands. Such a justification would be impossible in Descartes concept of private language. In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein strongly argues that private language is not logically possible. In this context Crispin Wright says that Cartesian picture of inner language lacks the resources to give satisfactory account of certain crucial aspects of our talk of intentional states.¹ Wittgenstein introduces the concept of private language argument in *Philosophical Investigations* as follows –

There are certain criteria in a man's behavior for the fact that he does not understand a word: that it means nothing to him, that he can do nothing with it. And criteria for his 'thinking he understands', attaching some meaning to the word, but not the right one. And, lastly, criteria for his understanding the word right. In the second case might speak of a subject understanding.

*And sounds which no one else understands but which I “appear to understand” might be called a “Private Language.”*²

From this version it can be said that there is a notion of private language which cannot be taught or learnt by anyone except the speaker because it is a language which a particular person employs to refer only to his own immediate private experiences. It is held that a language is public if it refers to what is publicly observable. If a person could limit himself to describe his own sensation or feeling, then, strictly speaking he alone would be able to understand what he is speaking. In this context John V Canfield defines private language as, “only one person, the speaker can understand the words of a ‘private language’ because he will refer to items in the metaphysically exclusive domain of the immediately given.”³ Here Canfield also remarks that in private language words are used only for speaker himself.

In *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein gives a definition about private language as follows –

*The individual words of this language are to refer what can only be known to the person speaking to his immediate private sensation. So, another person cannot understand the language.*⁴

From the above concept of private language we have found the following characters of private language –

- a.** The speaker alone can know that the words of the language refer to.
- b.** The words must refer to the speaker’s immediate private sensations.
- c.** Another person cannot understand the language.

Though Wittgenstein's main emphasis is on ordinary language or public language, still he considers it as an important theme for philosophical discussion. He holds that ordinary language is the gateway to reach the destination in our day today life. According to him, "*The individual words of private language refer to what can only be known to the person's speaking to his immediate private sensation. So, another person cannot understand the language.*"⁵ Here, it is found that concept of private language has brought out two serious issues in philosophy of mind – one is knowledge of other mind and another is skepticism. Wittgenstein states that these two serious issues in philosophy have occurred due to not properly assessing the inward criteria of language. So, Wittgenstein writes –

*Skepticism is not irrefutable, but obviously non-sensical, when it tries to raise doubts where no questions can be asked. For doubt can exist only where a question exists, a question only where an answer exists, and an answer only where something can be said.*⁶

From this version, it may be said that skepticism has significance in the process of knowledge. The method of doubt has also significant according to Wittgenstein.

In case of privacy Wittgenstein refuges Descartes concept of inner state. Descartes was interested in inward criteria where as Wittgenstein was interested in outward criteria for understanding language. According to Wittgenstein, our sensations are expressed in outward behavior. Wittgenstein writes –

The question –“are my sensation private?” is answered by Wittgenstein as only “*I can know whether I am really in pain, another person can only surmise it.*”⁷ Wittgenstein rejected both the views that follow from Cartesian dualism. And he says, “*An inner process*” stands in need of outward criteria.”⁸ By the term outward criteria

Wittgenstein means the apparent outward expression and these expressions are observable. Without the outward criteria it would be impossible for sensations to have names. It is logically impossible to give name to different sensations that human beings have. Wittgenstein writes –

When one says “He gave a name to his sensation” one forgets that a great deal of stage-setting in the language is presupposed if the mere act of naming is to make sense. And when we speak of someone’s having given a name to pain, what is presupposed is the existence of the grammar of the word “pain”, it shews the post where the new word is stationed.⁹

According to P.M.S. Hacker, what is ruled out in the private language is not the imaginary soliloquist (alone or in groups) but one whose concepts, rules and opinions are essentially unsharable rather than contingently unshared.¹⁰ Hacker points out that the rules and opinions are not sharable in private language. Since, only the person or the groups can use this type of language, therefore rule following is not necessary in private language. In private language the problem is that whether one is following a rule correctly or not cannot be verified. It is logically impossible. In this context P.F. Strawson’s definition of private language may be considered. According to Strawson, “By a private language we are here to understand a language of which the individual name describes refer solely to the sensation of the user of the language”¹¹ Strawson mentions that the impossibility of speaker’s contingently unshared language to be a consequence of Wittgenstein’s argument and believes that this, in itself, shows that the argument fails.¹² According to Wittgenstein, we cannot exactly locate the origin of pain or nor can we share his pain though we can compare one’s pain with others. Therefore, it has to be indeed private. In *Philosophical*

Investigations, Wittgenstein considers private language as the language which describes one's inner experiences and which only the person himself can understand. According to Wittgenstein, language is a system or aggregate of rules or a system or aggregate of linguistic activities which is essentially characterized by sharability. Unfortunately the essential characters of linguistic phenomena are absent in private language. According to Wittgenstein, ordinary language is necessary in our everyday life for communication. The individual words of private language are to refer to what can only be known to the person speaking to his immediate private sensations; another person cannot understand such type of language. Therefore, Wittgenstein rejects the possibility of private language. The concept of private language is a contradiction in terms because language is only a medium of communication. From this viewpoint, language is essentially public. Since language is a public institution, it has to follow certain rules. But the private language comes only when there is occasion to communicate to oneself, when one bifurcates oneself into a hearer and a speaker. One may use any language in such communication within oneself and that language need not follow any rule. There is no means of verifying by the person himself whether that language follows the rules or not. And, the words of private language cannot be seen in language games. To be significant language, it must have the use in language games. In this context Antony Manser writes – "Whatever noises linguistically isolated individual might make, they would not count as a 'language'. In this sense a private language is a Camera. For a language social activity is always involving in the rules that only a social institution can provide. This general conclusion seems to be completely established by Wittgenstein."¹³

P. M. S. Hacker, one of the supporters of Wittgenstein says that there is no possibility of private language. Wittgenstein has done a fruitful work by rejecting

private language in philosophy of mind. According to Hacker, private language is not rejected only for non-understandable by others but it is logically impossible. He remarks that private language is the opposite of public language. Due to lack of rule and logical nature, private language cannot give the way of communication. Hacker says that, there is no positive account of Cartesian belief of private language. In self knowledge, observation is not applicable like other external things. There was no possibility of bringing such a subject matter under private concepts – that a subject could not make it the object of private thoughts. This is the biggest game. ¹⁴ Through these account of private language, P.M.S. Hacker seeks to produce common language as genuine language, it is significant and relevant, and one should accept this view.

Wittgenstein's concept of private language argument is a great attack of Descartes concept of sensation language. In Descartes philosophy of mind, he admits that sensations are private, therefore there is the possibility of private language which have the sufficient conditions to be a genuine language. On the other hand Wittgenstein remarks that though we have the sensations these are not only one's sensation and they are not private. The main attempt of Wittgenstein is to show how language can be communicated to each and every person. Here we can talk about the isolated individual human being like Robinson Crusoe in defense of private language, still the problem is that whatever he used or developed as language were confined to inhabited beings in Trinidad and Tobago Island. On the other hand ordinary language or public language is not such. It is not related only to some group or some particular inhabited place. Rather it must be communicated to each and every people. It must be comprehensive to the masses. Language must have a public aspect. Wittgenstein gives importance only with public language which is communicable and accessible to people. So, Wittgenstein is not satisfied with private language. Language is a social

phenomenon and it is not like Robinson Crusoe's invented language. In this context Russ Rees significantly asserts that no one could invent just language. Language goes with a way of living. An invented language would be a wall paper pattern; nothing more.¹⁵ It can be viewed that in so far as language is a means of communication; it cannot be confined to one self. But it is seen that private language is confined to oneself, because it cannot be explicated publicly or communicated to others. When one's language is communicated, his language would be categorized as public language because the other people also can participate in his language. That is why private language is logically impossible from this point of view. Here question arises, what language was used by Robinson Crusoe to communicate with the flora and fauna? As an answer of this question it can be asserted that Robinson Crusoe communicated through invented language. It is opined that as invented language follows rules or grammar, so it cannot be like private language because it also can be communicated if we undergo through rules or grammatical investigation. Therefore, it can be finally opined that language as a medium of communication cannot be private, it is public phenomenon.

Henry Le Roy Fince, a critical reader of Wittgenstein philosophy, opines that Wittgenstein's discussion of private language has been perhaps the most controversial part of his philosophy. It remains the central arguments of Wittgenstein's philosophy where his attack on Cartesianism is most strongly focused. And it is certainly the case that Wittgenstein's philosophy will not carry the day without this argument. In the support of Wittgenstein thought, Fince mentions that, 'the main point of the private language discussion is not to stable something about language'.¹⁶ (e.g. language is necessary social)

Descartes's theory demands that private language is possible but this assumption leads to the consequences that language could be invented. But this is absurd because inventing a new language involves in inventing a new form of life which is impossible. Nobody would dispute the fact that a form of life cannot be invented but is evolved. Hence private language is impossible. Upholders of private language ignore social nature of language. Language is a form of life. As Wittgenstein says that, to imagine a language is to imagine a form of life and form of life cannot be private.

Norman Malcolm also holds that there is no possibility of private language because private language is far from verification. A person attempting to create and employ a word in a private language can't verify that it is being used correctly. This was one of the earliest readings of Wittgenstein's arguments, and one of the most natural ones.

Wittgenstein deeply tries to establish that instead of private language people have to use ordinary language. Private language has the difficulties to communicate people with one another. In this context Wittgenstein uses the beetle in the box analogy in *Philosophical Investigations*. He writes –

–Suppose everyone had a box with something in it: we call it a “beetle”. No one can look into anyone else's box, and everyone says he knows what a beetle is only by looking at his beetle. –Here it would be quite possible for everyone to have something different in his box. One might even imagine such a thing constantly changing. –But suppose the word “beetle” had use in these people's language? If so it would not be used as the name of a

thing. The thing in the box has no place in the language-game at all; not even as a something: for the box might even be empty. – No, one can ‘divide through’ by the thing in the box; it cancels out, whatever it is. ¹⁷

From the ‘beetle in the box analogy it can be supposed that everyone has a box that contains a ‘beetle’. But there is a problem that no one can look into another’s box. Therefore, it is objectionable or questionable because, are we sure that there are something exactly same in the box? It might be the case that the box is empty, or there may be something else in the box. Through this analogy Wittgenstein tries to show that anything can go in the name of sensation or pain since we use the word ‘pain’ in our language-game without knowing exactly what does it stand for. It follows that ‘what goes inside’ when we use the word pain is not important.

Through curious analogy, Wittgenstein is trying to point out that the beetle is very much like an individual’s mind. No one can know exactly what it is like to be another person or experience things from another’s perspective (look in someone else’s box), but it generally assumes that the mental working of other peoples mind is very similar to our own, (everyone has a beetle which is more or less similar to everyone else’s). However it does not really matter-he argues-what is in the box, or whether everyone has a beetle, since there is no way of checking or comparing. In a sense, the word ‘beetle’ –if it is to have any sense meaning –simply means “what is in the box”. From this point of view, the mind is simply “what is in the box” –or rather “what is in your head.”

Wittgenstein argues that although we cannot know it is like to be someone else, to say there must be special mental entity called a mind that makes our

experiences private is wrong. Part of the reason he thinks this way is because he considers language to have meaning through public usage. In other words, when we talk of having a mind (or a beetle), we are using a term that we have learnt through conversation and public discourse. Furthermore, the word we have learnt can only ever mean “whatever is in your box” –i.e. your mind –and should not, therefore, be used to refer to some entity or special mental substance since no one can know that such a thing exists (we cannot see into other people’s boxes).

John V. Canfield says that if Wittgenstein’s’ argument were a verificationist one it would be plainly inconsistent with other things that he has to say about language. He would be imposing on the uses of a private language conditions that he explicitly refuses to impose on regions of public language. Secondly, in sec. 258, Wittgenstein argues that all legitimate uses of language are governed by a criterion that functions to adjudicate conceptness. More recently, Benjamin F. Armstrong has offered an interpretation that there can be no private language. The alleged words of a private language can’t give information to others. ¹⁸

Wittgenstein rejects the private language for several reasons. According to him, private language is limited within the speakers own space, therefore it has no any criteria to become proper language. In *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein gives the arguments against the possibility of private language. He writes –

Look at the blue of the sky and say to yourself, “How blue the sky is!” – When you do it spontaneously –without philosophical intentions –the idea never crosses your mind that this impression of color belongs only to you. And you have no hesitation in exclaiming that to someone else. And if you point at anything as you say the words you point at the sky. I am saying you have not

*the feeling of pointing-into-yourself, which often accompanies 'naming the sensation' when one is thinking about 'private language'. Nor do you think that really you ought not to point to the color with your hand, but with your attention.*¹⁹

According to Wittgenstein, looking at the blue sky when one exclaims, 'how blue the sky is', one does not think that the impression of color belongs only to the person who exclaimed 'how blue the sky is'. As impression of the color when one points to the sky, he does not point with his hand but with his attention. If one points one's attention to the color then it cannot be said to be something private. Here the language 'how the blue sky is' is not a private language.

Wittgenstein believes that though in private language one has to talk about one's own private sensation actually from one's own case one cannot know what the word pain means. If one learns only from one's own case what does 'pain' means then the word 'pain', would not be there in language. It is possible to give name to sensations because sensations are connected with the natural expression of sensation. So, Wittgenstein views –

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 the only means that here we can't talk about 'right'.²⁰

In this section Wittgenstein attempts to demonstrate that the words/signs of a private language cannot be defined in any meaningful way. Firstly he remarks that a definition of the sign cannot be formulated. A private language sign cannot be defined by using any words that the speaker already knows, as this would make it part of

public language. But if a word is to define privately it must be by ostensive definition. So, we must 'point' to our sensations in the same way that we might point to a physical object in order to name it. He writes –

*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!*²¹

According to Wittgenstein, though ostensive definition is the way of knowledge but it fails to give the proper knowledge. There is one problem of this definition of private language is that it is impossible to tell whether one has remembered the connection correctly. There is no difference between believing one is right and actually being right about the connection. And thus a mistake in the application of the private word is possible. Wittgenstein says that, there can be no criterion of correctness for private ostensive definition. In this connection memory is the only way to determine the meaning of the sign. But memory is not reliable source for correct use of language.

Wittgenstein argues that private definition is not only impossible, it is also pointless. The private definition cannot give the accurate knowledge. The words of private definition are not practiced in language games or it is not publicly observable. Only the speaker can observe the definition whether it is correct or not. Ostention is nothing but speaker's experience. In this context Wittgenstein gives an example which proves ostensive definition as meaningless. He writes – “*why can I not define words privately?*” Wittgenstein replies, “*Why cannot my right hand give my left hand*

money?” The suggestion of this example is that such definition would be of no practical consequence. The sensation words indicate the only speaker’s sensation, in the same way public sensation words are expressions of sensations rather than descriptions. Wittgenstein writes –

How do words refer to sensation? –There doesn’t seem to be any problem here; don’t we talk about sensation every day, and give them names? But how is the connection between the name and the thing named set up? The question is the same as: how does a human being learn the meaning of the name if sensations? – of the word “pain” for example- Here is one possibility: words are connected with the primitive, the natural expressions of the sensation and used in their place. A child has hurt himself and he cries; and then adults talk to him and teach him exclamations and, later, sentences. They teach the child new pain-behavior.

So you are saying that the word ‘pain’ really means crying –On the contrary: the verbal expression of pain replaces crying and does not describe it. ²²

It is given that one’s private sign would only come to mind as a result of one having the sensation. There seem to be little point in expressing himself that he has it. He knows it already. The word ‘pain’ is learned by the child because the adults teach him that these types of feelings are known as pain. From the observation of crying of a child adult can imagine that the child has hurt. Thus a child can learn the new word ‘pain’. Here it is determined by outward expression and the word ‘pain’ is primitive concept and it is used in language game previously.

Wittgenstein says that the very idea of a private ostensive definition is meaningless because the person who speaks a private language lacks a genuine pattern for distinguishing the correct use of the word from its incorrect use.²³ As a consequence, no one can either understand or misunderstand any words of a private language; it is an illusion to think that one can succeed in explaining something to oneself in this manner.

Language is a social phenomenon. It is not like someone's invented language. In this connection, it may be said that language is a means of communication. It is not for individual only. But private language has no such public criteria because it cannot be explicated to others; if any language is a means of communication then language would be categorized as public language because other person also can participate in his language. From this point of view, private language is not important. Therefore it can be said that there are several strong arguments for Wittgenstein's views that private language can't be accepted as significant and if private language is not significant or is impossible then it would follow from this that mind also cannot be necessarily private.

Wittgenstein avoids the conception of a logically private language. The primary reason is that to understand language is to be able to follow the rules for its use. There is no chance to check or verify the rules in private language argument. Another reason of avoiding the private language is that, for Wittgenstein, to speak a language is, to take part in a form of life. The training to share a form of life obviously has to take place in public. The concept of form of life implies the public nature of language. The sensation takes place in the form of life. Here we find that form of life is invariably related with public affairs.

There is another reason for which Wittgenstein denies the private language as meaningless. This reason is that, in this type of language the criterion of verification cannot be applied. The theory of verification can be applied in empirical things which are publicly observable. In case of private language nobody can see or know about the speaker's intention. Therefore nobody can verify it as right or wrong.

Descartes holds that consciousness is private. Mind, for Descartes is 'res cogitans' and cogitatio includes not only intellectual meditation but also volition, emotion, pain, pleasure, mental images and sensations. For Descartes, pain, in the strictest sense, is something spiritual: however such the incaution may confuse the pure sensation of pain with an erroneous judgment about its physical cause, none the less a res cogitans can feel pain though he has no body at all. According to Descartes, mind is better known than body in the sense that the internal is more certain than the external, the private is prior to the public. Besides Descartes, other philosophers like Locke, Berkeley etc are the supporter of this view. Sensation as well as intellectual thought, is a thought capable of founding the certainty of one's own existence. In the second "Meditation" Descartes says that it is the mind alone that has a sense or experience of itself seeing or walking. He holds that sensation is understood as thought. It can be said that Descartes 'cogito' and the private language argument lie at the heart of the epistemology and philosophy of mind. The 'cogito' leads to the conclusion that mind is better known than body. The private language argument leads to the conclusion that body is better known than mind.

Wittgenstein remarks that the Cartesian privacy or cogito is not relevant and he states that there is no possibility of any private language. Wittgenstein takes the same example 'pain' with Descartes to illustrate his thesis. Descartes did not much reflect on the nature of language. When he uttered the words 'cogito ergo sum' he

took it for granted that he knew what they meant. It seems clear that if a Cartesian 'res cogitans' uses a language it must be a private language in the sense defined by Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein opines that if the language contains words for sensations, then the connection between the words and the sensation must be set up without the intermediary of the natural expression of sensation in bodily behavior. Wittgenstein asserts that the words of the private language are supposed to have meaning at a stage yet it is doubtful. The word 'pain' in such a language must refer to what Wittgenstein calls 'on immediate private sensation' something which can be known only to the person speaking. For Descartes, pain, in the ordinary sense of the word, was something very like perception and it is a perception of the inner sense. In the sixth Meditation Descartes shows that pain is immediate private sensation. But in the section 246 and 247 of *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein explains in what sense 'private' is to be taken. 'pain' in the ordinary sense of the word is private in the sense that it is senseless to say of oneself that I doubt whether he is in pain and in the sense that one criterion of identity for pains is the identity of their possessor. According to Wittgenstein, 'pain' in the private language is meant to refer to something private in a special sense, a sensation whose existence one can know with certainty and other people cannot. Wittgenstein objects to the expression 'I know I am in pain'. In the case of one's own pain the expression of doubt is senseless, so the expression of knowledge is also ruled out. According to Wittgenstein, in the proposition 'I know I am in pain' means nothing more or nor less than 'I am in pain'. Wittgenstein argues that the expression of doubt has no place in the language-game with 'pain'. According to him, the utterance, I doubt whether 'I have a pain' is senseless. And there is no genuine possibility to be true. It is false that one person

cannot know, in ordinary sense of the expression that another person is in pain. One person often does know that another person is in pain. Second, in virtue of the nature of pain the subject of pain knows with certainty that he is in pain is a misconception. According to Wittgenstein, one cannot say, 'I know I am in pain' because one cannot say that 'I believe I am in pain' or 'I doubt I am in pain.' But one can logically say 'I know he is in pain'.

It is sometimes said that, Wittgenstein's argument shows that it would be impossible to learn the words for sensation if sensations had no bodily expression. Wittgenstein's argument seeks to show that it is impossible to give a coherent account of the exercise of the knowledge of the meaning of a word in a private language. He does not explicitly consider innate ideas. But in the section -257 of *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein makes clear that his argument does not depend on considerations about learning when he says,

What would it be like if human beings showed no outward signs of pain (did not groan, grimace etc.)? Then it would be impossible to teach a child the use of the word 'tooth-ache' – well, let's assume the child is a genius and itself invents a name for the sensation.²⁴

In the above context, Anthony Kenny observes – 'If I am right, neither the postulation of non-linguistic judgments about sensations nor the doctrine of innate ideas can save. Descartes from the criticisms suggested by the passages that I have quoted from Wittgenstein, if this is so, then the argument against private language has an importance which transcends any parochial concerns of ordinary language philosophy and the disputable theories of meaning put forward in the *Philosophical Investigations*.'²⁵ Kenny states that Wittgenstein's rejection of private language is heart of the *Philosophical Investigations*.

It is found that there are three basic parts in *Philosophical Investigations*. First, there is a theory of meaning in direct opposition to the logical atomism of the *Tractatus* that language is multi dimensional, secondly there is a theory about the nature of philosophy and finally, there is a theory of mind. His concept of private language argument is located in his concept of mind. In the nature of mind, Wittgenstein says that the Cartesian dualism who states that mental states exist in private, he finds the paradoxes in this concept, first the idea that we can never know what is going on in the mind of another person and also perhaps the older difficulty about understanding how things can act upon each other when they are different from one another according to this theory. Wittgenstein maintains that our mental vocabulary does not refer to inner acts and states. It is not so much that he denies the existence of private experiences as he denies that they could serve as criteria for the employment of mental words. In his view, to say that someone is in a given mental state is to say that he is in any of a large collection of publicly observable situations, that he is doing or disposed to do any of a large collection of publicly observable things. There is no one recurrent kind of thing of which a mental word is the name, nor is it the name of any kind of private thing. Wittgenstein gives two arguments in this context. In the first place, he examines in detail the working of a representative selection of mental concept and secondly, he has a general argument to prove that a private language, referring to the experiences of which only one person is aware, is impossibility. Again Wittgenstein argued that the publicly observable surroundings are in fact the criteria for our applications of mental words. He goes on to prove that there could not be a language whose use was wholly determined by private experiences. According to him, language is an essentially social phenomenon. The making of noises does not become language unless it is governed by rules. With a

private language, this condition cannot be satisfied, and the uttering of words introduced as names of private sensation is just an 'empty ceremony'. It is for this reason that our mental words must be, as they are, connected with features of our situation which any one can in principle observe. Every inner process must have its outward criteria.

According to Wittgenstein, it is important to consider the way in which the use of the words under examination is learned. We learn how to use the words "it hurts" from other people who tell that we are in pain from our circumstances and behavior. But we do not tell that we are in pain ourselves in this way. In fact, Wittgenstein maintains, we do not discover or find out that we are in pain at all. It is not a thing we can be in doubt about and so not a thing of which it is appropriate to claim knowledge. Wittgenstein says that the statements about pain in the first person are in fact, extension of natural pain-behavior, conventionalized alternatives to crying out which we are trained to adopt. They are not so much descriptions of pain but manifestations of it. Therefore Wittgenstein asserts that though 'pain' is individual yet it is not private. So, private language is not applicable in the sensation words. In this context A. M. Quinton states, 'For there could be no mental language with which I could talk about my own pain unless there was a public mental language and I had mastered it.'²⁶ According to him, Wittgenstein does not say that any statement about the mind of another person strictly and deductively follows from any set of statements about his behavior. To believe that other people have feeling in the way we do ourselves does not consist in the acceptance of a definite set of propositions. In this regards Wittgenstein views in his *Philosophical Investigations* that to take the view that someone who attempted to use language in the private way would not merely be

unable to communicate his meaning to others, but would have no meaning to communicate even to himself, he would not succeed in saying anything at all.

Wittgenstein constantly recurs is that the ascription of meaning to a sign is something that needs to be justified; the justification consists in there being some independent test for determining that the sign is being used correctly. His claim to recognize the object, his belief that it really the same and is not to be accepted unless it can be checked by further evidence. Apparently, too, this evidence must be public, it must, at least in theory, be accessible to everyone. Merely to check one private sensation by another would not be enough. For example if one cannot be trusted to recognize one of them, neither can one be trusted to recognize the other. Hence, there is no possibility of private language according to Wittgenstein. There will be no justification for the use of any sign of at all. In this context John W. Cook says that the philosophical idea of a private language is a consequence of the following argument –“No one can know that another person is in pain or is dizzy or has any other sensation, for sensations are private in the sense that no one can feel (experience, be acquainted with) another person’s sensation.”²⁷

The conclusion of the private language argument leads, in turn, to the further conclusion that no one can be taught the names of sensations; each of us must give these words their meanings independently of other people and of other people’s use of sensation words. The result is the idea that anyone who says anything about his sensation is saying something which he alone can understand. The names of sensation word will have no genuine public use, it has only a private use. This idea of private language provided by Cook is similar with Wittgenstein’s concept of private language. In the section 243 of *Philosophical Investigations* when he asks “*whether we could imagine a language whose words ‘refer to what can only be known to the*

person speaking, to his immediate private cannot understand the language."²⁸ He undertakes to show that the very notion of privacy on which the description of this language depends in a tangle of confusions. Hence, when he returns in section 256 to the consideration of "*the language which describes my inner experiences and which only I myself can understand*", he points out that our ordinary use of sensation words is not such a language. Thus, the temptation behind the idea of a private language has already been disposed of. Descartes who assumes that, even if his philosophical doubts be justified, so that he has 'no hand, no eyes, no flesh, no blood, nor any senses,' still he can privately understand and inwardly speak a language. Wittgenstein rejects this idea of language, his rejection is not our normal language game but a philosophical version of it. On Wittgenstein's view '*private sensations do not enter into pain language games*'.²⁹

According to Wittgenstein, a private language cannot have a single word in common with public language. He holds, one who attempts to use private language not only fails to communicate his meaning to others but also does not have a meaning to communicate even to himself, Wittgenstein considers that the notion of a private language rested on the fundamental mistakes. They are –

1. Mistake about the nature of experience.
2. Mistake about the nature of language.

The mistake about the nature of experience is the belief that experience is private, no one can know that another person is in pain. In this point, one's experience is known to himself, every experience differs from others. This mistake leads to mistake about language, viz. the belief that one acquires meaning of words by ostensive definition is no one can be taught the names of sensation unless he has those sensation himself.

In the *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein gives an example of pain in the context of language as a public nature. He asserts that pain is not the 'name' of an inner mental sensation which only one can have. This is so because rules cannot be 'privately obeyed' because obeying a rule, implied that one is doing the thing correctly. Logically, doing things right implies the possibility of doing them wrong as well. Therefore one can know whether one is right or wrong only through a public check – when one goes wrong other corrects him. If there is no public check one would not know whether one has obeyed the rules or not. Thus there would be no criterion to judge whether rules are obeyed or not moreover, without rules, therefore, logically, there cannot be a language denoting inner experience.

In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein says that meaning of a word consists in its use in language. Wittgenstein holds that the use of a word in a language is not arbitrarily or randomly made. Rather, there is always a rule or convention, behind every use of a word or utterance. For instance, how to use a word is the prerequisite to give the meaning of a certain kind to that word. Thus, it is the rule that governs us. And the concept of meaning is linked with the concept of rules of usage. Taking in this sense, a word is meaningful if there is a rule or rules regarding its use in sentences. And, a sentence is meaningful if there is a rule or rules for its usage in a specified class of empirical situations – the situations may be actual or possible. Here possible situations are categorized into two i.e., empirically possible (which is at present moment is not an actual situation, but which may be, on a later date) and logically possible situations (which are beyond the real of the empirically possible, yet, exist within the real of the theoretically possible). In this context Meredith Williams remarks that Wittgenstein gives as a new way to think about the normative and necessity of 'rule – governed' practices. Both features involve the community.³⁰

The structure of language is a social structure, that is, the language is dynamic and public in nature.

Thus rules constitute the basic structure of a language in the sense that rules are the way of language functions. One cannot conceive of a language without rules. To learn language and to understand it, we must follow the rules. But, according to Wittgenstein, in private language nobody can check the rules whether it is applicable or not. Therefore the words or expressions used in the so called private language cannot afford any rules of public use. It is said that rules by their very nature are public use oriented. The words of our language are always based on public rules. Therefore rules are rules for all to use and understand them and that makes them public. Hence, a private language that supposes to have no word in common with public language cannot appeal for rules of our language.

From the above discussion it is seen that the rule following is important for language. And again, it is a grammatical mistake to suggest for the private use of a rule in a linguistic usage. It is true that in private language, there is no need to justify the rules that means justification of rules do not arise here. To speak elaborately, if there is non to understand the linguists version of private rules except himself who alone understands his way of employing a language then he understands it very well and need no goal oriented justification thereby. On the other hand Wittgenstein writes

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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 thing as obeying it.³¹

Therefore, in the process of obeying a rule we involve practice which, in turn result is the mastery of a technique of learning our language. Further a language means to involve a form of life, obeying a rule means the involvement of a form of life. There is no question about privateness in form of life. The sense is that ‘form of life’ signifies the characteristic conventions that are acquired within or systematic human history. This justifies the structural convention of our life.

In Wittgenstein’s notion language which does not follow the rules of public sets of language are not languages at all. Without the possible rules the so called private language becomes void and meaningless. Therefore Wittgenstein restricts one to entertain such an empty language and he rejects private language argument on that ground.

Wittgenstein asks the question *How do words refer to sensation? Or how does a human being learn the meaning of the names of sensation?* He gives this answer as follows –

*Words are connected with the primitive, the natural, expressions of the sensation and used in their place. A child has hurt himself and he cries and then the adults talk to him and teach him exclamations and, later, sentences. They teach the child new pain behavior.*³²

Wittgenstein must be talking about how it is that a human being learns to refer with words to his own sensations – about how he learns to use ‘I am in pain’, not about how he learns to use, ‘he is in pain’. What Wittgenstein is saying is indeed radically different from the notion that ‘I learn that I am in pain’ means by obeying my attention on a certain sensation and calling it ‘pain’. According to Wittgenstein, the verbal expression of pain replaces crying and does not describe it. One’s words for

sensations are used in place of the behavior that is the natural expression of the sensations, they do not refer to it. Wittgenstein says that the verbal expressions of sensation can take the place of the non-verbal expressions and that in learning the former one learns new pain behavior. This seems to mean that the words (and sensations) for sensations are related to sensations in the same way that they are the primitive expressions of sensations. According to Wittgenstein, the sensation words cannot stand in some private and personal vocabulary of the one who experiences the respective sensations. The sensation word pain cannot be private because the word 'pain' is already practiced in language-games. So Wittgenstein views- "*You learned the concept 'pain' when you learned language.*" ³³ If the word 'pain' is not already present in language games then we cannot learn or understand the word 'pain'. To know the sensation word 'pain' one must have the knowledge of language games. The sensation of pain is related with person's behavior. In *Philosophical Investigations*, the question –*are my sensation private? is replied by Wittgenstein as follows –*

In what sense is my sensation private? –well, only I can know whether I am really in pain; another person can only surmise it. – It 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 cannot 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 sensation only from my behavior, 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 about myself.*³⁴

Wittgenstein says that nobody can doubt his own mental states, but another person can assume other mental states. From the behavioral expression, other can surmise whether or not the other one is actually in pain. Therefore Wittgenstein opines that – “*an inner process stands in need of outward criteria.*”³⁵

To know the internal process or mental states we are in need of some outward expressions. Without outward behavior nobody can assume other's mental feeling. The outward behavior is spontaneous expression of inner states. By outward criteria Wittgenstein means the apparent outward expressions which are observable. He gives importance in observable/physical behavior than the inner mental states. In this context Rogers Albritton says, “An important notion in Wittgenstein's later philosophy is that of a criterion. It is part of the grammar of the word ‘chair’ that this is what we call to sit on a chair, and it is part of the grammar of the word ‘meaning’ that this is what we call ‘explanation of a meaning’. In the same way to explain my criterion for another person's having toothache is to give of grammatical explanation about the word ‘toothache’ and in this sense, an explanation is the meaning of the word such as ‘toothache’.”³⁶ According to him, Wittgenstein calls a ‘criterion’ of having a toothache is a phenomenon by which under certain circumstances. One would be justified in saying that a man had a toothache or in saying, should one have occasion to do so, that one knew he had a toothache (it is therefore a phenomenon by which one may know that a man has a toothache, though sometimes, to be sure, one is justified in saying that one knows a thing and yet doesn't know it, because, as one may or may not discover, it isn't so). Therefore it is clear that inner cannot be private, it depends on outward expression. The outer expressions are the main criteria for

knowing the inner. In this purpose Wittgenstein writes – “*what would it be like if human being showed no outward signs of pain (did not groan, grimace etc) Then it would be impossible to teach a child the use of the word ‘tooth-ache.’*”³⁷

It is said that Wittgenstein’s concept of language games, form of life and private language argument are interrelated. Without sharing certain attitudes towards the things around us, without sharing a sense of relevance and responding in similar ways, communication would be impossible. It is important that all of us agree on what colors things have. Wittgenstein suggests that such agreement is part of our concept of color. Regular use of such concepts and agreement in their application is a part of language. We cannot separate the life in which there is such agreement from our concept of color. There are different forms or way of life and therefore we have different language concepts, different rules and a different logic.

This concept raises the question of the relation between language and forms of life. For example, could just one person have a language of his/ her own? We cannot imagine a solitary life from birth without form of life. Moreover, language involves rules establishing certain linguistic practices. Rules of grammar express the fact that it is our practice to say this and not that. Agreement is essential to such practices.

In the *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein is concerned with the problems of reflective situations in which a person is related to himself and in particular situations where his speech is within and for himself alone, then a language is essentially private. Contrary to the *Tractatus*, where one can only understand and use his own language about the world as it is for one self, the position in *Philosophical Investigations* is that language is essentially shared and public. Wittgenstein begins in 243 of *Philosophical Investigations* by imagining that there might be a tribe of people who spoke to themselves when alone and engaged in all to

correlate their language with what they did in given circumstances and with the circumstances in which they did this and so to learn, to translate what they said in to his one form of speech. Such a language would, however only be private if no one but the speaker ever heard it being used. Wittgenstein says that someone's private sensation that only he could experience.

Wittgenstein argues that understanding the meaning of expressions in language does not consist in private mental states or processes. Accordingly, starting with the *Blue Book* but chiefly in the *Investigations*, *Zettel*, and among the later writings, Wittgenstein attacks the idea that the concept of experience, thought, feeling, intention, expectation and the rest are concepts of what is inner and private, accessible only to the individual who possesses them. According to him, the mental feelings are not expressible in private language. These are used in language games previously and so such types of feelings are expressed through public language. For Wittgenstein, to speak a language is as we have seen to participate in a form of life. Coming to share a form of life consists in being trained to share it. Such training obviously has to take place in public. Wittgenstein rejects 'pain' as the name of a certain kind of sensation. According to him, we come to give that name to talk a kind of sensation by an act of inner ostention. But ostensive definition is something that works only in the context of a previously understood convention. A language game in which pointing, uttering a sound and so on, are recognized by the participants to constitute the process of attaching a denoting label to some item. There can be no such previously established language game here. Since 'pain' is not linked with the relevant kind of sensation by ostention. It does not denote at all, 'pain' as a label. Then question arises how is it connected with the sensations we use it to talk about? Wittgenstein replies that one possibility is that talk of pain is a learned substitute for

the groaning and winning which is the natural expression of pain.³⁸ The idea is that what we typically think of as private states and processes pain, anger and the rest are features of our human nature which therefore have natural expression in behavior. Therefore, naturally it can be argued that there cannot be private language.

There is a link between how we use talk of pain in our own cases and how we use it to talk about other's pain. On one traditional view, the way we come to think of ourselves as having justification, in appropriate circumstances, for ascribing pain or 'inner' states to other is by analogy with our own cases. For instance "if I prick my finger and it bleeds and I groan, inwardly feeling pain, then if someone pricks his finger, bleeds and groans, I infer that he must inwardly be feeling pain likewise". But this argument is called the argument from analogy. This argument is a weak one, it does not logically guarantee the inference I draw to the other's inner states, for he might be dissimulating acting as may even be a cleverly contrived robot which feels nothing. This is the source of skepticism about other minds: how, given that the argument from analogy does not work, Wittgenstein says that "the rules for the use of 'pain' and other psychological expressions are public ones, which apply equally when the talk is of myself or of others."

It is opined that language which asserts/report their inner private sensations is called a private language. In this context A. C. Graylings remarks that the notion of private language or inner experience may stand for a concept of language that has sense for speaker only or it is understood by a particular group of persons or any person belonging to the group of its users. Therefore anyone, who is not a member of the group could not understand the language. There is another notion of private language that it may imply such a form of language which only the speaker uses, although it might be translated to others in the variety of ways as normally adopted to

teach another unknown person. And again it can be said that a language is private in the sense that only the speaker can speak and understand it. This language would include the private experiences of which a particular person is the real owner. For this reason it is beyond the reach of any person. Its essential privacy logically restricts to public use in any form or under any circumstances. According to Wittgenstein, the concept of private language is logically impossible. In the *Philosophical Investigations* he shows that private language has no the criteria for communication among the common masses. It is not logically possible to accept as a genuine language. Wittgenstein gives several arguments against private language in *Philosophical Investigations* which are regarded as great attack against Descartes and other empiricist philosophers in the philosophy of mind. Wittgenstein wants to prove that there cannot be only one subject of a direct and immediate sensation and that immediacy is not only un-sharable but the question of its sharing would have no use in our human parlance. For in order to share or to be aware of someone's sensation experience another person must be in the numerical sense, able to identify the sensation given at that point of time to its subject. But in case of private language this nature is not seen. Secondly, Wittgenstein says that this is literally impossible since to satisfy this condition that the second person must become the first person and must sense, feel and have those sensations as appeared to the original subject. But this is absurd, because no one can come out of himself to become another person. Therefore no one can experience the contents of another person's sensation. In this context Wittgenstein writes –

A human being can encourage himself, give himself orders, obey, blame and punish himself; he can ask himself a question and answer it. We could even imagine human beings who spoke only

in monologue; who accompanied their activities by talking to themselves. –An explorer who watched them and listened to their talk might succeed in translating their language into ours. (This would enable him to predict these people's actions correctly, for he also hears them making resolutions and decisions.)

But could we also imagine a language in which a person could write down or give vocal expression to inner experiences –his feelings, moods, and the rest –for his private use? –well, can't we do so in our ordinary language? –But that not what I mean. The individual words of this language are to what can only be known to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensation. So another person cannot understand the language.³⁹

From this version it can be said that none can know or understand the private language used by its observer of the private experiential contents. Here, a language containing the sensation words of a particular subject's experience has meaning only to its user who employs it independent of any other listener's or groups'. Therefore, a private language may be best referred as a one person language and has only solipsistic use in that sense. According to Wittgenstein, this concept of private language is irrelevant.

Wittgenstein asserts that we may speak of meaning, which differs from person to person. If we go by reference theory of meaning and if we admit the possibility of private language, the meaning of the term 'toothache' would be different according to individuals, since each individual would have experienced pain differently given the difference in the intensity and duration of their experiences. This argument is defective and it can be provided in the following way –

“Ask the question, how is it that the individual is able to identify the pain as toothache when it occurs second time? If the argument that one’s sensation are different from the sensation of others and hence, one’s meaning of the term is different from the meaning others assign to the same term, then they will have to admit that the meaning of the term ‘toothache when it occurred on a Monday is different from the meaning of the same term when the pain occurred on Saturday. Thus, we would require words to represent every experiences of our everyday of the week and there would be no word representing common aspects of these experiences. Thus, the function of one word ‘toothache’ in our natural language would be performed, by innumerable words in this perspective. If this is the account of all words of sensations, feelings and thoughts, any operation in language is made impossible.”⁴⁰

In the context of private language argument P. R. Bhatt says that there are several versions of private language argument and each of them has different philosophical significance.⁴¹ According to him, a version of its related to philosophy of language and another version of its related to philosophy of mind. Of course there is another version of private language argument which makes it to be the problem of rule following leading to a strong version of skepticism about knowledge. A private language having significance only to oneself involving private vocabulary about one’s own sensations, feeling and thoughts is not possible. The first version of the argument basically shows how the private language is not possible. The basic character that communication is not present here.

The second version forcefully argues that we have no knowledge of other minds. That means we have no way to understand other’s sensations, feelings, thoughts and intentions of others. In other words, finding the meaning and

significance to several cultural activities would be impossible without presupposing human mind. This version treats the private language argument as 'reduction ad absurdum' argument designated by Wittgenstein. He shows how behaviorism without the assumption of human mind is inadequate.

According to William Child, the concept of private language argument perhaps the most controversial or debated issue in *Philosophical Investigations*. For Wittgenstein, language is essentially public, because language is a rule following activity. That rules are constituted by agreement within a community only. In that sense private language is not logically possible. But Anthony Kenny, the critical analyzer of Wittgenstein, remarks that it is entailed by several traditional and influential philosophical theories that private language is possible. For instance some empiricist philosophers have thought that the only matters of fact we really know our own experiences, what we claim to know about the world or about other people is based on our knowledge of our own mental states and processes. The same philosophers have commonly taken for granted that our knowledge of experiences can be expressed in language, at least to ourselves. The possibility of this expression does not presuppose any acquaintance with the external world or other minds. Anyone who accepts this must believe in the possibility of a private language whose words acquire meaning, simply by being linked to private experience. Indeed, he must believe that our actual language is a private language, not in the sense that it is peculiar a single user, but in the sense that the words of private language have acquired their meaning for each of us by an essentially private process.

Private language does not follow the criteria of grammar that means private language needs no criteria or grammar. In case of private language one cannot justify whether it is correct or incorrect. Private language is completely inward or inner. For

example sometimes people can show his pain in his body without actually being suffered from pain. On the other hand, one can hide one's headache without showing his pain to others. Therefore, it is very difficult to justify private language whether the used one is right or wrong. In this context Wittgenstein's diary example may be write here –

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 remarks 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 the ceremony for? For that is all 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 we can't talk about 'right'.⁴²

In this example Wittgenstein tries to say that sensation cannot be private. Nobody can use the sign or name individually for sensation. If sensation word is used

privately then it cannot be used in language games or in form of life. According to Wittgenstein, words or languages which are not found in our form of life they have no meaning at all. Ultimately private sensation words are not accepted by Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein states that the concept of private language is inconceivable because it cannot be checked. The public language is observed by others because the use of public language is public and it is checked or justified or evaluated. Wittgenstein writes that to use a word without a justification does not mean to use it without asserts that without outward criteria private language has no place in language games. In supporting Wittgenstein's concept of private language Saul A. Kripke remarks that language are essentially communal. Someone can understand a given language only if other people do too, so there can be no private languages. In private language we do not find behavioral criteria. Kripke supposes that meaning something by a word requires connection by others, therefore, language is essentially social or public'.⁴³ We have seen that there are many similarities between Kripke and Wittgenstein. Both of them reject the possibility of private language.

P. F. Strawson, a critical reader of Wittgenstein gives his view regarding Wittgenstein's concept of private language argument. Strawson wants to say that, though Wittgenstein provides many arguments against the possibility of private language, in real sense, private language can't be ignored, private language has sufficient use in field of knowledge of everyday life. Strawson defines private language as- "by a 'private language' we are here to understand a language of which the individual names describe, refer solely to the sensations of the user of the language."⁴⁴ In Strawson's view, Wittgenstein uses the private language concept only in case of sensations words. Wittgenstein does not give any explanation of private language in case of material things. But the world is not constructed only by mental

entities, besides there are various material objects here. Wittgenstein keep silent about the role of private language in these physical things except inner feelings like pain. Therefore, Strawson says that Wittgenstein's concept of private language argument is one sided. If we can apply the private language in sensation words then we can use private language in material things also. Again Strawson remarks, Wittgenstein uses the word 'pain' repeatedly in *Philosophical Investigations* which is not necessary. From the observation of Strawson view we may say that private language is significant in our common life.

According to Strawson, private language is not 'eccentric'. It is worth mentioned that the conception is possible and even necessary for one to have a private language. Besides the possibility of private language, it is very essential and necessary in our practical life. In general, it is seen that we are naturally social and therefore, we have a public or social life in the society. Everybody of us has a private or individual life, and nobody can deny the importance of this private life. From this analogy, we may say that, though we have public or social language for communication, we are in need of private language and it is necessary for all. Without private language our life would be imperfect. The idea of a private language is presupposed by every program of inferring or constructing the external world and other minds. It is contained in the philosophy of Descartes and in the theory of ideas of classical British empiricism, as well as in recent and contemporary phenomenism and sense-datum theory. The best known arguments of Descartes by which he seeks to prove the existence of self, in "cogito ergo sum" which means "Thought implies the thinker." The application of the method of doubt to all knowledge led him to say, "thus I can doubt everything, but the doubt itself cannot be doubted." In the persistent endeavor to reject every knowledge, the doubting of knowledge could not be rejected. This led him to formulate his

famous propositions, “cogito ergo sum.” Thought implies the thinker”⁴⁵ In Descartes, analysis of his concept of thinking, as given in his meditation, the activities of reasoning, judging willing, remembering, imagining and feeling are categorized by him as the various forms of the activity of thinking, which according to him, constitutes the essence of self. Thus Descartes provides his famous method of doubts which makes Descartes as father of modern philosophy. For Descartes without mind or private language, our ways of knowledge would stop, consequently, the whole process of knowledge would be meaningless. Descartes says that every human being has a constructed notion, of the world, in its contents such a notion may be rich or poor, true or false, confused or coherent, depending on the individuals, level of mental development, range of experience, and quality and extent of education. These all mental activities, we cannot deny. Indirectly it leads us to support the necessary of private language.

Though Wittgenstein says that language is a public phenomenon and there is no private language, some critics don't support this view. According to Strawson, the conception of a private language possesses no difficulty. Strawson finds that Wittgenstein's concept of private language breaks the individual self. Wittgenstein thought that private language is understood by speaker only. According to Strawson, it is not true in real sense. He argues a man might simply be struck by the recurrence of a certain sensation and get in to the habit of making a certain mark in a different place every time it occurred. The making of the marks would help to impress the occurrence on his memory. The conception of private language that Wittgenstein attacks is not the conception of a language that only the speaker does understand, but of a language that no other person can understand. Of course, Strawson thinks that Wittgenstein has not refuted the conception of a private language but has only shown

that certain conditions must be satisfied if a common language is to exist. According to Strawson, our sensation words will have both a public and private meaning. Though Wittgenstein says that sensation words can have a private use, these can't be accepted.

A. J. Ayer, argues that private language has sufficient criterion to express meaning. He says that Wittgenstein's conception of private language argument makes our knowledge very limited. Since we can acquire knowledge through private language. Ayer remarks that, 'private language arguments' is the most intricate concept in the *Philosophical Investigations*.⁴⁶ There are passages in the *Investigations* in which Wittgenstein appears to mean by a private language that it is logically impossible for anyone to understand except the speaker. According to Ayer, Wittgenstein is not correct. Ayer writes –

*If this were all that he meant I doubt if anyone would dispute his claim that there can be no such language, certainly I should not wish to do so. Neither do I seek to deny that, as a matter of fact, one's references to one's private experiences are made within the frame work of a public language.*⁴⁷

Ayer says that by rejecting private language Wittgenstein attacks in traditional philosophy. In classical philosophy, it is found that private language occupies a significant role. Classical philosophers admitted that we have inner experiences and these experiences can be expressed through private language.

Here it may be said that by rejecting private language, Wittgenstein goes far from the inner experiences which cannot be ignored in ordinary life, Ayer says that Wittgenstein is misled by his use of the word 'private'. An object like a tea cup is

said to be public because there is sufficient agreement in the reports of different observers. In the case of ‘a headache’ the above motive is lacking and therefore we say that headaches are private. We understand the meaning of ‘a tea cup’ and the meaning of ‘headache’. So, both have the criteria to fulfill the intention of speaker and hearer. Therefore like Ayer, we may say that private inner experiences have meaning and it cannot be avoided in any sense. The subjective experience of different individuals, their sensations, feelings and thoughts are always meaningful.⁴⁸

Wittgenstein insists on ordinary language because it can be a helping hand to sort out the philosophical problems of skepticism and knowledge of other minds. The other philosophical problems can be solved by ordinary language. In case of knowledge it can provide the objectivity. Consequently the subjectivity of knowledge and the objectivity of knowledge, the cause of skepticism and the knowledge of other minds will disappear. In this occasion Mari Mc Guinn writes that – ‘Language is essentially embedded in structured activities that constitute a ‘form of life’. Almost all of the activities that human beings engage in ones that are intrinsically connected with, or somehow grounded in, our use of language, our forms of life is everywhere shaped by the use of language, and it is this that I tried to capture earlier by saying that our form of life is fundamentally cultural in nature. Learning our language, or coming to participate in our form of life, is essentially connected with acquiring mastery of countless kinds of language game’.

Gordon Baker, A critical reader of Wittgenstein says that – “I will try to clarify an important aspect perhaps even the most important aspect – of the reception of Wittgenstein’s Philosophy amongst Anglophone Philosophers. It was to do with the so – called ‘private language argument’, which is found heart of the *Philosophical Investigations*.”⁴⁹

According to Baker, Wittgenstein is involved in an imaginary dialogue concerning the hypothesis of a private language, and this exchange has very important implications for the dualism expressed by Descartes. Indeed, the argument shows that Cartesian dualism is nothing but an illusion only. According to him, the private language argument has as its goal to clarify the negative implications which sense to refute Cartesian dualism. Wittgenstein aimed to refute Descartes dualism as well as to dualism a whole multitude of related doctrines. Gordon Baker gives the comments about Wittgenstein's concept of Private language argument as follows -

“The private language argument differs in several respects from the model of a reduction ad absurdum of Cartesian dualism. Wittgenstein offered no criticisms what so ever of the idea that there is a kind of inner perception which gives us knowledge of our own sensations. Although he rejects the idea according to which each person knows his own present experiences indubitably. Wittgenstein formulates this critique in a completely non dogmatic manner. Moreover, He does not criticize the idea that the mind and human behavior are linked together according to a causal model.”

4.2 Conclusion:

Wittgenstein's private language argument is problematic because it rejects both the possibilities of language and knowledge. Private language argument rests on the mistaken base of individualist's feelings and experiences as the source of meaning. In Wittgenstein assumption, individualistic feelings and experiences cannot be accepted. But the difficulty with the account of Wittgenstein is that we believe that there can be individual intentions and there could be collective intentions. And Wittgenstein says that both individual as well as collective intentions are expressed

through social institutions. Individual intentions without social institutions seem to be impossible for Wittgenstein, whereas, the private language argument emphasizes the individual intentions without social institutions. If we accept this view then we have to say that there is no possibility of private language. The most troubling element in the whole private language argument is this: can individual have their intentions that are different from the intention of others? Several of us believe that the intentions of an individual have to be admitted, otherwise, the question of who invokes the convention for the use of new word cannot be answered. The public rules can be modified and new rules can be introduced. To deny the possibility of individual intentions seems to deny the very possibility of human freedom and individual roles in a democratic set-up. Admitting the possibility of individual intentions does not mean to refute the possibility of private language. Individual intentions can be made public; they are accessible to others when we observe their action in real life situation. In the concluding remarks of the article *Wittgenstein on private language*, P. R. Bhatt remarks that private language is meaningful and it has the criteria of language.⁵⁰

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