

## Wittgenstein and the Methodology of Semantics

### Abstract

R.C. Pradhan claims in *Language, Reality, and Transcendence* that, in Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and *Philosophical Investigations*, "[i]n no case is Wittgenstein interested in the empirical facts regarding language, as for him philosophy does not undertake any scientific study of language" (Pradhan 2009, xiv). I consider Ludwig Wittgenstein's purportedly anti-scientific and anti-empirical approach to language in light of advances by philosophers and linguists in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I distinguish between various ways of understanding Wittgenstein's stance against scientism. Due to the success of more recent work on language, I argue that Wittgenstein's critique, as interpreted by Pradhan in *Language, Reality, and Transcendence*, does not undermine the formal study of language. Nevertheless, I argue, the contention of Wittgenstein and Pradhan that language, through grammar (in Wittgenstein's sense), serves a variety of functions still sheds light on the differences in meaning across different discourses. I argue that a synthesis of Wittgenstein's pluralist theory of meaning with elements of a theoretical study of language offers the best comprehensive account of natural language. I will argue that this conception of language is consistent with elements of Pradhan's interpretation. As Pradhan notes, "The aim here is not to project one kind of grammatical determination but keep options open for many such grammatical determinations such that the grammatical nuances are not papered over in the name of the unity of grammar" (Pradhan 2009, 28).

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### Wittgenstein's Early and Later Metaphilosophy

In *Language, Reality, and Transcendence*, R.C. Pradhan presents a novel, wide-ranging reading of the later philosophy of Wittgenstein. Pradhan concludes that Wittgenstein's later philosophy is continuous in important respects with the early philosophy presented in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Pradhan contends that Wittgenstein, in the *Philosophical Investigations* just as much as in his earlier work, has an aim of allowing a role for the transcendental, the ethical, and the mystical.

Pradhan considers the metaphilosophical perspective of the earlier and later work of Wittgenstein to be deeply opposed to scientism. In his study of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, *The Great Mirror*, Pradhan claims "Wittgenstein does away with the

purely scientific view of the world” (Pradhan 2002, 134). One cannot have a comprehensive understanding of reality based on science alone. Pradhan himself makes strong claims against scientism and empiricism. He contends “It is the worst philosophical disease to reduce reality to the empirically given facts alone,” holding that there are transcendental facts regarding what is possible that extend beyond our experience (Pradhan 2002, 143).

These transcendental facts include truths about language that, according to Pradhan, reveal the structure of reality. Wittgenstein, as in his earlier work, understands the nature of the world through language on Pradhan’s reading, a reading that characterizes Wittgenstein as a kind of Kantian who holds we understand the structure of the world through the structure of language. Pradhan contends that grammar, in the later philosophy of Wittgenstein, reveals the nature of reality. One key aspect of this reading is Pradhan’s notion of the autonomy of grammar. Considering Wittgenstein’s rejection of the study of language as a theoretical endeavor, Pradhan concludes, “[g]rammar is autonomous, and in a logical sense, constitutes reality” (Pradhan 1992, 13). There is no empirical study of grammar, and of the deeper underlying facts about language and reality itself, on Pradhan’s reading.

Drawing on the insights of his reading of the earlier philosophy of Wittgenstein from the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Pradhan construes grammar, in the later philosophy of Wittgenstein, as the correlate of logical form in Wittgenstein’s earlier philosophy. Pradhan contends that there is “an underlying unity of the two models” in his “earlier and later philosophy” (Pradhan 1989, 140). There is, as becomes clear in Pradhan’s reading of the later Wittgenstein, a continuity in methodology as well between the earlier and later work. Pradhan holds that anti-scientism and anti-empiricism lie behind the ideas in Wittgenstein’s earlier work and later work.

There is a strong textual basis for the claim, made by Pradhan, that Wittgenstein is opposed to the idea that philosophy can present scientific theories about the nature of language. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein contends that philosophy generally does not present theories:

It is true to say that our considerations could not be scientific ones...And we may

not advance any kind of theory... We must do away with all *explanation*, and description must take its place (Wittgenstein 1953, sect. 109)

This metaphilosophical anti-scientism comes through in Wittgenstein's rejection of the idea of philosophy offering a scientific account of language. For Pradhan, Wittgenstein rejects the idea not only of a scientific conception of language; Wittgenstein, according to Pradhan, does not consider the study of language to be an empirical study: "In no case is Wittgenstein interested in the empirical facts regarding language, as for him philosophy does not undertake any scientific study of language" (Pradhan 2009, xiv). It is worth noting here that the idea of rejecting a scientific study of language can be distinguished from the idea of rejecting an empirical study of language. If the term science is used in a way that incorporates both the natural and the formal sciences, then there are sciences such as mathematics that may be studied scientifically but not empirically. It is possible as well for there to be empirical studies that are not scientific. History is in many key respects an empirical study of the past, but it lacks the precision and the explanatory goals that would make it a science. A key distinction needs to be made between the formalism of science and the empirical nature of science: The science of mathematics is formal but not empirical; the science of physics is empirical and formal; and the study of history is empirical but not formal. As will be noted below, the ideas of rejecting the formalism of science and of rejecting the empirical aspect of certain sciences should be clearly distinguished.

#### The Strong Rationalist Reading

The rejection, based on Wittgenstein's anti-scientism, of the empirical study of language leads Wittgenstein, according to Pradhan, to contend that the study of language in terms of human behavior is inappropriate. Pradhan claims, in "A Note on Wittgenstein's Philosophical Grammar: Language, Grammar, and Natural History," that "[g]rammar cannot be derived from natural history, i.e. from the way we normally behave" (Pradhan 1989, 150). It is clear that, on Pradhan's interpretation, Wittgenstein in his later philosophy of the *Philosophical Investigations* just as in the earlier philosophy of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* does not, according to Pradhan, think it is correct to study language in any kind of empirical fashion. I will call this the Strong Rationalist reading of Wittgenstein.

Pradhan makes a case for a Strong Rationalist reading of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. In “A Note on Wittgenstein’s Philosophical Grammar,” Pradhan cites Wittgenstein’s claim in the *Tractatus* that “[p]hilosophy is not one of the natural sciences” (Wittgenstein 1922, 51) to support the claim that “Wittgenstein opposes the method of discovery since, for him, philosophy and logical grammar are declared to be not sciences which can discover logical form” (Pradhan 1989, 143). Given Pradhan’s contention that grammar is the equivalent, in Wittgenstein’s later philosophy, of logical form, Pradhan holds that philosophical study of language in the later works is also not an empirical science. In fact, as noted above, for Pradhan the study of language is not an empirical study at all. Citing *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* 4.12, Pradhan contends, “logical form and rules of grammar can not be explained by appeal to any sort of fact” (Pradhan 1989, 143). Given Pradhan’s contention that grammar is the correlate of logical form in the later philosophy of Wittgenstein, Pradhan holds that the nature of language is not accounted for by any fact in the *Philosophical Investigations* as well.

#### Is Wittgenstein a Strong Rationalist?

Is there indeed such a continuity between the methods of Wittgenstein in his earlier and later philosophy? It is not clear how we could square the use approach to meaning in Wittgenstein’s later philosophy with the Strong Rationalist non-empirical approach to semantics. Wittgenstein, as Pradhan notes, is well known for considering meaning to be use: “Every symbol in the language has a use and that is the crux of the whole philosophy of language, according to the later Wittgenstein” (Pradhan 2009, 72). In order to grasp the notion of meaning as use, are observations of the world and the uses of language by communities and individuals not necessary? Consider Wittgenstein’s discussion of “games.” The examples Wittgenstein gives for comparison, “board-games, card-games, Olympic games” are the sort of things that one could only be aware of through experience. As Wittgenstein says in his passage on games, “don’t think, but look!” (Wittgenstein 1958, sect. 66) Even the term Wittgenstein uses to characterize the relationship among games, “family resemblance,” connotes a certain kind of visual experience. (Wittgenstein 1958, sect. 66). Wittgenstein’s method, with its emphasis on looking, involves this kind of empirical evidence.

Wittgenstein appeals to the variety of uses of language in order to rebut the Augustinian theory of language, according to which the function of language is to name objects. Part of this refutation of the Augustinian theory involves careful attention to our linguistic practices. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein argues his case by providing examples of the variety of uses of language, uses that we are acquainted with through our awareness of the normal practices of language speakers:

Review the multiplicity of language-games in the following examples, and in others:

Giving orders, and obeying them—

Describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements—

Constructing an object from a description (a drawing)—

Reporting an event—

Speculating about an event—

Forming and testing a hypothesis—

Presenting the results of an experiment in tables and diagrams—

Making up a story; and reading it—

Play-acting—

Singing catches—

Guessing riddles—

Making a joke; telling it—

Solving a problem in practical arithmetic—

Translating from one language to another—

Asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying—

--It is interesting to compare the multiplicity of the tools of language and of the ways they are used, the multiplicity of kinds of word and sentence, with what logicians have said about the structure of language... (Wittgenstein 1958, sect. 23).

*Pace* Pradhan, what Wittgenstein is doing in this passage is proving his point by appealing to the variety of ways in which people normally behave. He points out this sort of linguistic behavior to reject the idea that all language functions to name objects in the world.

Wittgenstein's own method, a method of providing not explanatory theories but descriptions of the world that leave everything as it is, does not seem to square well with the Strong Rationalist reading. As Pradhan himself notes, "Wittgenstein holds that reflections on grammar really amount to philosophical descriptions, not philosophical explanations" (Pradhan 2009, 28). It is not clear how it would be possible to provide an adequate description of language use without making the kinds of observations Wittgenstein discusses in his passage on games or in his citation of the varieties of uses of language. Pradhan's claim that "[g]rammar cannot be derived from the natural history, i.e. from the way we normally behave" does not fit with Wittgenstein's citations of the way in which we behave when we use the term 'game' or language generally (Pradhan 1989, 150).

#### The Vague Descriptive Account

As Pradhan rightly notes, Wittgenstein's later philosophy is not a scientific approach to language. I contend that this is largely due not to Wittgenstein's stressing of an anti-empirical methodology, but rather his stress on an anti-theoretical, informal methodology. As noted above, there is a distinction between the empiricism of the sciences, at least the natural sciences, and the formalism of the sciences. Insofar as Wittgenstein rejects the idea that the study of language is a science, his claim is ambiguous between rejecting the idea that the study of language is an empirical study and rejecting the idea that the study of language is a formal study. Given that there is a good textual basis for holding that Wittgenstein does appeal to empirical data, the best reading of Wittgenstein's rejection of the scientific study of language is that it is a rejection of formalism. Perhaps this is what Pradhan had in mind. Pradhan characterizes Wittgenstein's philosophy in terms of a rejection of strict rules: "Wittgenstein holds that language operates not through strict rules but through a network of rules which do not constitute an ideal universal logic" (Pradhan 2009, 42)

There is a textual basis for considering Wittgenstein's anti-scientism to consist in his anti-formalism regarding language and philosophy. Wittgenstein writes:

The more narrowly we examine actual language, the sharper becomes the conflict between it and our requirement. (For the crystalline purity of logic was, of course, not a *result of investigation*: it was a requirement.) The conflict becomes

intolerable; the requirement is now in danger of becoming empty.—We have got on to slippery ice where there is no friction and so in a certain sense the conditions are ideal, but, just because of that, we are unable to walk. We want to walk; so we need *friction*. Back to the rough ground! (Wittgenstein 1953, sect. 107).

It is worth noting, in connection with Wittgenstein and empiricism, his claim that we “examine actual language” in the study of language, along with his clear statement of his rejection of the frictionless planes of a purely formal conception of language.

This rejection of strict rules is made apparent in one of Wittgenstein’s key examples, the meaning of the term “Moses.” Moses, as Wittgenstein argues in a critique of his mentor Bertrand Russell’s theory of names, does not necessarily have the same meaning as a particular definite description. To claim that Moses did not exist is not strictly the same statement as any of 1-3.

1. The man who led the Israelites through the wilderness did not exist.
2. The man who lived at that time and place and was called ‘Moses’ did not exist.
3. The man who as a child was taken out of the Nile by Pharaoh’s daughter does not exist.

In fact, Wittgenstein’s conception of the meaning of proper names seems open to the possibility that any of these 3 descriptions, or any particular number of descriptions of Moses might be false yet we can still meaningfully claim that Moses does not exist.

Wittgenstein, in line with Pradhan’s claim that his later philosophy does not involve strict rules, does not think there are a strict number of descriptions that are identical to the meaning of the name “Moses.” “I shall perhaps say, by ‘Moses’ I understand the man who did what the Bible relates of Moses, or at any rate a good deal of it. But how much? Have I decided how much must be proved false in order for me to give up my proposition as false? Has the name “Moses” got a fixed and unequivocal use for me in all possible cases?” The answer, for Wittgenstein, is no: “I use the name ‘N’ without a fixed meaning” (Wittgenstein 1958, sect. 79).

In order to properly characterize the way in which Wittgenstein is opposed to scientism, it is key to distinguish between the Strong Rationalist reading and what I will



call the Vague Descriptive Account. The Vague Descriptive Account is clear in Wittgenstein's theory of names. What is different between the sciences and philosophy is that, unlike the sciences, Wittgenstein's account of language rejects the idea that there are strict rules for language use. This is a respect in which Wittgenstein is breaking not only away from his earlier philosophy but also from the approach to language taken by Bertrand Russell. The theory of descriptions offered by Russell is flawed, on Wittgenstein's critique, not due to empiricism in Russell's approach to language. Instead, the flaw is in seeking too much precision in his understanding of names.

As presented so far, Wittgenstein's anti-theoretical approach to language consists in his Vague Descriptive Account of language, and not in the anti-empirical Strong Rationalist reading. In considering whether or not Wittgenstein's approach is tenable, we should consider this paradigmatic example of the meaning of names.

#### Against Vague Descriptivism

As an example of Wittgenstein's approach to semantics, the Vague Descriptive Account is flawed. Saul Kripke in *Naming and Necessity* has argued this convincingly. These arguments are familiar, but I will briefly spell them out to draw the consequences for Wittgenstein's philosophy.

As Kripke argues, names are rigid designators whereas descriptions are not rigid designators. A rigid designator denotes the same individual in every possible world. In a world where Moses did not lead the Israelites out of Egypt, 'Moses' would still denote Moses yet 'The man who led the Israelites out of Egypt' would designate some other person, if anyone at all. One can conceive a world in which Moses's brother Aron lead the Israelites out of Egypt: in such a world, the word 'Moses' would not designate Aron, but 'The man who led the Israelites out of Egypt' would designate Aron.

Kripke further argues that, even if all of the descriptions we currently associate with Moses were false, in the actual world, the word 'Moses' would still denote Moses. So there is a stronger claim, a stricter rule, than the one articulated by Wittgenstein: 'Moses' could still denote Moses not only if some but if all descriptions associated with Moses are false.

Kripke provides further support for his view by noting the extent of mistaken descriptive beliefs among individuals. Many people might have mistaken beliefs

regarding Wittgenstein. Some people might think Wittgenstein was the inventor of postmodernism. Others might think that Wittgenstein was a cultural relativist. Yet others might think Wittgenstein was German. If Wittgenstein's Vague Descriptive Account of the meaning of names were true, then none of these individuals would actually be referring to Wittgenstein with the name 'Wittgenstein.' This is counterintuitive: it seems that all of these individuals *are* referring to Wittgenstein even though they are falsely describing him.

If Kripke is correct, then there are certain rules of language that are indeed strict. For example, it is a strict rule that names are rigid designators. It is a strict rule that the name 'Moses' denotes Moses and 'Moses' is not equivalent to any definite description. It is also a strict rule that identity statements involving names are necessarily true, whereas identity statements involving descriptions are only contingently true. "Bertrand Russell is Viscount Amberley" is necessarily true, as both are names that rigidly designate the same individual. "Bertrand Russell is the author of "On Denoting" is only contingently true. Thus the Vague Descriptive Account, taken as a generalization about language, is flawed.

A further reason to doubt the Vague Descriptive Account comes from developments in syntax. The research program initiated by Noam Chomsky and developed by theoretical linguists in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries details our understanding of syntax through a theory that is both empirical and precise. If the Chomskyan linguistic research program is on the right track, neither Strong Rationalism nor Vague Descriptivism is tenable. The problem with Strong Rationalism is that empirical facts are used in a significant way in Chomskyan linguistics to establish theories: the primary evidence in favor of these theories of language is provided by the linguistic intuitions of ordinary language speakers. The problem with Vague Descriptivism is, in the variety of theories of syntax developed by linguists after Chomsky, there are strict rules in the grammar of a language such as English. To take one set of simple examples from one version of Chomskyan linguistics, a sentence consists of a noun phrase and a verb phrase; a verb phrase consists of a verb and a noun phrase; and a noun phrase consists of a determiner and a noun (Chomsky 1986, 57). By explaining facts about grammaticality in terms of general phrase structure rules of this kind, contemporary linguistics has made significant progress in explaining our understanding of language.

## Meaning and Use

As I have argued, Wittgenstein, on Pradhan's interpretation, takes meaning to be studied in a non-empirical fashion and semantic theories to never involve strict rules. Based on a reading of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, I have argued that Wittgenstein is not committed to the Strong Rationalist approach to language, but he does take a Vague Descriptive Account to certain aspects of language, specifically proper names. In light of Wittgenstein's discussion of games, Kripke's account of names, and contemporary advances in linguistics, I have contended that neither of Strong Rationalism nor Vague Descriptivism is tenable as a general methodology for semantics. However, I contend that there is a strand in Wittgenstein's philosophy, noted by Pradhan, which does offer a deep insight into the nature of language. This is Wittgenstein's interpretation of the meaning of terms in a holistic framework of use.

Pradhan writes, citing Wittgenstein: "Wittgenstein does not propose a theory construction, however, as he is more inclined to see the connections as they are part of the internal structure of the concepts. He writes:

A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not command a clear view of the uses of our words.-Our grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity. A perspicuous representation produces just that understanding that consists in "seeing connections."...(PI, sect. 122)." (Pradhan 2009, 26-27).

I contend that these connections among concepts are best grasped through our understanding of the use of the terms that express such concepts. Use, which we can observe in each other's linguistic practices, makes perspicuous the nature of concepts through contexts that implicitly give the meaning of a term.

The conception of meaning as use provides a fruitful framework for accounts of the meanings of many terms in language. As I will argue, we can see how Wittgenstein's conception of meaning works through the examples of logical connectives such as 'and,' moral terms such as 'ought,' and metalinguistic and metaphysical terms such as 'true' and 'fact.'

To assign a referent to 'and,' 'or,' or 'not,' or to treat logical connectives as generic properties or relations would result in a failure to recognize the special inferential

role these terms play within language. The key to understanding ‘and’ is through its use. From the proposition that p and the proposition that q, we may infer the proposition that p and q. From the proposition that p and q, we may infer the proposition that p and we may infer the proposition that q. These characteristic uses of the term ‘and’ implicitly define the meaning of the term. Meaning as use provides the best account of the role of logical connectives.

These logical terms are not the only terms in a language that are best understood through a use conception of meaning. The meaning of central moral terms such as ‘ought’ are best explained in terms of use. If we simply were to treat ought as a relation between agents and actions, we might be able to describe the world, but we would fail to recognize a key aspect of the meaning of ‘ought’: its normative role. As Wilfrid Sellars has stressed, speakers who accept that they ought to perform action A will have a tendency towards performing that action. In “Some Reflection on Language Games,” Sellars writes:

The motivating role of ‘ought’ in the first person is essential to the ‘meaning’ of ‘ought.’ That is to say, it could not be true of a word that ‘it means ought’ unless this word had motivating force in the language in which it belongs. (Sellars 1954, 350).

It is in virtue of the fact that the concept conveyed by the term ‘ought’ plays such a role in motivation and action that this term has the meaning it has. Normative terms are implicitly defined by the role that acceptance of sentences containing such terms plays in leading one to pursue certain courses of action and avoid others. A person who believes that she ought to give to charity will have a tendency towards giving to charity. The person who mouths the words ‘I ought to give to charity’ yet has not the slightest tendency towards giving to charity does not really believe that she ought to give to charity.

A use conception of moral language allows us to include the diversity of the uses of such terms in our conception of their meaning. We use moral language in a variety of ways. A term such as ‘ought’ plays a key role not only in our own deciding what we ought to do, but also in critiquing each other’s choices, actions, and thoughts. We can recognize the tie of the notion of ‘ought’ to a range of what P.F. Strawson termed our

“reactive attitudes”: a person who has done what she ought not to have done ought to feel ashamed of herself; a person who has treated us in a way she ought not to have done ought to be resented. Each of these uses of ‘ought’ implicitly defines the term. That the term ‘ought’ plays a variety of roles, both in our internal deliberations and our external critiques, is no objection to its being a meaningful term. As Wittgenstein would stress, there is no need for a single, precise definition of a term such as ‘ought’ for it to be meaningful. These varieties of the use of ‘ought’ give it its distinctive meaning in language.

Meaning as use also provides insight into the meaning of metalinguistic terms such as ‘true’ and metaphysical notions such as ‘fact.’ The failure of philosophical attempts to define truth as correspondence to the facts, or pragmatic utility, or provability has motivated philosophers to implicitly define truth in terms of use. In one version of this theory, disquotationalism, our use of the following disquotational schema defines the notion of truth: a sentence ‘s’ is true if and only if s. That we reason in this way is clear from the truth of claims such as: ‘snow is white’ is true if and only if snow is white. We can also use this sort of deflationary method to define notions that seem like deep metaphysical notions. The notion of a fact seems to function in just the same way the notion of truth functions: for any proposition that p, it is a fact that p if, and only if, p. It is a fact that snow is white if and only if snow is white.

#### Pluralism and Language

One of the major points emphasized by Pradhan, in his reading of Wittgenstein, is pluralism. Pradhan writes, in *Language, Reality, and Transcendence*: “The aim here is not to project one kind of grammatical determination but keep options open for many such grammatical determinations such that the grammatical determinations are not papered over in the name of the unity of grammar” (Pradhan 2009, 28). Wittgenstein’s philosophy allows, I contend, both strict and non-strict rules, depending on the terms involved. Thus there is room to synthesize the insights of Kripke, Chomsky, and others with Wittgenstein’s insights of the approach to meaning as use.

If we want to understand the meaning of names, it is best to look at how names are used, namely as rigid designators. The name ‘Moses’ is simply used, in the community, to refer to Moses. It is used to refer to that man. As Kripke stresses in

*Naming and Necessity*, in an imagined conversation between an ordinary person and a Quinean philosopher over whether Nixon might have won the election, a name functions in a way similar to a demonstrative, to pick out some individual in the world. “On the other hand, the term ‘Nixon’ is just a name of this man” (Kripke 1972, 41). Names, like the name ‘Kripke’ are uttered to make reference to persons, in this case, Saul Kripke. The names ‘Bertrand Russell’ and ‘Viscount Amberley’ are used to make reference to one and the same individual, Bertrand Russell. Kripke’s insight into the function of names despite can be seen as an insight into the *use* of names. We use names as rigid designators and not as descriptions. Like Wittgenstein, Kripke stresses the ordinary understanding of the use of terms such as names to make his point. He writes:

Of course, some philosophers think that something’s having intuitive content is inconclusive evidence in favor of it. I think it is very heavy evidence in favor of something myself (Kripke 1972, 42).

In a fashion similar to that of Wittgenstein, Kripke appeals to the ordinary use of terms in order to resolve philosophical problems and understand the nature of meaning. Kripke goes on to further spell out that other terms, other than names, can be used as rigid designators. “Demonstratives can be used as rigid designators, and free variables can be used as rigid designators of unspecified objects” (Kripke 1972, 49, n. 16). Note the explicit mention of use. We can distinguish between rigid and nonrigid designator usages of different terms in the language. Unlike Wittgenstein, Kripke claims that there are precise facts about the meaning of certain terms, such as names. Wittgenstein’s approach to meaning can be made to cohere with developments in the study of language in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by retaining the idea of meaning as use, while rejecting the idea that the study of language does not involve, at times, but not always, precise theoretical claims. The best Wittgensteinian approach to language is not committed to Strong Rationalism or a general Vague Descriptive Account, but rather allows for both strict formal theories of language and less formal theories of certain discourses, such as normative discourse.

While a Strong Rationalist reading of Wittgenstein can be called into question, and the Vague Descriptive theory of meaning has been refuted, the use methodology and semantic pluralism stressed by Pradhan in his reading of Wittgenstein still offers substantial insights into the meaning of language. A fruitful approach to the study of

language in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will leave behind a strong opposition between Wittgenstein's conception of meaning as use and contemporary views of meaning in terms of reference and truth conditions in favor of a synthesis of these views into a pluralist theory of meaning.

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