

## **Preface and Acknowledgement**

The aim of this present work is to study Bertrand Russell's philosophy of language with a critical outlook. Although Russell was not considered as a linguistic philosopher in true sense, but he had played a key role in the so-called revolution of linguistic philosophy that appeared in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is, in fact, very difficult to encompass the whole system of Russell's philosophy. However, in this project we propose to confine ourselves on the works of Russell started from 1905 – 1930, because we think that during this period his most writings on philosophy of language have come up. More specifically, it can be said that Russell's pre-occupation with language displayed in much of his philosophical writings during this period. In fact, the flourishing condition of the present day 'semiotic' is a sufficient testimony to the fertility of Russell's ideas. This is reflected from his remark as Russell elsewhere says that 'the influence of language on philosophy is profound and almost universally recognized.' If it is true that language, so to speak, become the foundation of present day philosophical discussion, then surely there we find hardly any philosopher like Russell who bears a greater share of responsibility in introducing the relevance of language as a philosophical method.

If we look back in the history of philosophy, it would seem clear that Russell's contribution to the revolution of linguistic analysis were twofold. Along with G.E.Moore Russell led the successful revolt against the New-Hegelianism of Idealist such as Bradley and McTaggart and again with Moore he took initiative to turn philosophy into a revolutionary way. Infact, it would not be an exaggeration, if we claim that Russell was a precursor of turning Anglo-American philosophy towards the 'linguistic philosophy'. Unfortunately, Russell like many other philosophers of linguistic persuasion has not been considered as a linguistic philosopher or more specifically his philosophy of language has not been sufficiently clarified to the present time. Infact, useful beginnings have been made toward an investigation of these questions, but this may not give an adequate picture of Russell's overall philosophy of language is presently available. However, in this project a systematic examination of the various aspects of his analytic method will reflect a plenty of clues to his philosophy of language. Russell at his earlier stages seems to have conceived that philosophical study of language as the construction of

philosophical grammar may be considered as a mere preliminaries to metaphysics. But subsequently, he came to realize that it would much more than what had been presumed. In his later stages, Russell intuits that philosophical linguistics may be expected to provide nothing less than a pathway to the nature of reality which is the metaphysician's goal. Russell further goes on to say that with sufficient caution the properties of language may help us to understand the structure of the world. Thus, analysis of language, according to Russell, potentially reflects the ontological structure of the world. Accordingly, philosophy of language cannot be restricted to the examination of uninterrupted formal systems. It can also be applied for eradication the rhetoric art of unintentional ambiguity. Thus, analysis of language, Russell senses, can be philosophically relevant if it requires the use of data drawn from logic, psychology and empirical-linguistics and the foundation of reasoned decisions concerning the scope of metaphysics and the proper method of philosophical research. Russell, infact, includes all theses questions in his philosophical analysis of language and at the same time maintains neutrality of his devotion to scientific method.

According to Russell the basic task of philosophical analysis is to expose specious 'a priori arguments' and then to settle any remaining questions on empirical grounds. This is the same view of philosophical analysis subsequently advocated by the logical positivists who were profoundly influenced by Russell's view on mathematics and logic. Elsewhere Russell himself admits that he has much more sympathy with the logical positivists than with any other school. However, on certain philosophical issues, Russell equally differs from the so-called logical positivists who are the prime supporters of 'pure empiricism'. For Russell since pure empiricism would reduce all our knowledge to discrete individual sense-data, the existence of universal cannot be reduced in such a manner.

Although, Russell has never formulated a genuine philosophy of language but he has considered linguistic analysis as an integral part of his philosophical method. One reason for not considering Russell as a linguistic philosopher is that like other linguistic philosophers Russell has never developed anything approaching a comprehensive theory to explain how language functions and how linguistic analysis should proceed. However, there are certain basic assumptions are presuppositions regarding language and the way it

functions which can be regarded as rudiments of a philosophy of language. Russell like Wittgenstein did not develop a theory of language.

Since the objective of this thesis to explicate and examine Russell's philosophy of language, it is very necessary at the outset to outline the history of analysis first and then make a compare and contrast Russell's own view of analysis with others. Linguistic philosophers by and large are of the opinions that analysis of language as a philosophical method is indispensable. It is a philosophical enterprise that begins and ends in language and language or more specifically clarification of language is all about in practicing philosophy. Russell, however, thinks the other way round as he holds that although analysis of language as a philosophical method is indispensable in doing philosophy, but this does not mean to say that it is all about in doing philosophy. Russell considers analysis of language as an indispensable method simply because it helps us to know the basic structure of reality language is about. So Russell's prime objective of introducing analysis of language as a philosophical method is to have the true structure of reality. In **Chapter One and Two** we propose to explain and examine the history of analysis and the method and merits of Russell's philosophical analysis of language. These two **Chapters** are entitled as: **An Outlook on the history of Analysis** and **The Method and Merits of Russell's Philosophical Analysis of Language** in turn.

It appears to us that the concept of 'structure' is fundamental for Russell's analytic method as it will help us to gain a general understanding of his conception of linguistic analysis as a philosophical method. As a result of his work in logic and philosophy of mathematics, he tended to concern himself with the formal and structural aspects of language. He is also inclined to have the 'formal structure; or 'logical syntax' for its own sake and being a qua- philosopher he is also interested in it for other reason as well. Since, the grammatical structure of sentence at times fails to dig up the true logical structure, Russell therefore pleads for true logical form of the proposition or sentence so that the true structure of reality of language can be grasped. Whether the structure of a proposition corresponds the same structure of fact is determined whether they have the same logical form or not. It has been claimed that there underlies an isomorphism between the structure of a proposition and the structure of a fact if one has to detect the true logical form of the proposition. Thus, to unveil the common structure between the

proposition and the fact is philosophically significant. So, for Russell the discovery of the logical forms of propositions is the philosophical purpose of linguistic analysis. Thus, for Russell the pursuit of logical form is considered to be the criterion of understanding the nature of language. Therefore, the **Third Chapter** is entitled as: **The Pursuit of Logical Form: A Criterion of Understanding the Nature of Language.**

Although it was Russell who first explicitly emphasized the philosophical importance of ordinary language-“the influence of language in philosophy has been profound and almost unrecognized”- he equally emphasized that ordinary language is not sacrosanct. Most of the proponents of Russell have been heavily influenced by Russell and they have proposed a logical language or artificial language that would help us to know the true structure of reality. According to Russell ordinary language is not authentic at times as a philosophical method because the grammar of ordinary language is not authentic. The grammar of ordinary language very often fails to depict the true structure of language. So it is part of the main task of philosophy, Russell claims, to reform ordinary language so that the grammatical and syntactical form of expression may correspond with their true logical form. Philosophical investigation then has its goal to reconstruct an ideal or philosophical language in such a way so that the non-referential expressions would be eliminated. The systematic reconstruction of propositions would result in a ‘logically perfect language’, a language that would show at a glance the logical structure of the facts asserted or denied. Such a language would represent the theoretical goal of reconstructionism and thereby would stand as the ultimate philosophical accomplishment of linguistic analysis. Thus, Russell pleads for a logically perfect language which would propose to explain and examine in **Chapter Four** and it is entitled as: **A Plea for a Logically Perfect Language.**

By constructing philosophical language through the logical form of proposition, Russell thereby leads to reconstructionism – a theory where non-referential expressions are extirpated. According to Russell a logically perfect language is constituted by only demonstrative pronouns which for him are known by acquaintance. In this regard, Russell classifies names into two halves, such as ordinary proper names and logically proper names. Only logically proper names are genuine names which can be known by acquaintance and only demonstrative pronouns belong to this group. Ordinary proper

names, though they look like names, are not genuine names. They are disguised descriptions and hence cannot be known by acquaintance. They can be known by descriptions. 'This', 'that', 'it', being pronouns, are considered to be logically proper names, but 'Socrates', 'pencil' etc. are ordinary proper names and they can be known by descriptions. So in the process of reconstructionism Russell introduces the theory of acquaintance by means of which he classifies logically proper names from ordinary proper names. We propose to explain this in **Chapter Five** and it is entitled as: **Theory of Acquaintance**.

It appears clear to us that Russell introduces reconstructionism by constructing a logically perfect language and thereby enables to eradicate ambiguous and non-referential words or expressions from logically perfect language. This ultimately leads him to overcome various defects and puzzles involving in ordinary language. This can be exposed through various uses of reconstructionism. In **Chapter Six**, we propose to explain and examine various uses of reconstructionism and it is entitled as: **The Uses of Reconstructionism**. Here reconstructionism may be said to represent the common denominator of a number of somewhat diverse analytic techniques employed by Russell at various times collected under a single title. It includes the analysis of denoting phrases; the analysis of incomplete symbols; constructionism and the technique which dispenses with abstractionism. All these things just mentioned are encompassed within the title 'the uses of reconstructionism'. In this sequel, we propose to analyze Russell's uses of reconstructionism under three models, such as (i) the theory of descriptions; (ii) the analysis of class symbols; (iii) the logical construction of physical objects.

We then propose to discuss types theory in **Chapter Seven** and it is entitled as: **The Theory of Types**. Since Russell desires to introduce the reformatory conception of language by eradicating the defaults of ordinary language, the theory of types would be an effective tool of doing this task. We think that Russell's theory of types has a great deal of value as it draws attention to the fact that grammatically innocent sentence may often prove to be logically vicious. It will be worthwhile, we think, to examine this case in a little detail to see how Russell develops his idea of analysis. Russell formulates his theory of types in order to overcome the so-called mathematical puzzles as well as conceptual puzzles arising out of the exercise of ordinary language. However, here we

propose to examine Russell's theory of types not in terms of solving the puzzles of mathematics, but in terms of solving the puzzles arising out of the application of ordinary language and which are very much conceptual in nature.

In **Chapter Eight**, we propose to examine with critical outlook Russell's whole program of philosophical analysis of language. There is no question of doubt that the philosophical method as propounded by Russell opens a new vista to the so-called linguistic philosophers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, this does not make sense to say that the so-called method as proposed and introduced by Russell is beyond criticisms. In fact Russell's logical theory and his whole notion of analysis have been questioned and criticized by the later analysts particularly by those of Oxford persuasion. His general conception of the influence of language upon our thinking and the part he plays in the genesis of philosophical problems together with his practical demonstration, such as the theory of definite descriptions, the theory of types, of how such problems can be dissolved by analysis are the prime tasks of this proposed thesis. The thesis will address all of these issues with critical outlook.

It is highly opportune moment to express my unrepayable debt to my supervisor, Dr. Kanti lal Das, whose assistance, encouragement and active co-operation helped me to complete this thesis. His height of appreciation, superlative encouragements provided the much needed recipe of support for me in completing this thesis. In spite of his busy schedule and engagement with academic assignments, he spent a considerable time to go through the present work and made necessary amendments. Without his invaluable suggestions and constant co-operation it would not have been possible to complete the present work within the stipulated work. In all humility, I acknowledge my indebtedness to him.

I am also indebted to every teacher of the department of philosophy from where I got the degrees of M.A and M.Phil. In this regard, I particularly call upon the name of Prof. Chandidas Bhattacharjee, who is no more with us, and Prof. Raghunath Ghosh for their constant mental support and encouragement in completing this thesis. I am equally grateful to the staffs of central library, departmental library for their wholehearted co-operation during library works.

I am equally indebted to my parents, my family members, well wishers for their constant source of encouragement and mental support in completing this thesis. I humbly and gratefully acknowledge the kindness and the generosity of all.

At last I am happy to convey the message that I found myself in awkward position on many points in understanding Russell and still I think that I have to have some more clarification on many points. However, there is no end point of understanding philosopher like Russell. What I intend to say is that I have taken maximum care at my level best to make my work consistent and flawless. However, if there remains any flaw in conceptual level or in linguistic level, I myself own the responsibility for this.

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