

PREFACE

The aim of the present work is a study of the philosophical relevance of language. It attempts to develop a new approach to the philosophy of language and to justify it by showing its superiority over other approaches that have hitherto been used in solving significant philosophical problems. The phrase "philosophical relevance of Language" suggests something very deep and wide, for language may be relevant to philosophy in two broad ways, viz., philosophy of language and linguistic philosophy. The former deals with the subject matter of philosophy whereas the latter takes language as a philosophical method. My thesis, however, is concerned with linguistic philosophy.

It has been said that philosophy in the present century has taken a linguistic turn. It is a turn in methodology. It is believed that philosophy cannot dispense with linguistic analysis because the problems with which philosophy deals are linguistic in character. There may be dispute regarding this issue, but a pervasive conviction of the age is that language may be examined fruitfully for giving a clear picture about the structure of reality. We describe it as a pervasive feature of contemporary conviction because language may be examined for other purposes, yet the ontological relevance has been believed to be primary by most of the philosophers who have joined in this movement.

The present thesis aims at showing the relevance of language to philosophy as a method from various aspects. In the Introductory chapter an attempt has been made to highlight the total picture of the thesis. It is informative, since it tries to give a broad outline of the thesis.

The first and most immediate question arises under this title is the

question: **Are problems of philosophy linguistic in character ?** Modern western philosophy takes a 'linguistic turn' when it comes to believe that the problems of philosophy are linguistic in nature and they can be solved or even can be dissolved only on a proper linguistic plan. But this line of thinking begs the question, since a good many of philosophers believe that philosophical problems may be factual. And there we find a third conviction which claims that philosophical problems may be both linguistic and factual. In the second chapter I have tried to give an elaborate explanation on this issue and finally come to the conclusion that philosophical question in a certain sense is linguistic. But this conviction should not reject the view that philosophical statements are in a certain sense factual. The relevance of language to philosophy need not be proved by segregating philosophy from the realm of fact.

Although linguistic philosophers share the same conviction that philosophical phenomena are nothing but linguistic in essence, equally and fundamentally, they disagree about the very nature of language. It has been found by many, that, language which is believed to be an intention to represent the structure of reality, actually misrepresents it. Consequently, the need is felt to look into the difficulty of language which is responsible for the distorted and misleading character of reality which it often represents. The deficiency lies in the surface structure of language which is practically adhered to when we want to know reality through the medium. Consequently, the syntax of ordinary (everyday) language has been supposed to replace by a new syntax which is strictly logical, and thus an artificial language comes into existence. The language which replaces ordinary language is believed to be ideal , for it alone can give us a faithful picture of reality. This problem has

been discussed under the title : "**Dose language require revision**"? and it is discussed in chapter three.

But the efficiency of such ideal language has not been agreed upon by all. It fails to keep up the assurances as it has supposed to do. The construction of an ideal language disappeared from the philosophy of one who was one of its ardent advocates. Wittgenstein's **Philosophical Investigations** makes an attempt to show that language can still be relevant to philosophy only if it is ordinary language. So it is not necessary to revise and improve upon ordinary language. Ordinary language is just alright as it stands and is capable of revealing reality for us. This problem has been given the name : "**A plea for ordinary language** "and it is delineated in chapter four.

Behind every theory one will notice a more general and crucial conviction. It is that language is somehow related to reality. The word 'reality' has often been used to mean transcendental or metaphysical reality. If it be so, then reality may very well be ineffable, since we do not have any linguistic equipment which would be suitable to a description of such transental reality. The point is that what is to be meant by the term 'reality' is a matter of linguistic decision and it governs everything empirical. I have tried to assess, and makeout a sense of the claim in chapter five under the title : "**Language and ontology** ".

But when we come to Peter Strawson, we get an altogether different description of the world of ours. Unlike many other philosophers, Strawson goes on to say that the philosophical relevance of language cannot just have

a negative import. It should tell us what comprises our ontology. It is precisely here that we can refer to P. F. Strawson, who in his celebrated book **Individuals** has thrown considerable light on the ontological relevance of language in the positive sense. The world for him is the totality of particulars, which we know to be sensible and refers to other in an individuating way. The method which Strawson advocates for the discovery of the conceptual scheme has been called the method of descriptive analysis. Descriptive analysis explores the close examination of the actual use of words and it seems to be philosophically productive. This apparently startling argument has been given the: "**Language and the human conceptual framework**" and it is examined in chapter six.

The appearance of Chomsky in philosophical scene is surprisingly novel. He considers language as worthy of serious philosophical attention, not because it reveals reality for us or because it displays the conceptual structure which lies buried in language, but because it goes a long way to tell us man's innate competence for the use of language which after all describes and communicates. This line of thinking has been discussed in the seventh chapter as: '**Language as a mirror of mind**'.

The thrust of the thesis makes it clear that language is philosophically relevant for more than one reason. We find also that language is a mirror. It is a mirror either of the world inside or the world outside, either in the form of epistemic schema or in the form of mind's innate linguistic capacity.