CHAPTER - III

GRAMMATICAL PROPOSITIONS

In this chapter I will focus on the nature and structure of grammatical propositions. These propositions occupy a unique place in language, according to Wittgenstein. The logical propositions of the Tractatus have appeared as the grammatical propositions in Wittgenstein's later works. The most significant thesis to be discussed in this chapter is that grammatical-empirical distinction which is maintained in Wittgenstein's logic and grammar is redefined in the later works. The uncompromising distinction is diluted to accommodate even the otherwise empirical looking propositions as grammatical. The notion of 'grammatical' is widened to cover the synthetic a priori propositions.

The notion of grammar which I have so far developed indicates that there are propositions which can be called grammatical depending upon what role they play in language. A grammatical proposition, according to Wittgenstein, states the rule or the conditions of use of a word or sentence. Therefore, grammatical propositions set the limits of language, i.e. the bounds of what can be correctly used in language. Seen in this context, grammatical propositions lay down the limits of intelligibility of our linguistic descriptions. They set the "limits of empiricism"!
1. Nature of Grammatical Propositions

Grammatical propositions, according to Wittgenstein, consist of (i) Mathematical propositions (ii) propositions of logic and (iii) a wide variety of other expressions. Examples of these above variety include such propositions as,

"Every rod has a length" (PI, Sect. 251).
"The class of lion is not a lion but class of classes is a class" (RFM, p.182).
"An order orders its execution" (PI, Sect.458).
"I cannot feel your toothache" (BBS, p.49).
"You can't hear God speak to someone else, you can hear Him only if you are being addressed" (Z, Sect.717).
"This body has an extension" (PI,p.251-2).
"White is lighter than black" (RFM. I, Sect.105).

These propositions constitute a wide variety of grammatical sentences. They have one family resemblance, namely, they tell about the concept concerned. They define or bring out the logical structure of the concept and its use in language. Grammatical propositions are, to say the least, conceptual or definitional.

Backer\(^2\) points out that there may be two types of grammatical sentences dressed in metaphysical disguise viz., (1) the first are grammatical sentences expressed in the modal form
such as "can or cannot", "must or must not" etc. e.g. "I" cannot exhibit my own sensations "(Z., Sect. 134). "Green or blue cannot be in the same place simultaneously" (BB. 56). (2) Secondly, there is a range of completely disguised grammatical sentences, e.g. 'of course, I know what I wish' (BB. p.30). These sentences, amongst others, are disguised grammatical sentences, because, they do not appear to be so. They appear to be metaphysical statements about "sensations", "wish", etc. Wittgenstein supposes that philosophy abounds in such metaphysical looking sentences which are really grammatical. Though they talk about the conceptual essences assigned to a word or expression they do not pose to be metaphysical descriptions of such essences. Wittgenstein gives a striking example of this confusion in the following passage:

The 'private experience' is a degenerate construction of our grammar (comparable in a sense to tautology and contradiction). And this grammatical monster now fools us; when we wish to do away with it, it seems as though we denied the existence of an experience, say, toothache (NFL, p.314.).

As Wittgenstein very aptly puts it, "A whole cloud of philosophy [is] condensed into a drop of grammar" (PI, II, XI, p.222).

Mathematical sentences also form another kind of grammatical propositions. Of course, they have the misleading form of verbal expression of mathematical proofs. They show us what makes sense to say, e.g. $2 + 2 = 4$. They are the mathematical rules that regulate our mathematical calculations. "The mathematical proposition has the dignity of a rule" (RFM. I, Sect.165). By
noting a mathematical rule, we really note a deep convention and a conceptual connection that is an underlying necessary truth. Wittgenstein says,

Let us remember that in mathematics we are convinced of grammatical propositions; So the expression, the result, of our being convinced is that we accept a rule (RFM. III, Sect.26).

Thus for Wittgenstein, mathematical propositions stand as the grammatical propositions that hold the key to our understanding of mathematical necessity and mathematical truth. The whole of mathematical necessity is a species of grammatical necessity.

The logical propositions which Wittgenstein used to call tautologies in the Tractatus are also called grammatical in his philosophy. The proposition e.g. 'A is A' and 'P -> P', etc., are logical in that they state some obvious, though necessary, truths regarding our language. These truths are the rules is our language. Being rules, they lay down conditions of use of language. Hence, their grammatical character. Wittgenstein writes,

The propositions of logic are 'laws of thought', 'because they bring out the essence of human thinking' - to put it more correctly because they bring out, or shew, the essence, the technique, of thinking. They shew what thinking is and also shew kinds of thinking. (RFM, I, Sect.133).

Logic, it may be said, shews us what we understand by 'proposition' and by 'language' (RFM, I, Sect.134).

Thus Wittgenstein meant the propositions to be grammatical in the sense that they state the necessary conditions of use of language.
The following are some of the important characteristic of the grammatical propositions.¹

1. They have the form of empirical propositions and appear to be informative.

2. Unlike empirical propositions, however, they do not state facts, but express conditions of stating the facts. They are necessarily true in the sense that without them no empirical truth can be expressed.

3. Grammatical propositions are of the character of rules; therefore, they are unique in language.

2. Grammatical Propositions and Grammatical Rules

Wittgenstein has highlighted the close relationship between grammatical propositions and the rules. According to him, these propositions have the status of rules. Like rules they state criteria and explanations of meaning. The rules as a criteria determine what is a correct use of an expression. The notion of correctness and incorrectness is associated with grammar. In the Philosophical Grammar, Wittgenstein claims that "the place of word in grammar is its meaning" (PG, Sect.23) and that the explanation of meaning amounts to laying down the rules. This suggests that grammatical propositions are grammatical rules so far as they function as explanations of meaning. The explanations of meaning are the same as explanations of grammar. Let us briefly discuss some of the views about the relationship between grammatical propositions and grammatical rules.
The view that grammatical propositions are identical with grammatical rules was discussed by G.E. Moore in his account of Wittgenstein's Lecturers 1930-33. According to Moore, Wittgenstein took grammatical propositions as expressing grammatical rules which themselves are expressions of necessary truths. According G.E. Moore the term "grammatical rule" is used in two different senses which are never explicitly distinguished:

a) A rule of grammar allows or proscribes some combinations of words. For example, "Do not call anything a rod which has not got a length" is a rule which allows a certain sentence-expression. No body can call anything a rod which has no length

b) A grammatical rule is a statement to the effect that certain conditions are fulfilled for the correct use of an expression e.g. "I can't feel our toothache'. Feeling another man's toothache is grammatically ruled out. In the sense of (a) grammatical propositions do not have truth values and in the sense of (b) they seem to be like empirical propositions but really they are not BO. These two sentences have an apparent conflict, but really they mean the same thing, i.e., rules and statements thereof are having a unique status in language.

The relationship between grammatical propositions and grammatical rules is typical of Wittgenstein's conception of
grammar. Wittgenstein has no distinction between grammatical rules and grammatical propositions (statements). The reason is that a rule is a statement of the conditions of the use of an expression. The statement 'Every rod has a length' (PI. Sect.251) is not only a proposition (in grammar) but also a rule. As a grammatical proposition it states something grammatically necessary and as a rule it embodies what is stated as necessary. Wittgenstein writes,

But the picture attaching to the grammatical proposition could only shew, say, what is called "the length of a rod". And what should the opposite picture be? (Remarks about the negation of an apriori proposition) (PI. p.251).

A grammatical proposition qua necessary is used in the first sense, as a rule which permits, forbids or regulates certain use. It is the availability of such a rule which makes the assertion of grammatical proposition, employed in the second sense i.e. as a statement of the conditions in which language is actually used, true. Thus the conflict between the rule and proposition can be resolved without denying that rules are not true or false in the ordinary sense. Moore is right in saying that grammatical propositions are not either true or false in the sense of experiential propositions are. That only shows that grammatical propositions have the status of rules.

The grammatical proposition "Every rod has a length" can be explained as "For each thing X, if X is a rod, then X has a length" or "if you call anything 'rod' then you must say it has a length". This is a grammatical rule. "Having a length" is an
essential characteristic of those things which we call "rods". Grammar tells us that what we call a 'rod' cannot be without a length. Thus the rule-structure of the grammatical proposition is made clear by Wittgenstein. Calling them proposition does not deny their rule-status.

Moore, while explaining the rule-status of grammatical propositions, gives the example: "You donot say two men was working in the field." There are passages where Wittgenstein seems to conceive of grammatical rules in this way and to equate grammatical propositions with grammatical rules. In the Remarks on Foundation of Mathematics Wittgenstein asks: what sort of proposition is "The class of lions is not a lion, but the class of classes is a class"? (RFM, p.182). His answer to that is: it is a grammatical proposition used to call attention to the fact that the word 'lion' is used in a fundamentally different way from the word "class" (cf. RFM, p.182). The following claim made in the Philosophical Investigation can be cited in favour of above claim:

"Every rod has a length" that means something like: we call something (or this) "The length of a rod" - but nothing "the length of a sphere" (PI, Sect.251).

This shows that grammatical propositions as rules have a binding character in concept-formation. These rules state that certain expressions are allowed or forbidden in a language. The grammatical proposition thus lays down the way in which words like "lion" and "class" in the above example are used.
Mow the question arises whether the grammatical statement about the use of words makes any empirical claim. Debra Aidun says,

It makes an empirical claim about grammar, and is therefore contingently true or false. Grammatical propositions are necessary rather than contingent...their necessity results from their own use as rules of grammar.\(^{10}\)

However, it is not obvious how the statement of a rule can be contingent at all. The rule and its statement are the same in Wittgenstein's sense. We have already seen that grammatical propositions function in the same manner as grammatical rules. As Aidun himself says, Grammatical propositions do not make any transparent claims about grammar. They exemplify or illustrate acceptable usage.\(^{11}\) So the grammatical proposition "Every rod has a length" is true if the rule "we call something the length of a rod, but nothing the length of a sphere" is true.\(^{12}\) Thus the rule and the proposition coincide in grammar. The application of the rule is vouchsafed for in the totality of grammar. If the proposition is the embodiment of the rule, the rule is its innermost essence.

The relationship between grammatical rules and grammatical propositions can be better understood within the game-model analysis of language. According to Aidun, the two senses of grammatical proposition adumbrated above may correspond to the internal and external\(^{13}\) aspects of the grammatical proposition. Rules define the moves in a language game: They define the
limits within which an expression is used in a language-game. The sense of the expression is strictly defined within the language-game. Thus rules are internal to the very possibility of the symbol having a place in the language-game. Thus when we take grammatical propositions as actual expressions of rules in language-games, we are taking the internal standpoint. The external standpoint consists in the statement of the rule as "in English we use the words ...". However, the external standpoint is a misnomer and it cannot be stated so. Aidun's claim about external standpoint is based on a misnomer.

Baker and Hacker have recently defended the internal standpoint a mentioned above according to which the grammatical propositions are themselves rules determining the norms of representation in language. Rules which involve a variety of linguistic conventions (including the criteria, paradigms and samples in language) are the norms of representations that set the bounds of sense or limits of empiricism. Baker and Hacker write,

What philosophers have called 'necessary truths' are, in Wittgenstein's view, typically rules of grammar, norms of representation, i.e. they fix concepts. They are expressions of internal relation between concepts which are themselves used in stating truths about the world.

According to Baker and Hacker, what is remarkable about the grammatical propositions is their normativity and necessity in grammar. They are normative being the determinants of concept formation and necessary being the only constitutive conditions of
sense. To put in their words,

Necessary propositions do not describe the limits of what is possible, fencing us in from impossible possibilities. They are norms of representation constituting the bounds of sense, delimiting what it makes sense to say. They fence us in only from the void.\(^{18}\) (author's italics).

Grammatical propositions are necessary propositions which Wittgenstein tried to demarcate from the empirical propositions. Empirical propositions are defined as the description of facts whereas the necessary propositions are only the framework propositions constituting facts.\(^{19}\)

3. Saying and Showing

The distinction between empirical and grammatical propositions is the distinction between saying and showing which survives from Wittgenstein's early philosophy (Cf. TLP, 6.12). The logical propositions show the logical form of language and the world according to the *Tractatus*. Likewise, the grammatical propositions, e.g. "Every rod has a length" shows what is the internal property of being a rod. This proposition states the essence of something being called a 'rod' and nothing else. Grammatical propositions do not, however, say anything. They are not descriptive propositions.\(^{20}\) They constitute the facts rather than describe them.

An empirical proposition, on the other hand, says that something is the case; it asserts the existence of some fact and is true if the fact exists. Grammatical propositions show but do
not say that words may be combined in a certain way to yield meaningful sentences. The tautologies in logic represent a limiting case of propositions. They do not make assertions about the world. They say nothing, but by the very fact that they are true under all circumstances they show something about the grammatical or syntactical properties of language. Besides, they show the form of the world, that is, what the world must be in order to make sensible assertions in language at all. Thus, grammar, like logic, is the domain of what can be shown rather than said. The logical and the grammatical essence are one and the same. They are shown in the very use of language. Grammatical propositions, therefore, are not propositions proper, they are propositions by courtesy of if they are "taken right". They are concerning the syntax or the logical structure rather than how language is actually formed. Grammatical propositions are thus intended to show how words are used, i.e., the syntactic features of language. Wittgenstein both in his early and later philosophy holds that a grammatical proposition would show something about the semantic as well as syntactical properties of language. That is, it would reveal or mirror the logical structure of language.

In the Remarks on the Foundation of Mathematics he calims that mathematical propositions are a species of grammatical propositions which show how new conceptual connexions are laid down in mathematical proofs. These propositions set the limit of what one can say, i.e., what we can call a mathematical
operation. As Wittgenstein puts it, "What I want to say is: Mathematics as such is always a measure, not thing measured" (RFM, III, Sect.75). In the Philosophical Investigations, Wittgenstein likewise claims that a grammatical proposition presents a picture or a model of reality rather a fact. For example, in the grammatical proposition "I know.... only from my own case" (PI, Sect.295). What is at issue is not a fact of experience but "a full-blown pictorial representation of our grammar. Not facts, but as it were illustrated turns the of speech". (ibid). It says nothing but shows something about the semantical rules of language. That is to say, the grammatical propositions show how the future application of an expression is anticipated in the rules of grammar. The possible moves in a language-games are laid within the rules of grammar. Grammar defines what is possible and what is impossible. Wittgenstein writes,

Compare "logically possible' with "chemically possible'. One might perhaps call a combination chemically possible if a formula with the right valencies existed (e.g. E - O - O - 0 - H). Of course, such a combination need not exist; but even the formula HO₂ cannot have less than no combination corresponding to it in reality (PI, Sect.521).

That grammar, like logic, only shows what are the important and essential truths regarding language-use is further corroborated Wittgenstein's insistence that logical/grammatical truths are shown or mirrored in the practice of language. Practice of language is the home of logic or grammar. In On Certainty, Wittgenstein puts it aptly as follows:
Am I not getting closer and closer to saying that in the end logic cannot be described? You roust look at the practice of language, then you will see it (CC, Sect.501)

What grammar shows cannot be said. This is to echo Tractatus 4.1212: "What can be shown, cannot be said". To say the unsayable is to commit oneself to nonsensical statements. Therefore, paradoxically, grammatical statements try to say what is to be shown. Debra Aidun puts it in the following words,

When we try to put into words what shows itself in the grammar of language, grammatical propositions result. These only show and do not say anything at all. They exemplify certain grammatical connections and point to these rather than to any empirical state of affairs. Nonsense results, when we regard these propositions as saying something, as expression of metaphysical truths, for example.23

Grammatical truths, to be precise, are the epitomes of conceptual regularities in our language and the necessary correlates of what can be revealed in the operations of language. Logic or grammar is the essence of language.

4. Grammatical Propositions and Analytical Truths

Now the question arises: Are grammatical propositions analytic? Interpreters of Wittgenstein have generally compared grammatical propositions to analytical statements.24 However, it has been argued by others that grammatical propositions cannot be analytic for the reason that they are neither true nor false.25 E.K. Specht,26 however, has argued that grammatical propositions can be compared with the synthetic apriori propositions.
Wittgenstein is not concerned with the analytic-synthetic distinction as such. This distinction is as old as Kant,\textsuperscript{27} if not earlier and has a characteristic history of its own. As stated by Kant and accepted by the later philosophers, analytic propositions are those whose negation is a self-contradiction. For example, the proposition "All materials bodies are extended" tells us an obvious truism since its predicate is already contained in the subject.\textsuperscript{28} Thus analytic propositions are non-informative since they do not add any new knowledge. Synthetic propositions are, on the other hand, informative statements in which the predicate adds to our knowledge of the subject. This distinction was accepted by the contemporary logicians since these fitted into the proposed class of logical propositions recognised by Frege\textsuperscript{29} and Russell.\textsuperscript{30} Wittgenstein introduced the tautologies as the logical propositions which are identical with analytic propositions (Cf. TLP, 6.11).

In view of Wittgenstein's preference for analytic statements as constituting the domain of logic, it is arguable that he considers the grammatical statements as analytic. There are two reasons why this is so: (1) analytic statements are logically necessary and so are the grammatical statements. Their opposites cannot be conceived, and (2) like analytic statements grammatical statements do not say anything empirical; they are factually empty. Thus grammatical statements e.g. "The colours green and blue cannot be in the same place simultaneously (BBS, p.56) make no factual claim about language and experience and so their
status is marked off from the empirical statements like "This flower is blue". As Hacker writes, "None of these sentences have a recognizable canonical -form of a rule-sentence. However, their truth does not depend upon the facts in the world, but upon linguistic convention." Like analytic statements the grammatical propositions are of the form of conventions that necessarily regulate the use of language. Conventions are syntactic laws that determine use of grammatically intelligible sentences. For example, "All bachelors are unmarried" does not speak of marriage or social customs, but only of what can definitionally be called a 'bachelor'. This points to the fact that analytic statements are of the form of rules. Wittgenstein has recognized the rule-status of analytic propositions. Given the background it is not surprising that grammatical propositions include analytical statements as well. However, there is no direct definitional identification of grammatical statements with analytic truths. Baker and Hacker write,

Wittgenstein's conception of a proposition of grammar does not mesh with the standard notion of an analytic truth. He did not argue that every proposition of grammar is a type - sentence which is either (an instance of) a law of logic or reducible to a law of logic by the substitution of the definitions for certain expressions. The analytic synthetic distinction is* framed in terms of the forms and constituents ,of type-sentences whereas whether an utterance expresses a grammatical proposition depends not only on its form, but on its roles on occasions of utterance.32

The collapse of analytic - synthetic distinction in the hands of Quine 33 does not affect Wittgenstein's grammatical - empirical distinction since the later distinction does not derive
from the former. Analytic – synthetic distinction in its modern form has its origin in the language experience divide introduced by the positivists according to Quine. This divide is an unfortunate aberration because of the holistic character of the system of language and the attendant conceptual scheme. Quine's main argument is that language cannot simply entertain two disparate groups of truth such as analytic truths dependent on language and synthetic truths dependent on experience. In our holistic framework Quine holds, all truths belong to one system: the analytic truths are core-truths and synthetic ones are peripheral ones. Thus Quine's scepticism regarding analyticity is based on a fair acceptance of holism. Wittgenstein would have welcomed Quine's holistic view of language if it is presented as a foundational concept rather than as a conceptual construct. So he would have welcomed the idea that analytical truths are not removed from the use of language. For him they are the grammatical statements that regulate use of language. Hence, the grammatical - empirical distinction is based purely on grammatical considerations and not on language-experience dichotomy.

5. A Priori and A Posteriori

Wittgenstein claims that the propositions of grammar bring out the objective criteria of language-use and thus lay down conventions as conditions of concept-formation and of constitution of experience (RFM, III, Sect.30). Our grammar may
be said to have immanent conceptual moulds in the form of grammatical propositions which provide conditions for making experience possible.

The grammatical propositions, which include propositions of logic and mathematics, state rules of language. So the grammatical propositions express the necessary conditions of experience. For example, the grammatical propositions like "Every rod has a length" and "Every body has extension" are such as express necessary rules for the use of the concepts like 'rod' and 'body' respectively, and of the language-games in which they occur. These propositions present a grammatical picture which conditions the intelligible context of a language-game. Therefore, we can claim that these propositions are apriori. They are apriori precisely because they cannot be derived from experience. They, in fact, constitute experience. Wittgenstein says,

"But the picture attaching to the grammatical proposition could only shew, say, what is called "the length of a rod". And what should the opposite picture be? (Remark about the negation of an apriori proposition) (PI. Sect.251).

All apriori propositions, as we know, are independent of our empirical experience. These propositions, according to Wittgenstein, lay down necessary conditions for the possibility of experience. They have a different role in language, which is quite different from that of empirical propositions. Empirical propositions express matters of fact whereas the former express
the conditions of the possibilities of these matters of fact. The grammatical propositions determine the ways of our looking at things i.e. our forms of representation. Thus they are the apriori criteria of intelligibility of our language. As Hurbert Schwyzer writes:

"A grammatical proposition is .... an encapsulation of what can count as a move in the language game, a frozen record of what it makes sense to say."

That is to say, grammatical propositions show the conditions of language-game. Language-games are our basic form of our experiencing the world; since they themselves are conditioned by grammatical propositions, our thought and experience of the world must conform to the conditions laid down by grammatical propositions. A world not conforming to the apriori grammatical propositions is unintelligible according to Wittgenstein. Thus, Wittgenstein integrates the notion of apriori into the concept of 'grammatical' and paves the way for founding the epistemic notion of apriori in the wider network of grammatical relations.

The grammatical propositions appear to be metalinguistic in the sense that, as Herbert Schwyzer points out, that they are not themselves language-games nor are they moves in the language-games. They are on a different level altogether. They are (a) universal being the apriori grounds of language-games in general (b) necessary as the indispensable conditions of particular moves in language-games. Thus grammatical propositions share what Kant call the constitutive conditions of all experience.
Experience as well as objects of experience are constituted in the language-games. But it is grammatical propositions which provide the necessary principles of their constitution i.e. their necessary internal features. E.K. Specht has put it in the following way:

"Now, the apriori propositions express those properties of an object which necessarily belong to it on the basis of the linguistic rules for its name: its truth value thus depends on the way in which we have gathered objects together and on the linguistic rules that are consequently fixed."

Thus grammatical propositions constitute the essential features of all that we can experience, i.e., the apriori conditions of all that is possible in the objective world of experience. That is to say, grammar is the domain of all that is essential in the domain of experience. It is the home of the apriori. The aposteriori truths fall outside the domain of grammar.

6. Are Grammatical Propositions are Synthetic Apriori?

Now the question arises whether we can characterize grammatical proposition as synthetic apriori. According to Kant, there are synthetic apriori propositions which are transcendently indispensables for the possibility of experience. Synthetic apriori propositions are the principles which contain the necessary grounds of the possibility of experience. Synthetic apriori propositions are so called as they not only and to our knowledge but also are apriori. Kant writes.
Principles apriori are so named not merely because they contain in themselves the grounds of our judgement, but also because they are not themselves grounded in higher and more universal models of knowledge ... such principles lie at the foundations of all knowledge of objects.  

The synthetic apriori propositions are universal and necessary. They are the general conditions of experience e.g. the principle of causality. Besides, they are necessary conditions experience e.g. 2 + 2 = 4. The principles of both mathematics and physics, according to Kant, are synthetic apriori in nature and are the foundations of our experience/knowledge of the world.

Wittgenstein's grammatical propositions are synthetic apriori in the above sense. Like Kantian synthetic apriori judgements grammatical propositions also provide universal and necessary conditions of experience. Both kinds of propositions are identical in content, though not in form. Synthetic apriori propositions are grammatical in that they tell us how to understand our world. They are the essential conditions of our account of the world. However, Wittgenstein entertains no transcendental justification for the synthetic apriori proposition. For him grammatical propositions only show what the world must be like, whereas Kant's synthetic apriori propositions say that world has a particular structure. Secondly, while Kant was concerned with the investigation of the apriori forms of pure reason, Wittgenstein was concerned only with the grammar of ordinary language. Wittgenstein's grammatical propositions can
be said to provide transcendental grounds of the possibility of experience, even though there is no transcendental deduction of such proposition. Grammar is transcendental in the sense it reveals the essences of language and thought. Wittgenstein derives necessity from grammar rather than from the supposed transcendental structure of the thinking mind. He does not recognize such a mind. He continues to believe that a thinking subject is illusory. In the absence of thinking and judging mind', (TLP. 5.631) there is no room left for a Kantian transcendental deduction of the synthetic apriori propositions. In Wittgenstein's scheme all synthetic apriori propositions are grammatical in that they have locus only in grammar, i.e., the necessary structure of language.

Wittgenstein's Copernican Revolution consists in situating the synthetic apriori propositions in grammar, since the domain of consciousness is abolished as a metaphysical illusion. Grammar takes the place of transcendental domain and the categories are subsumed into the rules of the concept formation. Consciousness is nothing but our linguistic awareness of rule-following. Synthetic apriori propositions and grammatical rules become identical. 44

7. Necessity and Contigency

Wittgenstein addresses himself to the problem of necessity as one of the basic issue in logic and grammar. Necessary truths for Wittgenstein are heterogenous. There are differences among
necessary truths. Tautologies and contradictions are the necessary truths in logic. The propositions of arithmatic which are necessary are different from tautologies. In the Tractatus, mathematical propositions are equations, not tautologies (TLP, 6.2). Thus Wittgenstein is willing to admit a variety of necessary propositions. What he is interested in is the location of necessary propositions. He believed that necessary propositions have a unique status in language. They are what he often called the rules or the laws rather than propositions proper. The necessity-contigency distinction is, for Wittgenstein, something inviolable.

To clarify the distinction between necessary and contingent proposition in an illuminating way we must focus upon the differences in their use (PI, Sect.421). The difference is often obscured. What is necessary is determined by its position in a language-game and not by its appearance. For example, the proposition "This is called 'red'" may not appear as necessaary propositions. But as an extensive definition. It can be called a necessary proposition. A contigent proposition, on the other hand, is a factual statement, that is, a statement that is used to state something that is the case e.g. "This flower is red". Here the statement is a statement of a fact and not of a rule. The fact-rule distinction is underlying the necessity-contigency distinction.

As a result, Wittgenstein's sagregation of grammatical from
empirical propositions diverges from the traditional demarcation of necessary from contingent propositions. First, traditionally necessary propositions are taken as necessarily true or necessarily false. But Wittgenstein rejects the notion of necessary truths by denying that there is a discoverable domain of necessary truths. Logic as well as grammar has no subject-matter (TLP 6.124). The so called necessary truths are rules or laws according to Wittgenstein. Secondly, traditionally the necessary propositions are a priori. That is, they are independent of experience. Wittgenstein rejects the epistemic apriority as a criterion of necessity. Necessary propositions are grammatical and so are constitutive of experience. Hence a priori propositions lose preeminently. If the propositions of grammar could be equated with necessary propositions, Wittgenstein's position could be that the terms 'empirical' and 'contingent' are co-extensive. One might even claim that he assumed that there can be no necessary empirical truths. Such claims are misleading formulations of his ideas. There was a strong tradition prior to Kant that necessary truths might be discovered in experience. This is prominent in Locke's discussion of real essences, and Kant's idea of synthetic a priori judgements. This idea is certainly one for which Wittgenstein had no sympathy, at least in the *Tractatus*, where he claimed that all necessity is logical necessity (TLP. 6.3751).

The distinction between necessary and contingent proposition is drawn by reference to the roles of such propositions in our
language. The idea that there might be necessary empirical propositions is consistent with this requirement.\(^47\) The dichotomy between necessary (grammatical) and contingent (empirical) depends upon what they do in language rather than how they are formulated. They may play related roles in giving descriptions, in forming explanation, and in making conceptual connection. So the dichotomy cannot be an uncompromising one. Both necessary (grammatical) and contingent (empirical) belong to the*^arfJT language game. They have the same locus i.e. language but have diverse roles. Depending upon the role, they are identified as necessary or contingent. In On Certainty, Sect.96,97) Wittgenstein has characterized this dichotomy in more reconcilatory terms. For example, he brings in the river-bed analogy to show that necessary propositions are like the bed of the river wherein the experience flows. So, the experiential propositions are shifting and contingent. But it is not ruled out that what is shifting now may become a hardened rock deposited in the river-bed. An empirical proposition because of its role may appear in a grammatical proposition. The following is what Wittgenstein writes,

But if someone were to say "So logic too is an empirical science" he would be wrong. Yet this is right: The same proposition may get treated at one time as something to test by experience, at another time as a rule of testing (OC, Sect.98).

However, Wittgenstein has identified necessary truths with rules of grammar. Thereby he has maintained the dichotomy even in its subdued form. If there were necessarily empirical
propositions they would have to be like rules of grammar. But such rule-like empirical proposition are inconceivable. If a proposition like "The Earth had existed for million of years" is grammatical (OC, Sect. 84), it is so because it has left its empirical role and has assumed the status of a grammatical rule. Necessity accrues to it as a rule. Necessary truths are in Wittgensteinian view typically rules of grammar or norms of representation. They fix concepts and their internal relations. Necessary propositions i.e. grammatical propositions are no more descriptions, either of the world or of a super-empirical reality. Thus it is essential that Wittgenstein should maintain the grammatical (necessary) and empirical (contingent) distinction.

8. Conventionalism

It may be interpreted that grammatical propositions are only human conventions which act as necessary rules within a particular linguistic context. So, they do not express transcendental necessities. Conventionalism accepts the rules of language as facts of human convention which are the results of arbitrary human usage and practice. Grammatical propositions, thus construed, never lay down any necessary truth about forms of language and thought. But Wittgenstein opposes any such interpretation when he says our grammatical principles are anchored in our very forms of life. He thereby means that the grammatical propositions represent not only the limits of any
possible language but also limits\textsuperscript{51} of our form of our life and thought. So, it can be concluded that grammatical propositions represent the transcendental limits of our thought and experience of the world.

Thus Wittgenstein's theory of grammatical propositions cuts the ground off conventionalism by suggesting that grammatical rules, though conventional appearance are genuine necessary truths. What is necessary about them is their role in language and their rule-status. For example, the mathematical rule $2 + 2 = 4$ is stating a norm rather than describing a supesensible reality. Hence, its necessity in its appearance as a linguistic convention.

Even from a linguistic standpoint, Wittgenstein rejects the naively empiricist/positivist approach to language and experience. He believes that our language represents a systematic framework which we hardly ever be able to discard at our own will. This belongs to the foundation of our thought and experience, i.e., "it forms the basis of action and therefore, naturally, of thought" (PC, Sect.411). Wittgenstein again writes,

So I am trying to say something that sounds like pragmatism. Here I am being thwarted by a kind of Weltanschawing." (OC, Sect.422).

This world-view which is basic to our general experience is something which is implicit in our language. Conventionalism has
to reckon with this basic fact about our language. As Wittgenstein has said repeatedly, what belongs to the basis of all conventions is not itself conventional. It is not conventional that we have rules in our language. It is a necessary truth about language.

9. Grammatical Certainty

Several passages in Wittgenstein's later writings suggest that Wittgenstein views certainty which characterises grammatical propositions as a direct consequence of their use as rules in language. In the Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics Wittgenstein claims that "to accept a proposition as a unshakeably certain - I want to say - means to use it as a rule. This removes uncertainty from it" (RFM, p.81). Wittgenstein is speaking specifically of mathematical propositions in this passage; however, mathematical propositions are a species of grammatical proposition and what is asserted of mathematical propositions can be claimed of grammatical propositions in general. Thus the "unshakeable certainty" of grammatical propositions, i.e., the fact that we "cannot imagine the opposite" (PI, 251) of what these propositions express, is a result of their use as grammatical rules. Thus the certainty of a grammatical proposition is the certainty pertaining to the language-game itself. Wittgenstein writes in the Philosophical Investigations; "The kind of certainty is the kind of language-game" (p.224).
This shows that all certainty is grammatical certainty. Certainty does not depend on objective certainty. It is purely objective certainty pertaining to language alone.

In On Certainty Wittgenstein explores the roots of grammatical certainty. He brings out those propositions which play the role of norms or descriptions of rules of all representations. These propositions have the certainty which can be called grammatical certainty. Necessity and certainty become identical since both are derived from grammar. For example, the propositions "The Earth has existed from millions of years" and "I have two hands" are no more descriptive propositions but are the framework propositions that are presupposed by our so called descriptions. These propositions are the hinges or the bedrock on which our language-games are based (PC, Sect.498) The OC-model of grammatical certainty replaces the epistemic model of certainty.\textsuperscript{52}

10. Logic, Mathematics and Grammar

Mathematical propositions, as earlier said, are given grammatical status by Wittgenstein. According to him, mathematics, like logic, is a technique of demonstrating the conceptual necessities in our language. Both logic and mathematics are found in language. They are grammatical in nature.

Wittgenstein says, that mathematics has no foundations. It
needs no foundations either. He writes,

"What does mathematics need a foundation for? It no more needs one, I believe, than propositions about physical objects -, or about sense impressions, need an analysis. What mathematical propositions do stand in need of is a clarification of their grammar, just as do those other propositions (RFM, V, Sect.13).

The foundation of mathematics are grounded in our language. It is incorrect to say that logic provides the foundation of mathematics. As Wittgenstein says,

"Or : logic as the foundation of all mathematics does not work, and to shew this it is enough that the cogency of logical proof stands or and falls with its geometrical cogency. (RFM. 11, Sect.43).

Wittgenstein claims that there is no metamathematics i.e. there is no mathematics to describe mathematics. Mathematics has no realm of truths of its own which demands justification. Mathematics is a calculas. Wittgenstein writes,

Since mathematics is a calculus and hence is not really about anything, there is not any metamathematics. (PG, Sect.290).

This is a reaffarimation of his early view that mathematics is a method of proof rather than a science containing its own truths. This is clear from the following passage.

I should like to say: mathematics is a MOTLEY of techniques of proof. - And upon this is based its manifold applicability and its importance (RFM, III, Sect.46).

Thus mathematics is a procedure of calculation i.e., a form of
activity which derives its significance from its application in our language. Therefore, Wittgenstein claims that the mathematician is an inventor and not a discoverer (cf. RFM I, 169).

Mathematics is a formal system with its propositions as grammatical rules. The mathematical propositions are of the nature of syntax. They express rules of grammar. For, according to Wittgenstein, "to accept a proposition as unshakeably certain means to use it as a grammatical rule ... (RFM. III, Sect.99). He also writes,

Let us remember that in mathematics we are convinced of grammatical propositions; so the expression, the result, of our being convinced is that we accept a rule (RFM, III, Sect.26).

Thus mathematical propositions stand as paradigms in our language and function as grammatical rules. A mathematical proposition has a two fold character as "law" and "rule" (RFM, III, Sect.21) i.e. it not only works a rule but is also law. It is self-contained and autonomous like any grammatical rule containing its own truth and falsity within itself (PR, Sect, 122). Such a proposition is recognisable in itself, i.e. provide an 'insight' (PR, Sect.174) into itself. It is self-evident.

Wittgenstein agrees with Kant on the fact that mathematical propositions are synthetic apriori. For Kant those propositions are synthetic as well as apriori being based on intuitions which are themselves apriori. For Wittgenstein, mathematical
propositions, being one kind of grammatical propositions, are synthetic apriori because they are based on rules of grammar, which are themselves apriori and necessary. He has always opposed the view that mathematics consists of tautologies or analytic truths. In the *Tractatus* he had characterised mathematical propositions as equations and not as tautologies. Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Remarks* writes,

I said earlier about the nature of arithmetical equations and about an equation's not being replaceable by a tautology explains - I believe - what Kant means when he insists that $7 + 5 = 12$ is not an analytic proposition, but synthetic apriori (PR, Sect. 10).

Wittgenstein answers that the mathematical propositions are necessary because we cannot but accept them i.e. we cannot think without them, if we are to speak and think meaningfully at all. For example, the forms of inferring and calculating which we have are inexorable for human beings. Wittgenstein writes,

--- thinking and inferring (like counting) is of course bounded for us, not by an arbitrary definition, but by natural limits corresponding to the body of what can be called the role of thinking and inferring in our life. (RFM, I, Sect. 116).

Wittgenstein believes that the necessity of the mathematical proposition is founded in us i.e. in our forms of life and not in anything else, because ultimately "it is we that are inexorable in applying these laws" (RFM, I, 118). For us, they draw the limits of our thinking in 'general i.e. they determine what is thinkable at all. The mathematical 'must' in this sense,
demonstrates the necessary limits of our thinking. It is not, however, due to a grammatical decision that we accept mathematical propositions as necessary but because they represent the limits of what we think.\textsuperscript{54}

11. Anti-realism

Now the question arises: is Wittgenstein a realist or anti-realist. So far as the notion of grammatical truth is concerned, the most dominant view espoused by Dummett\textsuperscript{55} and Wright,\textsuperscript{56} is that Wittgenstein is an anti-realist. The central thesis of anti-realism is that no truth whatsoever is verification-independent. Truth is given to the cognizing mind as something constructed. As Wright has made clear, mathematical truths are, for Wittgenstein, creations of the mathematical mind rather than are like super-sensible facts. Mathematics is not a domain of mathematical facts.\textsuperscript{57}

For an anti-realist, there are two central claims to make:

a) Truth is sensitive to the cognizing mind.

b) The meaning of the propositions is given not in the truth-conditional mechanism, but in the way the propositions are used. So meaning is a verifiable component of all propositions.

Whereas thesis (a) has a far reaching semantical consequence namely that, it rejects correspondence theory of truth, (b) rules out the possibility of a semantics based on truth. Both thesis
are against realism.

Our present concern is not whether anti-realism is true or false. The question is whether it is plausible. Its plausibility follows from the fact that the Wittgensteinian rules are the necessary ways in which we can think. In that sense, they are not Platonic realities. They serve as transcendental limits of thought rather than objects of thought. Thus anti-realism gains plausibility vis-a-vis the Platonist interpretation of mathematics and logic.58

12. Conclusion

Wittgenstein recognises grammar as the domain of truths that show themselves. They are truths because they are internal to our ways of thinking and using language. Hence they could not be relegated to the domain of reality. Rather, they manifest themselves in activity, i.e., language-games and forms of life. Grammatical propositions as rules are the ever present limits of our meaningful language use. Hence their dispensability. But that is shown, not said.
1. See Wittgenstein, Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics ed. G.E.M. Anscombe (Blackwell, Oxford, 1956; revised edn. 1978) VII, Sect.21, (To be abbreviated as RMF). He writes, "The limits of empiricism are not assumptions unguaranteed, or intuitively known to be correct; they are ways in which we make comparisons and in which we act" (RMF, VII, Sect.21).


3. The concept of grammatical necessity is a widely used concept in Wittgenstein's later works. According to this doctrine, the distinction between mathematical (logical) necessity and grammatical necessity is dissolved. See PI. II, p.224.


5. The word 'rule' has a wider meaning in Wittgenstein's writings. Rules are not merely those which are stated as directions or commands. They can be merely conventions or practices which are given a unique status in language. See PI Sects. 181-242. and RMF. VII, Sect.47-60.

7. See Debra Aidun, "Wittgenstein on Grammatical Propositions" p.143.
8. Ibid.
10. Aidun, p.146.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
17. Ibid., p.269.
18. Ibid., p.271.
19. For a detailed discussion on the fact-norm distinction, see Backer, *Insight and Illusion*, pp.166-177.
22. Cf. Ibid.
23. Ibid., p.148.
24. P.M.S. Backer is one of those who take grammatical propositions as analytic. See *Insight and Illusion* Chapter VI. See also Newton Garver "Analyticity and Grammar", The
25. See Aidun, pp.148-149.


28. Ibid.


30. See Russell, Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy


34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.


38. Ibid.
39. Schwyzer has very shown the similarity between Rant's and Wittgenstein's approaches to apriori propositions which are not analytic. See Schwyzer. For further discussion See R.C. Pradhan, Language and Experience (Anu Prakashan, Meerut, 1981).


41. Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, p.188.

42. Ibid.


44. See PR. Sect.108.

45. See Backer and Hacker, Wittgenstein; Rules. Grammar and Necessity.

46. Wittgenstein would have endorsed Kripke's distinction between epistemic necessity and metaphysical necessity but would have rejected the independence of epistemic necessity as a viable category. Besides, for Wittgenstein, the so-called metaphysical necessity is ultimately grammatical. See Kripke, "Naming and necessity", in Semantics of Natural Language, eds. Davidson and Barman (O. Reidel, Dordrecht - Holland, 1972).

48. For further discussion on grammar and necessity see Baker and Backer, *Wittgenstein, Rules, Grammar and Necessity*.


51. For further discussion See R.C. Pradhan, *Language and Experience*, Ch.IV.

52. Wittgenstein rejects Moore's analysis of certainty as fallacious for the reason that Moore attempts to provide an epistemological justification for certainty. Wittgenstein's grammatical model of certainty shows that "I know" way of grouping statements is out of place and grammatically fruitless. See OC, Sect.3-10.


54. See Stroud, pp.477-496


57. Ibid.

58. Ibid. See also Baker and Hacker, *Wittgenstein, Rules, Grammar and Necessity*.