CHAPTER III

LANGUAGE AND MEANING: RUSSELL

III.1. Russell's Philosophical Career:

Bertrand Russell has a long philosophical career where a gradual development is found clear in three successive phases. These three phases are related with the publication of his three books, "The Problems of Philosophy", "Our Knowledge of the External World" and "The Analysis of Mind". His philosophical career develops continuously through eliminating the unessential elements and reducing the universe to an ever diminishing number of fundamental constituents.\(^1\)
Russell is a Neo-realist which is evident in his later works. "The Problems of Philosophy" expresses such a philosophy which has little in common with his later developments, but it leaves clue to Neo-realism. Russell here begins by attacking the ordinary Idealist position of Berkeley. Berkeley holds that the only entities that can be known are ideas in the mind and thus all knowledge becomes mental, even the objects of knowledge. In Berkeley's view therefore, for example, knowledge of a tree is a series of impressions or ideas which are imprinted upon our senses by the so-called tree, and the tree does in fact consists of the ideas which are in the mind.

Russell points out that when a person is spoken of as having in mind, the meaning is not that the person is in the mind rather that a thought of the person is in the mind. But the thought is different from the person, and we can, in fact, only think about the person because he is something other than our thought about him. That the act of thought and the object of the act are different is of paramount importance. Berkeley overlooked this distinction and as a result arrived at solipsism. According to Russell, the way to come out of solipsism is to define mind to begin with as that which possesses the characteristic of becoming acquainted with things other than itself. It implies that knowledge of objects consists in a relation between mind and extra-mental entity, which in other way establishes the possibility of the existence of external world. There are two forms of this relationship - 'knowledge by acquaintance' and 'knowledge by description', according to Russell. Knowledge by acquaintance is the direct awareness of objects. There remains no intermediary process of inference or knowledge of truths. In case of physical objects like table, whatever is known by acquaintance is not the table itself but a number of sense data perceived by various senses such as hardness, brownness and so forth. It is knowledge by description, according to Russell, that gives the knowledge of the table and it is not
a direct relation. Russell even holds that strictly speaking, the actual thing is not known to us at all. Yet our knowledge of the sense data and knowledge of the general truth about sense data are thought to justify the existence of the physical object.

‘Knowledge by description’ involves some knowledge of truth and knowledge of truth involves in its turn ‘knowledge by acquaintance’ of certain things essentially different from sense data in nature. These are the things Russell calls universals which are entities. "All a priori knowledge deals exclusively with the relations of universals."2 The universals are entities such as whiteness, justice etc. which are concepts or abstract Ideas. The universals are independent. “This theory is in part derived from Plato, who maintained the eternal and independent being of Forms, such as the Forms of goodness, truth and beauty, which are conceived of in a manner not very different from Mr. Russell’s universals.”3 However, Russell goes ahead of Plato whenever he recognises the existence of universals in case of verbs and prepositions also. Plato admitted universals only in case or substantives such as the universal ‘humanity’ and of adjectives, such as the universal ‘whiteness’. Together with substantive and adjective, Russell includes verbs and prepositions also. Thus, we find in the first stage of Russell’s philosophy that he admits the existence of at least four kinds of entities — the knowing mind, the sense data, the universals and the physical object.

In the second phase of his philosophical career Russell carried out an attempt to solve the problems arising out of his standpoint in ‘The Problems of Philosophy’. In his book ‘Our knowledge of the External World’ the second phase of development of his philosophy has been represented well. Russell’s recognition of physical objects in his early philosophy involved serious difficulty. The same physical
object presents different appearances to different people at the same time or to the same individual at different times. As a result there arises doubt whether an external reality, other than the mind, can exist at all, or even if such a reality exists, it can never be known. The former here leads to idealistic position whereas the later to Kantian. Russell does not stand in favour of any one and tries to come out of the difficulty by eliminating the so-called physical objects. But even after eliminating physical objects, Russell maintains the existence of an external world. The question then arises, if there is no physical object, of what the external world is composed. Russell answers that it is composed of sensedata which are not physical objects but entities, such as raps of sound and patches of colour. The sense data are sensible objects distinguished from sensation.  

The basic difference between Russell’s position in ‘The Problems of Philosophy’ and that outlined here is that whereas in the former he was prepared to assume the existence of the table, in the later he did not admit the existence of any class of entities other than the sense data. The sense data are perceived in sensation which is mental. They are the objects of sensation for which Russell calls them sensible objects. The physical objects are, according to Russell, logical constructions from the different appearances that set of sensedata present to us. The different appearances are, in fact, different aspects of the world and aspects exist from all possible points of view. It follows from this that each aspect of the universe is independent of mind and therefore, an external reality is established, Thus in the second phase of his philosophical development Russell retains the external world, but eliminates the common sense physical object.
The third phase of Russell’s philosophy is expressed in “The Analysis of Mind”. The thoughts expressed in this book have much in common with what is called Neo-Realism. Russell seeks to reconcile the science of mind or psychology and the science of matter or physics by establishing the existence of a common subject-matter for both the sciences. The scientists and philosophers tried to resolve this apparent duality of mind and matter into one fundamental unity. The traditional attitude towards this problem was such that the scientists had endeavoured to eliminate mind whereas the philosophers attempted to eliminate matter. But the recent developments have affected such attitudes. Matter, under the influence of modern physics, has been growing less material while mind under the influence of modern psychology has become progressively less mental. But it does not mean that one can be merged with the other. Rather both may be considered, as Russell did, as deriving from a more fundamental stuff of which the universe is composed. Russell gives the name ‘neutral particulars’ or ‘neutral entity’ to this stuff, the word neutral being intended to convey the fundamental character of the particulars, and that they are in themselves neither mental nor material. By the introduction of neutral entity Russell occupies the position that sensations and sense data, instead of being separate and distinct, are really identical entities. Russell holds, “sensations are what is common to the mental and the physical worlds; they may be defined as the point of intersection of mind and matter.” Here in this third phase he shifts from his earlier position as found in Our Knowledge of the External World. Thus Russell’s philosophical carrier develops starting from physical objects to the neutral entities through the distinction between sensation and sense data.
III.2. Logical Atomism:

The philosophy of Bertrand Russell may be described in his own words as, "The philosophy which I advocate is generally regarded as a species of realism, and accused of inconsistency because of the elements in it which seem contrary to that doctrine. For my part, I do not regard the issue between realists and their opponents as a fundamental one; I could alter my view on this issue without changing my mind as to any of the doctrines upon which I wish to lay stress. I hold that logic is what is fundamental in philosophy, and that schools should be characterized rather by their logic than by their metaphysics. My own logic is atomic and it is this aspect upon which I should wish to lay stress. Therefore, I prefer to describe my philosophy as 'logical atomism', rather than as realism, whether with or without some prefixed adjective".6

In the above statement the philosophical attitude of Russell and the central point of his own philosophy have been clearly expressed. Russell’s philosophy of logical atomism has been expressed in a series of lectures delivered in London (Gordon Square) in the year 1918. He develops the philosophy of logical atomism with an attitude of giving sound logical basis to metaphysics. He admits that the nature of reality can be described with the help of language. It is the analysis of language by which reality can be arrived at. He thinks that ordinary language cannot fulfill this purpose and therefore, develops an ideal system of language. This ideal language is truth-functional language. The structure of reality can be understood from the structure of such ideal language.
According to Russell, the simplest unit of logical thinking is the simple proposition. The truth-functional language is analyzable in to simple propositions. The simple propositions are called ‘atomic propositions’ by Russell, which represent simple fact in nature. The fact is “the sort of thing that is expressed by a whole sentence not by a single name like Socrates”. Russell does not attempt to give exact definition of fact, rather gives explanation of what a fact is. He says, “when I speak of a fact ...... I mean the kind of thing that makes a proposition true or false”. The facts are responsible for a sentence being true or false and they belong to the objective world.

According to Russell, fact is the sort of thing which is the case when the statement is true and is not the case when the statement is false. It is necessary to take account of facts in order to give a complete account of the world. Russell maintains that in metaphysics the analysis should be started from the analysis of the fact, for facts are the ultimate constituents of the world. Regarding fact and its component he holds. “The things in the world have various properties, and stand in various relations to each other. That they have these properties and relations are facts, and the things and their qualities or relations are quite clearly in some sense or other components of the facts that have those qualities and relations”.

The nature of a simple fact can be understood by analyzing simple propositions. The simplest imaginable facts are those which consist in possession of a quality by some particular things, just as the fact, “This is white.” In this proposition the word ‘this’ stands for a particular and ‘white’ is the quality. “There you have a whole infinite hierarchy of facts – facts in which you have a thing and a quality, two things and a relation, three things and a relation, four things and a relation, and so an.
That whole hierarchy constitutes what I call atomic facts and they are the simplest sort of fact". The propositions which express atomic fact are atomic propositions. The atomic facts contain the terms of the relation besides the relation itself.

Russell, through the analysis of language arrived at the simplest sort of thing called ‘atomic fact’ as reflected by an atomic proposition that consists solely of a proper name and a simple predicate. In the proposition ‘This is white’, ‘this’ is the proper name and ‘white’ is the simple predicate. Whatever is not further analyzable is the simple or atomic. The atoms here are logical atoms, not physical for which Russell himself says his philosophy logical atomism. “The reason that I call my doctrine logical atomism is because the atoms that I wish to arrive at as the last sort of residue in analysis are logical atoms and not physical atoms. Some of them will be what I call ‘particulars’ – such things as little patches of colour or sounds, momentary things – and some of them will be predicates or relations and so on. The point is that the atom I wish to arrive at is the atom of logical analysis, not the atom of physical analysis”.

III.3. Challenge against Atomism:

Logical atomism, the theory of an ideal language stands on some ontological background. The ideal language consists only of names as the symbols and reference constitutes its meaning. Atomism has been challenged by questioning and abandoning the ontological presuppositions. Wittgenstein in his ‘Philosophical Investigations’ takes such a stand to reject atomism. The primary object language is the ideal form of language according to Russell. In this language words stand for the simple objects. But Wittgenstein holds that there are no ultimate simples; as ‘simple’ and ‘complex’ are relative terms. Hence the view that there are ultimate simples,
which can be named, is itself an unwarranted assumption. Taking simple in the sense of non-composite Wittgenstein raises question about simple constituent parts of the reality composed and also about the sense in which a thing is taken as composite “.....We use the word ‘composite’ (and therefore the word ‘simple’) in an enormous number of different and differently related ways.”\textsuperscript{12}

Russell was aware of this problem. He explains that on the basis of minimum vocabulary the nature of simples is to be considered. The simples are the logical atoms which he arrives at as the last residue in analysis. By the method of analysis he seeks to arrive at the undeniable data. The undeniable data are arrived at by following the principle of minimum vocabulary. In this principle the question arises regarding the smallest number of words in terms of which all other words can be defined. In this connection Russell admits, “In general there is not a unique answer to this question.”\textsuperscript{13} He thinks that granting the possibility of different answers to this question, we may try to find out a common element among different answers. The different possible answers will as a rule, contain some words common to them all. These words represent hard core of experience by which our sentences are attached to the non-linguistic world.

Russell, throughout his philosophy holds a belief in some epistemological principles and these principles led him to accept his particular theory of simples. He holds; “I have maintained a principle, which still seems to me completely valid, to the effect that, if we can understand what a sentence means, it must be composed entirely of words denoting things with which we are acquainted or definable in terms of such words.”\textsuperscript{14} This appears to be the addendum that helps him to detect the ‘simples’. He explains that the word ‘red’ is taken as a simple symbol
which means that it is not definable in terms of other words. The meaning of the word ‘red’ is the object denoted by it. Here it may be said that ‘red’ can be defined as “the colour with the greatest wave length”. Therefore, someone may point out that there is at least one possible point of view from which ‘red’ may be considered as a complex symbol. Russell rules out this possibility by holding that the sense in which he uses the term simple excludes all such possibility. The actual meaning of a simple symbol can only be understood through acquaintance with the object denoted by it, according to Russell. He clearly points out, “If you define red as the colour with the greatest wave length, you are not giving the actual meaning of the word at all; you are simply giving a true description, which is quite a different thing.”

Apart from the explanation of Russell some further objections may be raised challenging the very idea of analysis by which we are to arrive at the simples. Wittgenstein in his ‘Philosophical Investigation’ raised objection against the idea of analysis by holding that to analyze is to distort reality. Russell was aware of this difficulty. In his earlier work Russell held, “One is often told that the process of analysis is falsification………..I do not think that it is a right view.” In the next phase Russell has changed his view and thinks that analysis is not necessary for arriving at truth. In fact ‘the whole question whether there are simples to be reached by analysis is unnecessary.’ The ultimate simples which are undeniable data are not such that can be taken as obvious facts of normal experience. They are the data obtained by logical analysis. There are also some other considerations, which make the method of analysis worth pursuing. But Russell hesitates to add this point perhaps due to his epistemological consideration, which is under the influence of Human epistemology in which he holds that knowledge starts with sensation. For him the
knowledge of simple data of acquaintance is different from the knowledge of the complex, which is not found in acquaintance. We therefore, think that the method of analysis is necessary. This method reveals certain truths. These epistemological beliefs are not indubitable, rather highly controversial. Following the method of analysis and under some epistemological principles Russell seeks to arrive at the precise from the vague facts of experience. These precise truths, according to Russell, are sufficient enough to supply the requisite data for the system of logic or philosophy. But in fact they can not act as the data for the epistemology with which Russell started. They require some further premises to yield the epistemological principles. In this position Russell would react in the version “when you are talking of the premise for theory knowledge, you are not talking of anything objective, but of something that will vary from man to man, because the premises of one man’s theory of knowledge will not be the same as those of another man’s.” This statement implies that Russell admits the possibility of other alternative epistemological presuppositions and if these presuppositions are entirely subjective, the resulting system can not claim universal acceptance. Therefore, it becomes clear we can not get a conclusion from the objections raised against Russell’s original epistemological presuppositions.

III.4. Epistemological Status:

Bertrand Russell is a British neo-realist whose philosophy flourished in the early 20th century. The influence of G.E. Moore and Meinong is clearly found in the philosophy of Russell. He is famous for “Principia Mathematica” which is a joint work with A.N. Whitehead. In this work they attempted to establish the logical foundation of mathematics. The philosophy of Russell has undergone many changes
during his long career; but in spite of the changes he tries to remain within realism. Realism, throughout the history of philosophy exposes itself as a reaction against idealism. It is not found as a dominant independent tradition. The main point of realism is that there exists a reality independent of and external to consciousness. This realistic thesis is put forward as a reaction against idealism according to which reality is always mind dependent or mental.

Realism developed in 20th century is constructive of which feature is not found in traditional or modern realism. At the same time it is more vigorous and original type of realism. The development in logic and mathematics provides sufficient ground for the consistency of realism in 20th century. Bertrand Russell develops logical realism in which reality is treated as a logical entity. This logical entity is fact or atomic fact for which Russell’s realism is also known as logical atomism or logical realism.

It has already been stated that Russell has been influenced by G.E. Moore and Meinong. Moore’s theory of sense data and physical object influenced Russell towards realism. Logical realism of Meinong’s theory of objects influences Russell on the way of logical analysis. During the whole philosophical career Russell’s position undergoes various changes. From “The Problems of Philosophy” to “Human Knowledge” many changes are found, but inspite of those changes he maintains realism in any sort.

Russell advocates epistemological realism in the “Problems of Philosophy.” He accepted physical realism in spite of admitting that physical object cannot be proved to be existent behind sensedata. In “The Problems of Philosophy” he
goes to universals beyond physical objects. In this march from physical towards universals, physical and logical realism have been combined. The universals are real having subsistent logical status. According to Russell the mind has direct acquaintance with the universals. This forms the basis of the rational knowledge of a priori truths. "All a priori knowledge deals exclusively with the relation of universals." 19

This epistemological realism has been modified by Russell himself in his later work "Our Knowledge of the External World". Here he expresses that perceptual knowledge has three factors – consciousness, sense data, and the perceptual object known through sense data. Sensedata are those, which are given to the senses. They are not the physical objects like a ‘table’. The colour, size etc. by which we can know the table are sense data of the table. He therefore, holds that physical objects can not be regarded as existing independently; whatever can be said is that sense data are there which in fact construct the perceived object. Perceived objects are therefore, nothing but logical construction based on different sense data. All the aspects of a thing are real, whereas the thing is a mere logical construction. In favour of this construction Russell says, "there are no grounds against the truth of this belief, but we have not derived any positive grounds in its favour." 20

The sense data or sensible objects, which are also referred to as sensations, are according to Russell, real aspects constituting both mental and physical objects. This particular epistemological position has been developed by Russell in "The Analysis of Mind." The sense data or sensations are neither physical nor mental but neutral entities. He holds "Sensations are what is common to the mental and physical worlds; they may be defined as the point of intersection of mind
and matter". Here Russell advocates neutral monism. Mind and matter are two different groupings of sense data only. Whatever now appears as mind will continue to exist, even if not perceived, as perspective of a physical object. This epistemological position associated with neutral monism is completely realistic.

In his long philosophical career, Russell changes his position several times. In his later writings, he shifts to representational realism. In his “An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth” he almost returns to his earlier epistemological position. In his book “Human Knowledge” he represents the problem about how and to what extent perception can be treated as a source of knowledge. According to him, the probable causal inference together with the laws of physics makes it possible. Due to the probable casual relation it is possible to proceed from the percept as effect to the physical object as cause. The problem of the relation between perceptual experience and physical object remains the matter of concern for Russell. The important fact is that in spite of radical shifts in his philosophical development Russell maintains fundamental physical realism at all times.

III.5. Theory of Meaning:

Language plays the vital role in communication and communicating is about the world. For communication it is not enough that words have meaning; it also has to be admitted that some of the words can refer to things around us and some others can be used to describe what there is. If language refers to none but the other expression, it would not be able to serve the purpose of communication about the world. Therefore, to understand language it is just as necessary to understand reference and predication as it is to understand meaning. It may be argued that
reference and predication are the basic tasks to which language is put. In the simplest type of sentence that we generally use, we first refer to something and then predicate or describe what has been referred to. For example, “Dr. Sarma is guiding,” “Guides are wise”. In such sentences we first refer and then predicate.

The linguists, the logicians and the philosophers are interested in the problem of reference from various points of view. The linguist has to study any pervasive feature of language for which they study the problem of reference. The logicians study it basically due to the numerous ‘paradoxes of reference’. Also he is interested in the pervasive feature of natural language if his artificial ones are to be of relevance. The philosophers are interested in reference for other reason. In referring, the words are directly related to the worlds and any thesis about reference also becomes a thesis about what exists there to refer to. The doctrine of reference becomes the foundation of philosophical schools like ‘Logical atomism’ which was propounded by Bertrand Russell.

The referential theory of meaning owes its origin to J.S. Mill. Mill says that all or most of words are names for which this theory is also known as the naming theory. He regards simple and complex expressions as names. But by name he does not understand proper names alone. According to J. S. Mill, if an expression is to be a name it is necessary to be capable of being used either as the subjects or as the predicate of a subject- predicate form of sentence. They are called names as they denote some actual existent entity in the world. According to this referential theory, there is one to one correspondence between language and reality. As the bearers of names constitute the only meaning of names, so the meaning of every linguistic symbol is the object denoted by it.
The metaphysics of logical atomism propounded by Russell and early Wittgenstein is the origin of this type of referential theory. The doctrine of logical atomism aims at a passage from vague to the precise by providing a method of analysis. These precise things, to which we are to arrive, may serve as undeniable data for further construction of a system. These data are the logical ‘simples’ as Russell believes that everything complex is composed of simples. Here the question arises regarding the relevance of the doctrine of ‘simples’ in discussions about language. Russell answers that in our language the meaning of complex symbols can ultimately be understood by analysing them in to simple symbols and these simple symbols stand for the ultimately simples. Russell says, “I have maintained as a principle which still seems to me completely valid, to the effect that, if we can understand what a sentence mean it must be composed entirely of words denoting things with which we are acquainted, or definable in terms of such words.”

Simple symbols suffice to the principle of minimum vocabulary. When the principle of Occam’s Razor is applied in the sphere of language, we find the principle of minimum vocabulary. This principle holds that the meaning of every complex symbol is to be understood by analyzing it in terms of simple symbols, the meaning of which is constituted by the objects designated by them. It is not possible to arrive at the simples on purely logical consideration. Russell thinks it as “perfectly possible to suppose that complex things are capable of analysis add infinitum, and that you never reach the simple”.

But besides logical Russell had some empirical considerations. These are his epistemological beliefs which lead him ultimately to arrive at some simples as “objects which it is impossible to symbolize otherwise than by simple symbols”.

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Consequently he holds that "analysis is possible with regard to what is complex. It always depends in the last analysis, upon direct acquaintance with the objects which are meanings of certain symbols".\textsuperscript{25} In fact, the ultimate stage of any empirical analysis consists of some acquaintance data as products of analysis. The point is such that the meaning of complex symbols on ultimate analysis depends on the meaning of simple symbols. These simple symbols are the names of certain objects of acquaintance for which this theory is known as the naming theory of meaning. The meaning of a symbol is constituted on ultimate analysis by its reference, which is a simple datum of acquaintance.

According to Russell, "simples are of infinite number of sorts".\textsuperscript{26} Russell distinguishes between names and predicates. Names and predicates are two different sorts of simple symbols. Both of them directly designate their corresponding objects, which in both cases are objects of acquaintance. In his earlier work Russell holds that understanding a predicate is quite different from understanding a name. Understanding predicate takes the form of a subject-predicate proposition, while understanding a name requires no such reference to proposition. But in his later thought Russell modifies his doctrine to a certain extent. He proposes to "abolish what are usually called particulars and be content with certain words such as 'red', 'blue' and so on".\textsuperscript{27} In this work he has identified the particulars with the bundle of properties, which are presented as one complex gestalt, presented at one particular moment of experience, and proper names are conceived of as symbols denoting such particulars. By denying a basic distinction between particular and properties, he withholds the subject-predicate form of analysis of simple atomic proposition as constituent of the primary form of language which he calls 'object language'. This view requires some syntactical rearrangement and Russell elaborates the precise
nature of this rearrangement. According to this arrangement, instead of saying 'This is red', we shall have to say, 'Redness is co-present with centrality'. This view leads Russell to say that on ultimate analysis language in its primary form can not be viewed to have any structure. Because he holds that object language has no well - formulated structure or syntax. But in “the object language upon which all others are based, every single word is an assertion”. There is only act of showing objects and consequently, it consists of names alone.

Thus, Russell’s philosophy of language takes the form of a purely referential theory of meaning in its extreme form. Language, on ultimate analysis, consists only of names denoting particulars, which are the objects of acquaintance alone. Linguistic symbols are of only one single variety, which are names of particulars and language in its essential nature need not have a structure. Such language has been suitably described by Alice Ambrose as, “Such a language…………… to use it would merely be to label what is known without the label. And the label would not serve for future reference, since that evanescent particulars can be named but once”.

Wittgenstein in his early stage also believes in a process of analysis as necessary for determining the meaning of complex symbols “The requirement that simple signs be Possible is the requirement that sense be determinate”. Regarding the nature of these simples Wittgenstein agrees with Russell. The ‘individual’ of Russell and the objects of Wittgenstein as found in the Tractatus were the primary elements. There are differences as regards the details of their theories of course. The view that the meaning of complex symbols is determined by analyzing them in to simple symbols, along with the view that the objects denoted by these simple symbols
constitute their meaning is accepted as the naming theory of meaning. As regards the complex symbols early Wittgenstein holds a view, which is in keeping with Russell’s theory of description. In brief, this is the view that the meaning of a complex symbol is the function of the meaning of simple symbols. For Wittgenstein complex symbols are necessary to describe the world. The complex symbols can described the world by their very structure. This structure of the complex symbols is again determined by rules of logic as presented in Principia Mathematica. So the demand is that language must have a definite structure, which is described as the logical structure, and this structure is to be determined by the rules of logic.

III.6. Some Problems With Reference:

The referential or naming theory of meaning involves some difficulties. The first is that language can not consist of names alone. Language has some structure, and names alone can not represent the structure. Ryle has raised this point strongly. As he states, "...........the words combined in to a sentence at least do something jointly which is different from their severally naming the several things that they name if they do name any thing. What a sentence means is not decomposable in to the set of things, which the words in it stand for, if they do stand for things. So the notion of having meaning is at least partly different from the notion standing for". In order to describe an event or a fact we require words denoting property or relation besides the words that are names.

This difficulty is of course not an insuperable one. This theory does not necessarily derecognise the existence of structure in language. Max Black criticized by saying that Russell is thinking of the ideal language as consisting only of names. In
reply to this criticism Russell says, “Even since my chapter, forty years ago, on proper names, adjectives and verbs, I have emphasized the impossibility of a language consisting only of proper names. Mr. Black must suppose me to hold that we can not be acquainted with relations – a view which I have repeatedly repudiated with all possible emphasis”. Russell considers both names and relation words as simple symbols. But he distinguishes between the two. We can name the objects but our apprehension of properties is of a different sort than the apprehension of names. Properties cannot be apprehended except as predicates. So it cannot be said that we name objects as well as we name properties and relations. By recognizing two different sorts of simple symbols, the awareness of which are of two fundamentally different varieties, Russell has been able to account for the existence of a structure in language.

Against this reply it might be argued that Russell’s conceiving of relation words as simple symbols, but of a totally different type from the names, is inconsistent with his other views. Russell thinks that we are not acquainted with simple facts, but with simple data of acquaintance only. But if the meaning of a relation word can not be apprehended except in a predicative way, and the awareness of them is to be regarded as a type of knowledge by acquaintance; then Russell should have admitted the acquaintance with simple fact. In that case the single relation word would suffice to express a simple fact. And there is no reason in that case, why we should not call this a name of a fact.

Moreover, Russell himself says that object language has no well-formed structure. In such object language every word might be considered as a name of a ‘Particular’, which is a fact, not a ‘thing’. The naming theory of meaning is
especially concerned with the objects language. Object language is the most primitive and elementary form of language. For object language structure is not an essential requirement. It might, therefore, be said that the difficulty stated above is not an insuperable one. It can be overcome by excluding relation words as names of facts and recognizing simple facts as particulars.

Another difficulty of referential theory arises concerning the identity statements. In object language the only meaning of simple symbols is the objects denoted by them. Therefore, it is not possible to assert an identity statement like "The morning star is Venus". Because this statement is not trivially true. Frege admits two different sorts of import for an expression viz., sense and reference. He says that these expressions have different types of meaning. The real information that the statement gives us is that these expressions stand for the same individual.

To this difficulty the simple reply is that a true identity statement can never be informative. The example cited above does not merely express an identity. It says much more than this as it contains not only the names but also some complex symbols. "The morning star" is a complex expression and it does not denote a simple like a name. Consequently, the meaning of this expression is to be understood by analyzing it in terms of simple symbols. Russell suggests the procedure of analysis in the following way: There is at least one x such that, that x is a morning star, and there is at most one X such that X is a morning star. Understanding the phrase in this way we precede to say that X is identical with Venus. Here the entire sentence does not express an identity but only the latter portion does. Hence for the purpose of the argument this example is not sufficient. Russell states, "The ordinary use of words is as a means of getting through to things, and when you are using words in that way,
the statement 'Scott is Sir Walter' is a pure tautology, exactly on the same level as 'Scott is Scott'. In object language words are all names and are used in ordinary way. Any identity statement in object language must be either a tautology or a falsehood.

It may also be raised against this theory that, if names are the only constituents of objects language and if the only meaning of names is the objects denoted by them, then how can we understand the meaning of the statements like 'Pegasus does not exists'? If Pegasus is a name it must denote some external objects without which it becomes meaningless. So, if Pegasus does not exist the name can not have any meaning, and consequently we can not meaningfully utter the statement.

Russell tried to solve this problem with the help of his theory of description. For him what appears as the grammatical subject of this type of sentences is not a name but a description. This description is a complex symbol and does not have meaning of its own. Therefore, it need not denote an individual. "............... a name can not occur significantly in a proposition unless there is something that it names, whereas a description is not subject to this limitation." A complex symbol can always be analyzed in terms of simple symbols. The subject term in the above statement is analyzable in to its constituent simple symbols, none of which comes as the subject of such sentence. As object language consists of names or simple symbols alone, Russell would not accept such assertion in which the subject term is a complex symbol as consisting part of object language. For him existence cannot be predicated of an individual. Existence is never an actual predicate. It can be attached as a quantifier to some propositional function only. The individuals are not such things that can be said by naming; they can be expressed only by description.
Russell also has to face the problems concerning the meaning of expression in oblique context. The notion of "oblique context" is especially used by Frege. For him direct context is that where the substitute terms have the same reference. The original and the substitute terms refer to the same by one another, which is the criterion of direct context. A word or an expression in ordinary context can be replaced by another having the same reference or truth-value. This substitution does not alter the truth value of the original statement. Quine takes it as a consequence of the principle of identity of indiscernible and puts the matter more clearly. "One of the fundamental principles governing identity is that of substitutivity or, as it might well be called, that of indiscernibility of identical. It provides that, given a true statement of identity, one of its two terms may be substituted for the other in any true statement and the result will be true." 

Quine discussed in details the different possible context in which the occurrence of an expression can be 'referentially opaque'. Modal, psychological, epistemological and various other sorts of contexts are the examples of oblique contexts. In such oblique contexts, substitutions of words by their equivalents change the truth value of the original sentence. As for example in the statement 'the morning star is Venus', the expression 'the morning star' can be replaced by its equivalent expression 'the evening star' and this substitution does not alter the truth value of the proposition. But in such a proposition as 'he believes that morning star is Venus' we can not replace the expression 'the morning star' by 'the evening star'. For the believer may not be aware of the fact that both are really the same identical being. In such circumstances the substitution will result in a falsehood. This problem has been discussed in details by Frege and as a solution he points out that in oblique contexts, when words and expressions are used as parts of a subordinate clause, they do not
have their customary reference. In such context they have as their reference what in ordinary context stand as their customary sense. But if names have reference alone as their only meaning, they cannot possibly have any other meaning even when they occur in oblique contexts. Hence it is difficult to explain the fact that oblique context is referentially opaque. Purely referential theory of meaning does not hold for all sorts of language. It is relevant for simple form of object language alone. Object language contains primary statements alone, as it is the lowest stage in the hierarchy of languages. It contains statements about facts only not any statement about statement. Therefore, as the sentences that occur in oblique context are of more complicated form they obviously are not constituents of object language. And hence this problem is not strictly relevant for this theory. Yet it is a problem for the advocates of naming theory of meaning. Because their commitment to logical atomism led them to accept the principle of extensionality which holds that all molecular propositions are truth functional. Thus the problem becomes unavoidable as this goes against the basic ontological presupposition of the theory.

The fact that oblique contexts are referentially opaque leads Russell to reject the principle of extensionality in its general form. But Russell again reconsiders the problem and thinks that something might be said in support of the principle. Here Russell refers to the view of N. Dalkey according to which ‘that B is hot’ is an expression in which B occurs only as a part of a subordinate clause and does not really refer to B, but describes A’s state. So Russell thinks that in psychological or some other type of oblique contexts it might be possible to substitute the expression ‘that B is hot’ by another, which can directly designate A’s state. He states, “similarly I might (in theory) substitute for ‘that B is hot’, words descriptive of the state of mind and body existing in those who are engaged in believing that B is hot.” The view
gives an explanation why it is the case for the fact that words sometimes do not have their customary reference. This also gives a solution for the problem how the principle of extensionality can be maintained in oblique contexts also. It is not the same word that has different meanings in different contexts. It is totally a different linguistic expression which occurring in oblique context, has a different meaning. Thus the difficulties discussed above are not fatal to the theory. There are other objections against the theory of logical atomism that may be considered and evaluated.

III.7. Russell on Sense-Reference Distinction:

Russell and Wittgenstein criticized and rejected Frege’s doctrine of ‘sense – reference – distinction.’ According to Frege sense is the mode of presentation of an object and reference is the object expressed in statement. An expression designates these two things – the object which is called the ‘reference’ and the mode of presentation of the object which is called the ‘sense’. The same object can be presented before the mind in various different ways and this way of presentation constitutes sense of an expression. Frege thus recognizes two different sorts of linguistic imports – sense and reference. According to him, a proper name has these two sorts of import. A proper name stands for a definite object and is associated with a ‘sense’ which represents the mode of presentation of that object. As Frege holds, ‘a proper name (word, sing. Signcombination, expression) expresses its sense and designates its reference.’ In case of a person’s name the sense depends on how the referent is presented. For Frege such presentation may happen in different ways and every such way correspond to a particular sense of a sentence containing a proper name. Frege does not stop at this stage of maintaining sense-reference distinction in case of simple symbols or proper name; rather he goes ahead in treating a complex
symbol or sentence in view of the said distinction. He takes the truth-value of a sentence as its reference when he says, "we are............driven in to accepting the truth-value of a sentence as constituting its reference."^39^ The thought expressed by a sentence is conceived to constitute its 'sense'. This sense of an expression is distinct from the objects in the physical world and also from the mental image in the psychological realm. The reference of a proper name is the object itself. We designate this reference by its means, the idea which is wholly subjective. The sense lies in between the object and the idea. For the sense is not subjective like the idea nor the object itself. The doctrine of 'sense' leads Frege to hold that it is by virtue of this sense that an expression is related to its reference.

Bertrand Russell rejected Frege's doctrine of the distinction between sense and reference. The fundamental distinction between Frege and Russell rests on the problem of identity statement. According to Frege an identity statement can be informative but Russell does not admit that an identity statement can ever be informative. Russell's main objection against the sense-reference distinction of Frege is that it would give rise to some ambiguities as it holds that the same expression is to be associated with things belonging to two extremely opposite realm of existence; one belongs to the world of thought, and the other to the physical world. Therefore, according to Russell, the relation between sense and reference becomes wholly unintelligible. Russell holds, "the relation of the meaning to the denotation involves certain rather curious difficulties, which seem in themselves sufficient to prove that the theory which leads to such difficulties must be wrong."\(^{40}\)

Russell, from the theory of Frege attempts to draw reductio-ad-absurdum which takes the form of a dilemma. The dilemma is – either the relation
between sense and reference is a logical relation; or it is not a logical relation. The relation is logical when the sense of a referring expression refers to its referent. The relation of meaning and denotation is not merely linguistic through the phrase. There must be a logical relation involved, which is expressed by saying that the meaning denotes the denotation. In case the relation is logical, it is not possible to refer to the sense of a referring expression, Russell thinks that if the logical relation between sense and reference is to be maintained, the distinction between them disappears. If the relation is not logical the relation between the sense and reference of a referring expression becomes wholly mysterious, and the theory of S R D has no explanatory value. Thus if the theory seeks to be explanatory, it breaks down; and if not, it is no theory at all.

The entire argument of Russell is based on two assumption: (a) the sense of a referring expression refers to referent and, (b) when we wish to refer to the sense of a referring expression we do so by enclosing the expression in inverted commas. "When we wish to speak of the meaning of a denoting phrase, as opposed to its denotation the natural mode of doing so is by inverted commas." Thus when we wish to refer to the sense of the expression C we can do so by enclosing it by inverted commas, and thus, as Frege himself has admitted, 'C' is to be used for referring to the sense of the expression C. Russell seeks to understand the relation between the expressions C and 'C'. For Russell, if these two are regarded as two different expressions, then this does not explain the relation between sense and reference. On the other hand if it is maintained that these two are not distinct but one and the same expression then either the distinction between sense and reference cannot be maintained, or the relation between them becomes wholly mysterious.
If C and ‘C’ are considered to be not really two, but one and the same expression, then it would be indifferent whether we use C or ‘C’. But when C is used without quotes, it can not possibly refer to the sense of this expression. Russell cites an example. Let us take the expression ‘the first line of Gray’s Elegy’ as standing for the expression C to the sense of which we want to refer. We might try to do so by using this expression itself. Thus we would refer to its sense by saying ‘the sense of the first line of Gray’s Elegy.’ It is to be noted that this does not refer to the sense of the expression “The first line of Gray’s Elegy” as standing for the expression C to the sense of which we want to refer. We might try to do so by using this expression itself. Thus we would refer to its sense by saying ‘the sense of the first line of Gray’s Elegy.’ It is to be noted that this does not refer to the sense of the expression “The first line of Gray’s Elegy.” Rather it refers to the sense of the denotation of this expression i.e. the sense of first line of the poem, “The Curfew tolls the knell of parting day.” Thus it is seen that by using the expression we cannot possibly refer to its sense; but only to the sense of its denotation. In order to refer to the sense of the expression some other technique has to be followed. This technique for Frege is to put the expression within quotes. According to Russell the expression within quotes is to be regarded as a different expression than the original. If this difference is not admitted it would remain a mystery why an expression without quotes fail to refer to the sense of itself, while it succeeds within quotes. Admission of this difference solves the mystery; but in that case the relation between the sense and reference of one and the same expression cannot be maintained. It cannot be shown that the ‘sense’ belongs to the same expression to which the reference is associated. The sense ceases to remain as sense, but it becomes, as Frege himself admits, the customary reference of another expression, viz, the original expression within quotes.
Russell and early Wittgenstein hold that expression can have only one sort of import, viz., ‘reference’. ‘Thought’ and ‘physical objects’ belong to two different realms. If the same expression is attached to both of them, it would give rise to confusions and ambiguity. Russell, therefore, suggests that as the ordinary custom is to use the expression within quotes to refer to the sense expressed by the original expression, it is better to admit that this use of quotation mark makes the expression altogether different. The so-called meaning of sense of the original expression is better to be considered as the reference of the new expression. Wittgenstein accepts this opinion of Russell. Hence Russell concludes that it is unwarranted to think that a single expression is attached to two different imports—sense and reference belonging to two different realms of being.

Against this criticism of Russell it might be objected that in ordinary usage linguistic expressions are associated with both meaning and reference. An expression is used to refer to a real object, and also for expressing a definite sense. Russell himself admits that in ordinary usage, the same expression is used to stand for two different sorts of objects, one belonging to the physical world and the other to the psychological realm. But he takes this as an inadequacy of ordinary usage; because it would give rise to severe confusions and ambiguities. Ordinarily, when we use an expression we intend to speak about the real physical objects, which it denotes. If it happens that by using the same expression we can as well speak about an entity of an altogether different sort, that would give rise to ambiguities, and consequently it would be impossible to judge the truth and falsity of an assertion containing such ambiguous expressions. Hence Russell suggests that we need “A new vocabulary if we are to describe these occurrences otherwise than by reference to objects.”
All difficulties of S R D doctrine as stated above led Russell to reject the sense – reference distinction and to uphold a purely referential theory concerning the meaning of linguistic expressions. Russell’s criticisms are not universally accepted; specially the subsequent philosophers trying for a return to S R D do not agree with Russell. But it must be noted that Russell’s objections have sufficient strength and can not be easily overlooked. Even if we admit that Russell’s objections are not sufficiently conclusive to refute the distinction; still the S R D account of Frege involves some further inexplicabilities. If it is granted that S R D offers satisfactory account of the fact how an expression is to be related with its reference; then also it fails to explain the relation between an expression and its sense. Frege could not work out how the particular sense is to be associated with an expression.

In order to associate an expression with the sense there must be a sound logical background, without such a sound logic the association has to be accepted as self – evident which is indeed too much to assume. Frege has taken for granted that every expression is an outcome of a particular sense. But the difficulty is that the entire weight of his theory concerning reference of an expression lies on the presumed connection between the expression and its sense. Without any detailed treatment of such a connection, frege’s theory regarding the reference of an expression becomes ambiguous and can be said to be something which might have been equally presumed.

Moreover, it may be pointed out that Frege has oversimplified the problem by giving no additional account for the treatment of complex symbols. We do not find any answer to the problem how a complex symbol gets its force. Russell has successfully shown that for simple symbols Frege’s account is misleading; and for
complex symbols, his account is insufficient. Thus Russell rejects the doctrine of sense – reference distinction which has become a matter of hot – debate in contemporary thought.

III.8. Evaluation:

We may also raise another line of criticism on the basis of rejection of the consequences of Russell's epistemological presuppositions. The meaning of all words, in ideal language, is to be understood in terms of some particular sensations or other. The concept of sensation gives form to the so-called ideal language that might not be satisfactory. The data of acquaintance are private to the individual who experiences them. Therefore, the language containing the names of those data becomes a private language to the speaker. According to Russell, when one person uses a word, he does not mean the same thing by the word as another person means. He therefore admits, "a logically perfect language if it could be constructed, would not only be intolerably prolix, but as regards its vocabulary, would be very largely private to one speaker. That is to say, all the names that it would use would be private to that speaker and could not enter in to the language of another speaker."\(^{43}\)

The fundamental principle is that individual experiences are private and can not be shared with anybody. In the same way when the individual tries to express his private thoughts and feelings, the language becomes private and thus incommunicable. It is the speaker alone who can understand his language. Such privacy in language is not due to any private stipulation. So, private code of a limited group of persons or even of one individual is not to be regarded as constituting private language.\(^{44}\) According to Wittgenstein, even the logical possibility of such private
language cannot be conceived. His line of criticism is that either such language is without any purpose, or even if it has any, it cannot possibly fulfill that. Wittgenstein has attacked the idea of private language on several grounds. According to him, the idea of private language makes linguistic behaviour superfluous. Language has the purpose of communication. If the private language cannot be understood by any one other than the speaker himself; it is meaningless to use linguistic expression. Thus, the very idea of private language is inconsistent with the purpose of using language.

Moreover, Wittgenstein states that there is no possibility of private mental act. There is no good evidence for thinking that ‘pain words’ refer to ‘pain sensations’ private to one single individual who feels it. It may be private in the sense of private possession, but it need not be assumed to be private in the sense of being incommunicable. He, of course distinguishes between ‘secrecy’ and ‘privacy’; anything is secret which is communicable but for some reasons or other is not communicated; anything is private which is not communicable at all.

But Russell maintains that language has some other functions besides communication. Expression and indication are two other functions of language. Private language in spite of its lacking the communicative function, would not be superfluous as it can perform other functions. A sentence indicates a fact but expresses a psychological state of the speaker. Therefore, when someone uses private language one might use it for the purpose of expressing his mental states. Russell has another strong argument for his defence. Here Russell would point out that, that the meaning of the words used by the speaker are private to the speaker, does not necessarily imply the impossibility of communication. He explains the fact of communication in his own words, “I have often heard it said that, that is a misfortune.
That is a mistake. It would be absolutely fatal if people meant the same things by their words. It would make all intercourse impossible, and language the most hopeless and useless thing imaginable, because the meaning you attach to your words must depend on the nature of the objects you are acquainted with and since different people are acquainted with different objects, they would not be able to talk to each other unless they attach quite different meanings to their words. Hence Russell would think that it is just an unwarranted assumption that in cases of actual communication the hearer understands exactly what the speaker means.

Wittgenstein also raises the objection against the notion of private language to be ill-founded. Even if it is taken for granted that private language serves some purposes although not suitable for communication, the notion of private language is not properly founded. In other words, if it is said that the speaker uses this language to refer to his sensations in the future then the use of these signs must be in accordance with some rules. But private language can not contain any rule. He also thinks that meaning of the words cannot possibly be understood by the speaker alone. Understanding the meaning of words implies a whole stage-setting. Speaking a language and understanding the meaning of words is possible only when language is conceived as a system governed by rule. Without any rule, language serves no purpose and then its possibility withers away. Here Wittgenstein's concept of 'rule' and 'language' is the basis of the denial of private language. Language, according to him, is strictly guided by rules and in this sense it is similar to the games. The rules are public and private rule is not rule at all. Wittgenstein has shown the impossibility of private language by denying the possibility of private rule. If there be any private rule, it would not be possible to distinguish between 'obeying the rule' and 'deviating from the rule' and thus it would be same whether there is rule or not. Wittgenstein
holds that the balance “on which the impressions are weighed is not the impression of a balance.”\textsuperscript{46} But in case of private language the distinction between the impression of a rule and rules by which impressions are to be judged is absent. This difficulty is clearly stated by Malcom in the passage: “When one has given oneself the private rule ‘I will call this same thing ‘pain’ whenever it occurs’, one is then free to do anything or nothing. That ‘rule’ does not point in any directing. On the private language hypothesis no one can teach me what the correct use of ‘same’ is. I shall be the sole arbiter of whether this is the same as that …….. But a sound that I can use as I please is not a word.”\textsuperscript{47}

The objective valid and accepted criteria, in fact, consist of observable features, fixed by convention as the defining characteristics of the object. In order to determine whether one is following the criterion, there is no way other than to appeal to the common behaviour. Therefore, there cannot be any private criterion. The term ‘private criterion’ is itself self-contradictory. Criterion means the principle by which something is judged and that can be used by individuals other than the speaker himself. Whatever is private cannot be regarded as rule or criterion and the criterion cannot be private.

The basic principle of naming theory is that the meaning of a simple symbol is the object corresponding to it. But this theory cannot properly explain the meaning of ego centric words such as ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘this’, ‘here’ etc. Such words have various uses in different contexts. They indicate different objects in different occasions. It seems pertinent to say that the objects do not constitute the meaning of such words; yet they are taken as meaningful symbols. Hence for the meaning of such words some explanations become necessary. But the naming theory does not offer
such explanations. Wittgenstein expresses this difficulty in his words: "if you do not want to produce confusion you will do best not to call these words names at all yet, strange to say, the word ‘this’ has been called the only genuine name; so that anything else we call a name was only in an inexact approximate sense." It is better to be clear here that Wittgenstein has difficulties not only in respect of these ego-centric words, but with the very conception that objects constitute the meaning of words. The ordinary usage of the term ‘meaning’ does not uphold that objects constitute meaning. Wittgenstein says, "It is important to note that the word ‘meaning’ is being used illicitly if it is used to signify the thing that ‘corresponds’ to the word .......... when Mr. N.N. dies one says that the bearer of the name dies, not the meaning dies. And it would be nonsensical to say that, for if the name ceased to have meaning it would make no sense to say ‘Mr. N.N. is dead.’ It appears from this that according to Wittgenstein, the identification of meaning with the object signified is totally contrary to our common mode of speech. The concept of name according to Russell is that a name must have an existing individual as its denotation and this individual is always the simple object of acquaintance for the speaker. But this concept according to Wittgenstein, is too narrow to explain the actual sense of the term ‘name’. Regarding the use of the term ‘name’ ordinary language has other conventions as well which are excluded by the referential (naming) theory. He thinks that the theory could not explain the idea of naming itself. Naming as represented in the theory remains mysterious for lack of proper explanation.
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