Donald Davidson, Conceptual Scheme and Language

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Abstract

Davidson's discussion on scheme-content dualism has obvious connections with the concept of language. He treats conceptual schema as language to explain his argument. In his later works he discusses the implications of scheme-content rejection on language. However, the theoretical relation between the rejection of the third dogma and his views on language is left unsaid. A coherent account of Davidson's views on language is also a matter of concern. Davidson's claim that there is no such a thing as language certainly becomes puzzling since many of his theories are dependent upon Language. Davidson's explanation of the correlation between language, belief and action is also discussed here. It is being argued in this paper that Davidson's views on Language could make sense with Davidson's account of ontology. Once this is settled the concept of language can be understood within the context of the rejection of scheme-content dualism.

Keywords: Donald Davidson, Conceptual scheme, Truth-theoretic semantics, Language

Introduction

Language is one of the central concepts in Donald Davidson's Philosophy. Language is methodologically necessary for his truth-theoretic semantics to work. His convention-T, fashioned after Alfred Tarski's T-schema, calls for the same methodological requirements. In Tarski's model theory, truth can be interpreted only within a Language (or model). That is why Davidson cannot do away with Language as long as he holds on to his convention-T.

While discussing scheme-content dualism, the rejection of it is central to his metaphysics, he reaffirms the role of language as key to having objectivity and truth. In his later works, however, commitment to this form of language seems shaky, especially when it comes to 'A nice derangement of Epitaphs'.

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Thinking about it, there seems to be a lack of clarity in Davidson's thought while discussing Language. A shift in his metaphysical outlook made it rather more confusing. This paper intends to explore this issue. The issue can be divided into two questions.

1.   What is Davidson's concept of Language?

2.   What metaphysical shift happened that had affected the concept of Language, in Davidson?

To deal with the first question, different ideas Davidson expressed regarding Language are discussed. Dealing with the second question, the paper examines his rejection of scheme-content dualism and its impact on the analysis of Language in Davidson.

In a threefold division, the first part of the paper discusses the theoretical outline of the rejection of scheme-content dualism. The following part is a comprehensive explanation of his views on language. This includes his two major theories on language, such as truth-theoretic explanation of meaning and radical interpretation. This also includes his famous rejection of language. Davidson's explanation of the correlation between language, belief and action is also discussed here. In the final part, the relation between his rejection of scheme-content dualism and language is inquired.

An interesting difficulty that is lurking in the backdrop is to make sense of Davison's different theories on language. If there is no such a thing as language how to construct a theory of it. The puzzle is how to make sense of his semantic theory and the theory of radical interpretation if there is no language. Once the shore is cleared, the relation between language and scheme-content dualism can be investigated.

Rejection of Scheme-Content Dualism

After giving up analytic synthetic distinction, for Davidson, we are left with the concept of content. The option of 'content' presupposes the criterion of having a scheme to receive it. The dualism of scheme and content encourages the plausibility of conceptual relativism. As per the difference in the content there can be different schemes. For Davidson, this dualism is based on a dogma and it should be abandoned. He places two main arguments regarding this:

1.   The very idea of a conceptual scheme is faulty.

You cannot conceive that there is only one conceptual scheme. If you are admitting there is a conceptual scheme you are automatically presuming there are other schemes.

2.   a. We need an identity condition of conceptual scheme to justify conceptual relativism.

b. In order to find the identity condition of a scheme, we have to show how a particular content cannot be a part of that scheme.

c. We cannot trace the relationship between the scheme and content which can also enlighten us about how a particular content cannot be a part of a particular scheme.

Thus,

d. We cannot justify conceptual relativism.

The first argument is supported by the second one. Maria Baghramian distinguishes scheme and content as the thinking apparatus and what it is that we are thinking. For Davidson, it is not a thinking apparatus but an underlying system for the thinking process. Baghramian is wrong in saying, "[a]ccording to Davidson, conceptual schemes are languages..." (Baghramian 289). For Davidson, the conceptual scheme is distinct from both mind and language. However, this system is not analyzable without an adequate medium. For that, we need a mind or language.

For Davidson, conceptual schemes are "ways of organizing experience" or "they are systems of categories that give form to the data of sensation" or they are "points of view from which individuals, cultures, or periods survey the passing scene" (Davidson, "*On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme*" 183). Loosely, we could suppose that a scheme is a point of view and what it does is to provide a way to organize experience. The characterization of the scheme as a point of view immediately generates trouble. A point of view presupposes another one. We can talk about different points of view if there is a common ground to compare them. If there is a common ground, then, they are not completely different. This piece of reasoning is central to his paper as it appears later with the issue of translation.

Language, however, is another story. He says, "Languages that have evolved in distant times or places may differ extensively in their resources for dealing with one or another range of phenomena. What comes easily in one language may come hard in another, and this difference may echo significant dissimilarities in style and value" (Davidson, "*On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme*" 183–84). Language is presented here as something that survived through time, something that is adaptive to the changes and something that is evolved.

A point of view is a pattern of beliefs. According to Davidson, we can attribute beliefs to the person whose language we can understand. The use of language presupposes a collection of intentions and beliefs. Thus, the language has a relation with the attribution of beliefs and through this aspect it is connected to a scheme. Without language it is rather impossible to conceive a scheme. Therefore, the scheme is analyzed as it is associated with language.

A different scheme means a different pattern of belief. More than one language may belong to one pattern. Translation within these languages would not be difficult. However, Translation from a language that belongs to a different pattern must be difficult. Davidson's initial supposition regarding conceptual relativism is based on this difficulty in translation. The impossibility of translation proves the difference in schemes. Here, he brings back his earlier reasoning, which is to make sense of the failure of translation, there must be something common among them. If this common something is 'individuated' in both the schemes, then the translation is possible. Thus, Davidson's initial supposition does not provide us with a criterion for conceptual relativism.

What we now need is an understanding of that 'common something'. The common something of different schemes has to be content. If we have a common content, then, translation is possible. Therefore, our requirement is an understanding of a content that cannot be a part of a scheme. In order to have conceptual relativism, we need such an understanding from our theories about the relation between scheme and content. Davidson tries two types of relations (organizing and fitting) with two kinds of contents (world and experience). This investigation fails for two reasons.

1.   We do not have a theory of content to show that a particular content cannot be organized.

2.   We do not have a theory of truth to test whether there can be another relation between the fact and the sentence, if they are taken to be considered as facing each other with the totality of each item.

The result of this investigation is the dismissal of conceptual relativism. Davidson calls it a dogma because of this untestability of the scheme. Now, let us turn to our original problem of this paper. The whole point of explaining these arguments is to show that these are applicable to the concept of language also.

If scheme is a point of view, conceptual relativism is possible in the same language. What we need to presume for that are different belief sets entertaining different ontologies. Although they are in the same language, translations can be difficult due to different ontologies. These sets of beliefs can be seen as different languages, if we want. On the other hand, we could suppose different languages belong to the same scheme, just like Davidson does. Davidson's suggestion to associate scheme with language does not imply any particular combination. Differences in these combinations does not add up to anything fruitful in Davidson's line of argumentation. All that is noted is the similarity of scheme to sets of meanings that cannot be translated to each other. Also, if the changes in meaning can be assimilated by language, then it can be reflected on the scheme for the same reason that they are related.

Davidson on Language

The demolition of analytic-synthetic distinction created a chain reaction of abandoning many dogmatic beliefs previously held plausible. According to Davidson, the demolition had led to the destruction of the difference between theory and language. Though there are several other reasons (like the revision of the concept of formal in mathematics and logic) that had led to this, Davidson's immediate reason to be concerned about this could be Quinian. The trouble is how to provide a theory of language if there is no distinction among them. Davidson had to come up with his theory in the midst of this trouble. The formal system separated from the object of enquiry to theorize about it is no longer available. The theoretical language for defining something is already a part of that something. The concept of language is not that of ordinary or formal but the mix of both. A theory of language must be conducive of this complexity.

PHILOGRAM

For the first problem Davidson had to take recourse to Alfred Tarski. A meta language could help out with the job previously held by the formal language. The meta language could map the object language formally. We could continue using the formal methods assuming no type distinction of formal and natural language. However, it could be assumed that some sort of an inherent difficulty is generated in Davidson's system because of this. For both Tarski and Davidson "the terms 'object language' and 'meta language' have only a relative sense" (Tarski 350).

Frege's semantic theory makes use of meaning-like entities called sense. He built his theory around the principle of compositionality. He basically uses his quantification technique to analyze the semantic structure of a sentence. Davidson thought that giving a semantic theory by attaching meaning to the parts of a sentence is not only circular but also vacuous. Davidson thus abandoned Frege's formal technique for Tarski's. Tarski's technique is not based on compositionality but on recursion. A theory of the form 't means x' will do the trick for a given language L1 . While Tarski was giving a truth theory for Formal Languages, in formal language using meta language, Davidson giving the same for Natural languages. For Davidson, both meta language and object language are natural languages.

Radical Interpretation and No- Language Argument

Radical interpretation is Davidson's take on Quine's Radical translation thesis. For Quine, indeterminacy of meaning leads to inscrutability of reference which leads to ontological relativity. Davidson cannot appreciate the theory of ontological relativity. Along with his theory on scheme-content dualism, he thinks a lavish use of the principle of charity could save ontology from going relative.

The real trouble about language came when Davidson discussed his argument for the rejection of language. He said,

> There is no such thing as a language, not if a language is anything like what many philosophers have supposed. There is therefore no such thing to be learned, mastered or born with. We must give up the idea of a clearly defined shared structure which language-users acquire and then apply to cases. (Davidson, *Truth, Language, and History* 107).

This attracted some serious criticisms, like that of Dummett's (Dummett 459). However, Davidson's claim did not appear suddenly out of thin air but can be seen as a consequence of his commitment to naturalism. Paul M. Livingston says that a commitment to naturalism invariably leads to the negation of semantic concepts (Livingston 202). He says that Davidson's claim is a response to what Livingston calls a structuralist conception of Language.

Most of the criticisms are concerned with the consistency of his earlier views with the current claim. Primarily, how a truth theory for a natural language L could be conceived without a 'Language'. Such a worry is not completely misplaced. Davidson himself had

slight changes in his views about Language over the years. Ernie Lepore And Kirk Ludwig discusses these criticisms in detail and claim that there is no significant form of inconsistency between the earlier and the later views (Lepore and Ludwig 263).

A serious criticism against Davidson's claim is that if an independent existence of language is not assumed, then Davidson's philosophy collapses. Bar-On and Risjord says,

A truth-conditional semantic theory of the kind Davidson offers does not reify meanings. But it does not … do away with language. Indeed, it seems that the independent existence of L as used by its speakers is what allows us to see the truth theory for L as an empirical theory of meaning for L. … If, contrary to appearances, there are no natural languages, we may wonder what there is for a truth theory to be about, and in what sense such a theory could still be said to have empirical content. (Bar-On and Risjord 165)

The first point here is that despite the meaning being not reified, Davidson did not abandon the language. What is the form of language without meaning? The concept of meaning has been an integral part of the concept of language. Since meaning as an entity is also out of the picture, in language, we are left with the syntactic categories. Meaning is no longer an entity capable of participating in any theoretical endeavors pertaining to language. However, Davidson did not withhold the concept of meaning as such but it was theoretically replaced with truth- condition and the associated belief system.

The second point is that the truth theory for language is an empirical theory of meaning because of the independent existence of language. To support this, they quote Davidson:

The question whether a theory of truth is true of a given language (that is, of a speaker or a group of speakers) makes sense only if sentences of that language have a meaning that is independent of theory (otherwise the theory is not a theory in the ordinary sense, but a description of a possible language) .... If the question can be raised … the language must have a life independent of the [truth] definition.... (Davidson, "The Structure and Content of Truth" 300) [Italics was given by Bar-On and Risjord]

From here what they assume is that without having a thing called language, the independence of language as articulated here makes no sense. They call it the independence requirement. However, we need to be clear about the nature of independence which is mentioned in the quotation. It is not the independence of an ontological kind. Look at the first part of the paragraph from which the above quote is taken:

What is missing is the connection with the users of language. Nothing would count as a sentence, and the concept of truth would therefore have no application, if there were no creatures who used sentences by uttering or inscribing tokens of them. Any complete account of the concept of truth must relate it to an actual linguistic intercourse. (Davidson, "The Structure and Content of Truth" 300).

The understanding of truth helps to realize the difference between the truth theory for a language and the actual usage of language. The truth theory and the meaning of a

sentence must be different in order to be clear about the truth theory of the language. The meaning of a sentence is produced only with the actualization of a sentence. Based on that, the truth theory gets relativized. Thus, the understanding of the concept of truth and the understanding of the concept of language is complementary to each other.

Two Descriptions of Language

In Davidson's paper 'Communication and Convention'(*Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* 265–66) he explains two kinds of descriptions of language. The first kind of description consists of what makes an utterance meaningful and the collection of the meaning of the actual and potential utterance. The truth-conditional theory of meaning belongs to this kind. The second kind of description is such that it connects meaning with beliefs, desires, intentions and purposes. Of these two, the first is a recursive theory of what 'to mean' means. This theory has the characteristics of a formal theory. In the second theory he enlarges his boundaries to include more complex issues concerning the natural language. The central point of this description is the individual and her rationality. In the first description truth was characterized as a relation between a sentence, person and time (Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* 34). In the second it has become a relation between sentences, rationality and belief. Thus, we have two descriptions of language. The collection of the truth conditions of the possible sentences gives us a description of a possible language. There is another description in which there are sentences with actual occurrences. Meaning is attributed to these sentences. The first description lacks meaning because it is not an actual use of a rational creature. To a sentence, meaning comes with the involvement of a rational being. The independence that is presented above is not independence from the language user. Consider this passage:

> ...(T)here is the idea that any language distorts reality, which implies that it is only wordlessly if at all that the mind comes to grip with things as they really are. This is to *conceive language as an inert* (though necessarily distorting) *medium independent of human agencies that employ it; a view of language surely cannot be maintained* (Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* 185).[italics by me]

Following Davidson here, it is absurd to presume a concept of language which is independent of human agency. So, language is an active medium because it is not independent of human agency. The meaning of a sentence and the beliefs associated with it are interrelated. [i] Belief is interconnected to other beliefs and propositional attitudes. Propositional attitudes keep us rational beings.[ii] Language is the building block of belief. However, the structure of understanding is based on the interconnection of beliefs. The meaning of a sentence is the product of the syntactic structure of a particular sentence and the beliefs that are contextually associated with it (Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* 134).

The two descriptions of language that are mentioned above can be analyzed further. If

we engage in a formal enquiry, there can be a set of all possible T-sentences for a language. A limited human intellect, at a particular point of time can access some of it. From this set, some of the T-sentences can be actualized, in the sense that these T-sentences are the truth conditions of the uttered or inscribed sentences. However, the fact about everyday use of language is such that it probably will not be repeated.

   This analysis can be placed alongside the analysis of prior and passing theory. [iii] These are, indeed, two very different analyses. However, what is common with these is that actual use of language cannot capture the nature of language. It is with the passing theory that we actually use the language. However, in Davidson's words a passing theory "cannot in general correspond to an interpreter's linguistic ability" (Davidson, *Truth, Language, and History* 102). Our passing theory is not shared because it may be different in different circumstances and utterances. Our prior theory is not shared because it is different with different people we speak to. So, neither of it can be said to be what is usually known as language. The same trouble can be traced here as to end up at the same conclusion. The description of language is definitely not the same as giving a theory of language. A theory of language can be a meaningful body of possible T-sentences. The analysis of the descriptions shows that the language is not a unified single body. That is precisely why it is not shared or structured.

Language and Agency

One of the key features of Donald Davidson's philosophical reasoning is providing formal structure to some of the complex concepts in philosophy. As a matter fact, this is something he shares with many other thinkers in the analytic tradition. However, conceiving and accepting the complicated structure of complex concepts is not very common. Some concepts are complicated not only because it has too many variables but it has many levels of variables in which finding constants among them is a hard task.

   Understanding language is elusive, for Davidson. In a 1986 paper, he went for a claim that there is no such a thing called language, at least not the shared and structured language that is often theoretically claimed to be. This claim was criticized as demolishing Davidson's own project in language. Some Davidsonians find it as a natural development of his philosophical thought.

   Although some concepts in his philosophy have changed over the years he seems to reconcile with his past position. He also brings together different areas of his philosophical thought especially philosophy of language and philosophy of action. In a 1980 paper, 'A Unified theory of Thought, Meaning and Action' he attempts to provide a theory that could explain both language and action. The present paper explores this unified theory as an attempt to understand Davidson's notion of Language.

Meaning, Belief, and Desire

Davidson's philosophy of language is seen as two different projects, the meaning theory in the style of Tarski's truth theory and Radical Interpretation. Meaning is intertwined with belief. Meaning, for Davidson, is to be understood as interpretation. To understand the meaning of a sentence uttered by a speaker requires two basic conditions.

1. Knowledge of the literal meaning of the sentence in a language.
2. A theory about the belief structure of the speaker while making the utterance.

The first condition can be theoretically captured in the style of Tarski's truth definition. A meaning theory must satisfy the condition in the form of 's means p'. Since the meaning of a sentence is contextual relative to a language, this formal condition can be recursively specified for all the sentences in a language. We could replace the obscure 'means that' with 'true that'.

The formal statement,

(T) s is T iff p,

in which 's' is the structural description of a sentence and 'p' is the sentence. If language exists independently of belief, Convention-T would have been sufficient to understand the meaning of a sentence.

The second condition is expanded in the project of radical interpretation. The principle of charity to capture the second condition.

The duo of belief and desire makes action possible, according to Davidson. The pair of belief and desire or 'pro-attitude' is the cause of an action. For Davidson every action can be explained using a 'primary reason'. Primary reason can be stated in the form of a practical syllogism in which the premises are belief and desire and the conclusion is an action.

Listen to Davidson:

> …we suppose we know what sentences a speaker holds true, and when, and we want to know what he means and believes. Perhaps we could crack the case if we knew enough about his beliefs and intentions, but there is no chance of this without prior access to a theory of interpretation. Given the interpretation we could read off beliefs from the evidential base, but this assumes what we want to know.

To construct a theory of something it is imperative for Davidson to not assume its synonyms as the building blocks of that theory. So co-dependent notions cannot be used to explain each other. A stalemate in understanding meaning is that belief is an integral part of meaning without which an understanding of it is impossible but cannot use belief to construct a theory because they are codependent. The same is the case with desire. These three are co-dependent concepts. This codependency makes it impossible for these concepts to be understood by reducing it to any other. What is needed is a theory with equidistance from these three. Davidson says, " Not only do the various propositional attitudes and their conceptual attendants form the setting in which speech occurs, but there is no chance of arriving at a deep understanding of linguistic facts except as that

understanding is accompanied by an interlocking account of the central cognitive and cognitive attitudes." (Davidson, *Problems of Rationality* 151)

To construct an equi-distant theory language and action needed to be merged. Thus, language use can be seen as a form of activity. Similar to the fact that actions are directed by desire and belief, the selection of holding a sentence true is also directed by these intensional notions. Thus, a language user becomes an agent who chooses one sentence over the other.

Ramsey's Theory

Davidson uses Frank Ramsey's theory of subjective probability to construct his theory of linguistic agency. Ramsey was concerned with how to measure beliefs (Ramsey 156–255). Human beings believe in one thing more than another. The degree of belief may vary according to the object of belief. Is it possible for us to measure these degrees of belief? In order to do that a standard should be made. A full belief could be fixed as 1 and its contradiction as 0. Equal belief in a proposition and its contradiction as ½. Challenge lies in calculating a belief with the degree of belief of ⅔ or ⅓.

Ramsey measures belief on the basis of action. As Ramsey says, "...we act in the way we think most likely to realize the objects of our desires, so that a person's actions are completely determined by his desires and opinions" (Ramsey 173). Consider the case suggested by Ramsey: A traveler reached a crossroad and was wondering which way to proceed. He spotted someone far away from the road. What action the traveler may take? Whether he walks all the way to the person to ask about the way or he takes the risk of randomly choosing one way. If he chose the first option the degree of belief can be represented by

Where, f(d) is the disadvantage of going *d* yards to ask the route. The advantage of arriving at the right destination is *r* and the disadvantage of reaching the wrong one is *w*.

This is basically how Ramsey shows beliefs are measurable. Choosing one over the other is based on two considerations, one is the value of the consequence of action and two is the likelihood of the action chosen. Likelihood is the probability of action leading to a desired result. A rational agent does not choose to lose (no sure-lose contract or no dutch-book). Davidson follows this insight in developing his theory.

A Unified Theory

The ordinal preferences can be observed in the choice of action. Uncertainty lies with grasping the degree of belief and the relative probability of choices. Agents' choice among action weighs the subjective values of actions based on rationality. Based on Ramsey's technique we could measure the degrees of belief by showing the relative values. These degrees of beliefs can be shown as a pattern with which the rational agent chooses an action.

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Davidson retells the theory in the terminology suited to accommodate linguistic elements. The interpreter who is trying to understand the meaning of the utterance of the speaker may conceive the speaker who is a linguistic agent to choose which sentences should be deemed to be true. Davidson says Ramsey's version of Bayesian decision theory can be incorporated as a part of Truth-conditional theory of meaning. Here the interpreter can assume the speaker follows the truth-conditional theory while choosing which sentence to count as true.

On the one side, a truth-conditional theory modeled as Bayesian decision theory. On the other side, the principle of charity that accommodates relative degrees of beliefs. The suggestion is to use the interpreter's own chart of his possible choices of held-true sentences to assume the possible chart of degrees of beliefs. The driving principle here is the logical consistency of the degree of beliefs the agent may possess based on the notion of no sure-lose contract.

Reduction of the basic intensional concepts happens similar to Ramsey's approach. Ramsey takes a basic normative move of choosing as foundational to the desire-belief matrix. Davison takes the basic assent to treat a sentence as true as foundational. Although this is also an intensional notion, this is relatively less harmful than the others.

Synthesizing Davidson's Views on Language

With all its complexities, what Language is can be ontologically tied down to mainly three factors- psychological, social and abstract (Santana 502). This is indeed a plausible strategy to understand Language, but is it enough to provide a theory that coherently incorporates all three aspects? In a slightly different sense an epistemological, logical and metaphysical inquiry of Language could be undertaken or may be a subjective, intersubjective and objective one. A different kind of answer to the question of what Language is saying what kind of a thing a Language is. Is it a medium, a tool, a metaphor, etc.? Not any of these answers seems appealing to Davidson.

It is true that Davidson maintains a semantic externalism. He conceived meaning as a product of intersubjectivity. It is difficult to separate language from its social groundings. Yet, the issue is that he is not making any ontological commitment here. He was clear about this point even in 'Truth and Meaning'. There he says, "...not to assume that parts of sentences have meanings except in the ontologically neutral sense of making a systematic contribution to the meanings of sentences in which they occur." (Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* 22). His reason for this is that conceiving an ontological meaning does not yield any demonstrative use and not the same reason why Quine rejects the ontological status of meaning. Davidson, in this, maintains a naturalism quite distinct from other versions of naturalism. Richard Rorty (126) was right to an extent that Davidson is a 'pragmatic', since the demonstrable use is a condition for him for a theory to be acceptable. However, Davison does not seem to satisfy many other qualities to be a 'pragmatist.'

The trademark of Davidson's naturalism is constructing theories evading ontological commitments. Though ontology is not easy to evade in Philosophy, Davidson tries best to do that. The naturalism of the Davidsonian kind is not radical but mild and accommodating (De Caro 183–202; Myers 47–58). For Davidson, Tarski's truth theoretic model does not presuppose any ontological requirement. So, he maintains a basecamp there for almost all his theories. His theory of Language is also evading ontological commitments in this way.

What we thus have is a Language which is not a separate thing in itself but a part of the social world. Language is an integral part of his theorizing, but not to be treated as an independent entity. Language is possible within the parameters of triangulation.

Conceptual Scheme and Language

It has been discussed here that the thesis of the third dogma of empiricism does not allocate space for any conceptual scheme. The arguments for it are also briefly discussed. The result of the thesis has a definite implication for the nature of language. It has also been discussed the different facets of Davidson's understanding of Language. Language, for needed to be understood as active in the sense that it is tied up to the social. A formal theory of meaning in the style of Tarski's truth theory need not assume an ontology for meaning. Interpretation is possible with a knowledge of this truth theory along with an understanding of the speaker's belief system. However, the actual occurrence of linguistic utterances cannot be captured by any theory; the very possibility of a language can be suspected.

A conceptual scheme is often understood as 'a frame of reference' which can be loosely identified with a set of intertranslatable languages. However, language is where the truth resides. Even if the truth is relative, it is a part of linguistic utterance. The worry is that if there is no language, then truth also goes, which is not acceptable by Davidson.

The real issue in the rejection of scheme-content dualism is not the occasional change in meanings or its sets, but the relation a scheme has with its contents. In the same way we tried to figure out the criterion of being a scheme, we can be concerned about the criterion of languagehood. We need a theory of unnamable. By contrasting with this theory, we will be able to understand the relation between the referential apparatus of language and its referent. The trouble is that theoretically an unnamable referent is not available to us.

When it comes to the sentence-fact relation, Davidson's arguments can be applied directly to languagehood. We have discussed the centrality of the concept of truth in understanding language and how these two depend upon each other. He says, "...what is in view here is not just actually available evidence; it is the totality of possible sensory evidence past, present and future…. The point is that for a theory to fit or face up to the totality of possible sensory evidence is for that theory to be true" (Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* 193). The complete set of sentences provides us with an understanding of truth and precisely because of this reason we cannot find a new theory

of truth outside this realm. A completely different language, then, has a completely different understanding of truth. The rules of that language make it quite different to even understand it.

Davidson was aware of the implications of this in Language. The implication is that neither the schema nor the language distorts reality. This is one of the fundamental theoretical positions of Davidson. He says, "of course, language reflects our native interests and our historically accumulated needs and values, our built in and learned inductive dispositions. But this fact hardly supports the claim that language seriously distorts or shapes our understanding of the world; the influence such as it is, goes the other way."(Davidson, *Truth, Language, and History* 130)

Major change in his metaphysical outlook happened with regard to the relation between schema and Language. While developing his rejection of scheme-content dualism he kept the pair of scheme and experience as different from Language and world. Later he realized that the language can also be a schema. Just like we cannot epistemically differentiate scheme and content, we cannot differentiate between language and world as well.

Language is a natural skill for him and works as a part of us once we acquired it. It is learned and used. For that he says, "before there can be learning there must be unlearned modes of generalization. Before there can be language there must be shared modes of generalization." (Davidson, *Truth, Language, and History* 140) The concerns raised in "A nice derangement of Epitaphs" are mainly with the creative aspect of Language. Other than that Language basically works with a shared set of contents.

Scheme- Language similarity may still pose a threat to the truth-theoretic semantics. These correlations are a not epistemically demarcated. These works for sematic and a model ontology. In that way truth could still be relativized.

Conclusion

The relation between language and reality is such that the world is already a part of language and vice versa. It is practically impossible to tear them apart. The relation between scheme and content is also like this. The truth being a part of language because the world is already in it. Thus, the relative truth does not appear as a problem to the view, but an integral part of it.

Davidson's view that there is no language suggests a rejection of an ontological theorization of language. Language need not be seen as a shareable and structured entity. It must be understood as ontologically neutral. This does not mean that there is no language at all. Language exists as a part of the social and causal structure of the world.

Notes

[i] Davidson argues that the propositional attitudes and language have a two-way

relation. "Beliefs, desires, and intentions are a condition of language, but language is also a condition for them" (Davidson 1984/2001a, p. 280), See '*Belief and the Basis of Meaning*' (Davidson 1974/2001a) for more information.

[ii] "If we cannot find a way to interpret the utterances and other behaviour of a creature as revealing a set of beliefs largely consistent and true by our own standards, we have no reason to count that creature as rational, as having beliefs, or as saying anything" (Davidson 1973/2001a, p. 137) See Davidson's papers '*Thought and Talk*' (1975/2001a, p. 170) and for a detailed description about this see 'Rational Animals' (1982/2001b).

[iii] See "*A Nice Derangement of Epitaphs*" (1986/2005) for his detailed analysis of prior and passing theory and how it leads to the conclusion of a no-language theory.

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