

On Wittgenstein's Conception of Imponderable Reality

Wittgenstein'in Tartıya Vurulamayan Gerçeklik Anlayışı Üzerine

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Abstract: In this study, we try to look at Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy historically rather than the early and late periods in the literature. For this, we focus on the concept of imponderable evidence, which we think captures Wittgenstein's conception of reality. This concept provides the link between Tractarian ideas, which are ponderable, and post-Tractarian ideas, which are imponderable. In his Tractatus, Wittgenstein analysed reality via the distinction between what can be said and what can be shown. In the same work, he concludes the Tractarian project by stating that he has said what can be said, but the real work to be done is what can be shown. Based on Wittgenstein's ideas after the Tractatus, our study focuses on what can be shown, that is, the imponderable. The aim of our study is to show that Wittgenstein's conception of imponderable reality is objective, contrary to the perception in analytic philosophy. The concept of imponderable reality is grounded in the idea of incorporating the subjective nature of meaning into philosophical discourse in an objective manner. To include the subjective nature of meaning in philosophical discourse, Wittgenstein set certain rules and criteria in his post-Tractatus works. Thus, based on these rules and criteria, he proposes a conception of objectivity that is imponderable but self-evident.

Keywords: Wittgenstein, imponderable evidence, reality, meaning, objectivity.



Introduction

The question of how things really are has always been a question that pushes the boundaries of epistemology and opens the door to classical metaphysics. If the appearances of things and their realities are different from each other, the legitimacy of relying on appearances disappears. However, it can be argued that it is also tempting to disregard appearances and rely on a substantial reality that lies behind them. The latter is often interpreted by Logical Atomists in the analytic philosophical tradition as a departure from objectivity. Thus, for an objective encounter with reality, should one choose between appearance and reality, or seek a middle ground? Before we begin, we should note that, in Ludwig Wittgenstein's words, there is a tempting aspect to this question.

Therefore, to avoid this temptation, we turn the above question into a problematic in the context of Wittgenstein's philosophy. This problematic¹, which Wittgenstein confronts, offers an alternative to dealing with reality through dichotomies such as the one above. Wittgenstein's problematic is this: Can the subjective nature of meaning, which the *Tractatus* refrains from discussing, serve an objective understanding of reality?

In this paper, we argue that Wittgenstein tries to incorporate the subjective nature of meaning into reality in an objective way, which is neglected by his Logical Atomist ideas in the *Tractatus*. However, from this statement, it shouldn't be inferred that Wittgenstein advocates a relative epistemology by compromising objectivity. On the contrary, we aim to show that he pursues an epistemology free from the relative and arbitrary. Thus, we have clarified that by objectivity, we mean the opposite of the relative.

We address the subjective nature of meaning through the concepts such as *intangible*, *incomprehensible*, *imponderable*, which Wittgenstein employed in his *Philosophical Investigations* and some other works. This subjective nature of meaning that emerges in the spiritual sphere and consciousness corresponds to the realm of reality that lies beyond the logical atomistic limits of the *Tractatus*. With these concepts, Wittgenstein doesn't refer to a relative, indefinite ground of reality. Rather, he expresses the fact that these concepts, which have an intangible, ethereal character,

¹ From now on, we will refer to this problematic as *P* for short.



correspond to a very clear reality with the concept of imponderable evidence.

Thus, Wittgenstein speaks of a reality that is intractable yet self-evident. This reality, both incomprehensible and intractable yet manifesting itself as self-evident, might seem paradoxical in nature. Yet, for Wittgenstein, this reality, in the context of the *Tractatus*' semantics, remains incomprehensible but can be objectively approached using various verification methods.

In our study, we'll first give a concise overview of the description of reality presented in the *Tractatus*. Subsequently, we will discuss the relation between the boundary of reality in the *Tractatus* and the reality outside this boundary, which is referred to as "middle Wittgenstein". Finally, we aim to discuss the imponderable reality and the objectivity of this reality, which we think clarifies Wittgenstein's position on the problematic.

Tractarian Wall of Meaning

The early period of Wittgenstein's philosophical adventure is generally associated with Logical Positivism, the philosophical thought style of the Vienna Circle. In the period when he was a member of this movement, he argued that language pictures the world and that this picture is realised through direct representation rather than description. He argues that language is the only means of contact with reality and that an objective understanding of this reality can only be realised through the "world".

Logical Positivists put forward a theory that recognises only empirically verifiable sentences as meaningful. Hence, abstract, religious or metaphysical discussions (about what is fundamental) were seen as literally meaningless. Take a sentence like "Daisies grow on the top of Kilimanjaro". You can check whether this is true by looking for a daisy growing on the top of Kilimanjaro. However, it is not possible to check whether a sentence like "God loves us" is true or not. Because according to Logical Positivists, this sentence has no meaning (Sullivan, 2017, p. 26).

Wittgenstein's theory of meaning in the *Tractatus* is restricted to apply in factual discourse. Although the fields of factual, ethical, aesthetic, philosophical and religious discourse are all accepted as parts of reality in the *Tractatus*, only the linguistic meanings of factual propositions are mentioned. Therefore, if the meaning of a proposition is to be mentioned, this



proposition must be about a factual content. For this reason, it is considered that the reality outside of factuality is not meaningful since it is not possible to handle it objectively.

If what we call “reality” is something more than the world and the factual, there is no way to talk about this surplus in an objective way. Therefore, the most virtuous act for a scientific discourse that has reached the limits of reality is to remain silent about what lies beyond the limits. Thus, for Wittgenstein, the objective boundary of reality is drawn to include only the world. This boundary between the factual domain and beyond has led to the formation of a wall within *Tractarian* semantics that prohibits crossing over to the non-meaningful side.

Thus, the criterion of whether a proposition that makes a statement about reality is meaningful or not is determined by this wall of meaning. To say that a proposition that makes a statement about reality has a definite meaning is to separate everything that is necessarily realised when this proposition is true with a definite line. Propositions that fall within the area enclosed by this line are true when they coincide with reality and false when they do not (Pears, 1970, p. 58).

The semantic understanding that determines the meaningfulness of a proposition based on this criterion, coincides with an ontology that attributes existence only to objects in the factual domain of reality. But are there objects not situated in the factual realm of reality? In *Tractarian* ontology, these objects' existence is stated as: "Without a doubt, there is an inexpressible. It shows itself; it is the mystical" (Wittgenstein, 2001, p. 89). Although the existence of the inexpressible is not denied, it is excluded from the *Tractarian* discourse since it cannot be known.

In the *Tractatus*, how a factual proposition obtains its meaning is clarified by referencing the positions of existing objects. The relationship between a word and its corresponding object in the factual domain is likened to the relationship between a proper name and the object bearing that name (Pears, 1970, p. 78). Therefore, such a semantic understanding coincides with an epistemology that makes only objects that have factual existence the subject of knowledge.

Wittgenstein thought that this conception of language he put forward in the *Tractatus* represented the logical structure of reality and ultimately



solved the problems of philosophy. However, realising that this relation between language and reality presents a very limited picture of reality, Wittgenstein largely dismantles the wall of meaning he had constructed. He transitions from the Tractarian wall of meaning, which imposes rigid boundaries on representing reality, to a more adaptive and holistic epistemology. Now, Wittgenstein aims to uncover the structure and limits of language not through an abstract logical theory but via empirical inquiry. Language is a part of human life and should be analysed in this environment with all its complexities of function and form (Pears, 1970, p. 6).

This approach is based on the relationship between the *Tractatus* and the *Philosophical Investigations* as complementing rather than denying each other. The *Tractatus* concerns itself solely with exploring the speakable world. Thus, when the *Tractatus*' preface asserts that nothing exists beyond language's confines, it implies that nothing factual lies beyond the boundaries of factual language (Pears, 1970, p. 98). Therefore, the main purpose of the *Tractatus* is to delimit the world as a field of factual things.

Mid-term and Beyond the Wall of Meaning

Let's consider David Pears' insight regarding the fundamental transformation Wittgenstein underwent after the *Tractatus*. According to Pears, Wittgenstein reversed this relationship by abandoning the idea that the structure of reality determines the structure of language. That is, since we see objects through language, language determines our view of reality. Therefore, he thinks that all languages no longer have a certain common structure and that reality cannot be deduced from this pre-existing common structure. A linguistic application, such as a logical deduction, is no longer based on an independent foundation. If a foundation is still needed, it is the human being himself (Pears, 1970, pp. 3, 4).

With this transformation, Wittgenstein seeks a new objectivity that does not exclude the subjective nature of meaning. Alice Cray asserts that the notion of objectivity in the history of analytic philosophy solely acknowledges aspects of the world present there without contemplating its cultural and historical context. Contrary to this understanding of objectivity, Cray posits that Wittgenstein's later views significantly shifted the meaning of the term (Cray, 2019, p. 47).



In the preface to the *Tractatus*, it is stated that the purpose of the book is to draw the limits of language, but what Wittgenstein means is the limits of the factual language. If the boundaries of factual language also represent the limits of meaning, then any statement not rooted in fact is bound to be meaningless. However, in the *Tractatus*, areas of discourse like religion and morality, which fall outside the realm of factual language, are noted to be not meaningless. These religious and moral domains are neither meaningful nor senseless. This perspective led Wittgenstein to introduce a third category: nonsense.

Beyond the limits of language, there are 'nonsense' propositions that cannot picture anything, and Wittgenstein confines traditional metaphysics to this domain. Since Wittgenstein suggests there's something to be shown (rather than said) and even labels it as 'mystical', a dilemma emerges concerning what resides within this realm of nonsense. Traditional readings of the *Tractatus* have recognised the existence of the unsayable, the inexpressible and the non-sense (Biletzki & Matar, 2023).

Thus, when Wittgenstein outlines the confines of factual language, he asserts that realms like religion and morality, which are outside these confines, don't convey factual meaning. Claiming these realms are not meaningful doesn't imply they are incomprehensible, but it is the first step towards understanding them (Pears, 1970, p. 54). We think that this point should be taken into consideration to determine Wittgenstein's world of meaning correctly.

In the preface of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein asserts his confidence in the validity of its ideas and believes he has definitively resolved the issues at their core. However, he pointed out how little had been achieved by the writing of the *Tractatus* and pointed to the main project in his mind (Wittgenstein, 2001, p. 4). This project undoubtedly concerns the unspeakable, to which he advises silence in fragments 6 and 7 of the *Tractatus*.

Recall Wittgenstein's declaration: "whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent" (Wittgenstein, 2001, § 7). The *Tractatus* is a work in which the things that can be said are said and the things that cannot be said must be shown. Wittgenstein points out the inadequacy of the picture theory in the *Tractatus* when he states that he says what can be said, but the real work is what can be shown.



The *Tractatus* is seen by Wittgenstein as a perfect model that explains the conditions of both meaning and truth. Picture theory, as applied to the simplest, atomic propositions, seemed eminently plausible. Wittgenstein then began to consider how such an ideal language could be extended to all compound propositions. Eventually he realised that it was impossible to directly deduce the logic of spoken language, which is part of the human organism and is at least as complex (J. Hintikka, 2000, p. 37).

The inadequacy of the *Tractarian* way of thinking is so serious that it manifests itself even when addressing the factual realm. This is crucial for understanding Wittgenstein's intricate relationship between the factual and the non-factual. While Wittgenstein was examining natural phenomena in the factual realm, he recognised non-factual laws of nature. In that case, how can knowledge of nature be obtained without referring to the laws of nature? In fragment 6.36 of the *Tractatus*, this situation is expressed as follows: "if there were a law of causality, it could be expressed as 'There are laws of nature'. But of course, this cannot be said: it shows itself" (Wittgenstein, 2001, p. 83).

Thus, Wittgenstein realised that when the unsayable is bracketed, the sayable is also incomplete. In other words, what can be said and what cannot be said are intertwined like a mesh. To provide an objective representation of reality, one must see the connections within this mesh's nodes. When we look at Fragments 6 and 7 of the *Tractatus*, we can see many statements about the meaning of the world being outside the world (Wittgenstein, 2001, § 6.41), the inadequacy of science and mystery. Wittgenstein, asserting that these unspeakable and mysterious spheres of existence also exist, doesn't discuss how these realms manifest themselves in the *Tractatus*. When he moves on to the work of *Philosophical Investigations*, he sets out to do this work, which he points out in the *Tractatus*.

The Encounter with the Imponderable Reality

Wittgenstein's views in his mid-term period give some clues about the problematic of *P*. Although *P* appears to have evolved, its core remains unchanged. While Wittgenstein states that meaning does not have a reality independent of use, he also argues that use is not arbitrary. He emphasizes that the relation between meaning and use isn't arbitrarily



established, and that use depends on a certain rule. Based on this rule, some uses remain in force, while others are not in force.

In this normative relationship between meaning and use, what determines an expression's meaning is not how we tend to use it, but how we should use it (Glüer et al., 2023). Wittgenstein also allows the rule that provides this normative relation to become obsolete over time and be replaced by another rule. By emphasizing this, he strives to cultivate a dynamic concept of language, shifting away from a language model with static meanings. In doing so, he draws attention to the fact that being in force is realised on an objective ground by stating that usage is subject to certain rules.

Wittgenstein moves from this linguistic level between meaning and use to the ontological level between object and experience. Here, the final form of the problematic *P* is discussed in terms of the measurable and non-measurable aspects of reality. While discussing the measurable aspects of reality, Wittgenstein encountered the immeasurable, mysterious structure of the laws of nature, as we mentioned above. This encounter has shown that to make a complete description of reality, dimensions that cannot be measured must also be considered.

Pierre Hadot relates fragment 6.52 of the *Tractatus* to Wittgenstein's note of 25 May 1915: "the turn towards the mystical arises from the fact that our desires cannot be satisfied by science" (Hadot, 2009, p. 18). Wittgenstein thus finds himself in the realm of mystery, which he forbids to speak about. In fragment 6.52 of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein states that the problems of life cannot be answered by science and points to the search for a reality where the question of "the meaning of the world" can be answered.

What could Wittgenstein have meant by expressing this reality as an imponderable reality? Does he mean that the grasp of reality cannot be grasped in a rational manner?

Wittgenstein's conception of imponderable reality after the *Tractatus* has been interpreted by some philosophers as a departure from objectivity. Russell regarded the *Philosophical Investigations* as an ordinary and worthless work with no connection to reality. He stated that from 1914 onwards he did not understand why the English Philosophical World found in its pages an important wisdom. Furthermore, Russell states that the



earlier Wittgenstein had a real philosophical genius, whereas the later Wittgenstein constructed a doctrine that rendered philosophy useless (Russell, 2022, p. 193).

Contrary to Russell's statements, our study argues that imponderable reality has a rational basis in terms of Wittgenstein's entire philosophy. However, we also think that Wittgenstein's conception of imponderable reality offers a new definition of objectivity, as Crary puts it.² In other words, the fact that Wittgenstein's conception of imponderable reality has an immeasurable character doesn't mean that it is fictional.

Wittgenstein, who likes to use seemingly contradictory expressions, invites us to the realm of reality that he tries to deal with through the expression "imponderable evidence". Well, is there not a contradiction in what is imponderable on the one hand and self-evident on the other? If it is self-evident, shouldn't it come to the ponderable, be analysed and examined under the lens?

Engaging with such apparently contradictory terms to discuss reality, Wittgenstein presents the problematic *P* as a paradox this time. The paradox he expresses in the *Philosophical Investigations* is as follows: "There cannot be a form of action determined by the rule, because every form of action can be made to conform to the rule. If every form of action can be made to conform to the rule, it can also be made to contradict the rule. Thus, there remains neither correspondence nor contradiction" (Wittgenstein, 2009, § 201).

In *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language* (Kripke, 1982), Kripke, who focuses on Wittgenstein's conception of rules, develops a solution to this paradox from his own point of view.³ However, our study will address the paradox within the context of the problematic *P* rather than

² Although we agree with Crary on this point, how Wittgenstein transformed the understanding of objectivity in philosophical thought is beyond the scope of this study.

³ Saul Kripke offers a new reading of Wittgenstein's views after the *Tractatus*. Kripke presents Wittgenstein as offering a septic argument against a certain conception of meaning and language, and a septic solution to such a problem. Many philosophers have called this interpretation of Wittgenstein Kripke's Wittgenstein or "Kripkenstein". Kripke stated that this interpretation influenced him. However, Kripke thinks that this way of recasting Wittgenstein's argument is done in a way that Wittgenstein would not have approved of (Kripke, 1982, p. 5).



Kripke's proposed solution. As such, we think that Wittgenstein develops his conception of imponderable evidence as a solution to this paradox.

Wittgenstein posits that our grasp and perception of other people's feelings, emotions and thoughts are based on a peculiar kind of evidence that is "imponderable" (Wittgenstein, 2009, § 358). According to Boncompagni, this evidence is imponderable and immeasurable because it is qualitative rather than quantitative. By observing facial expressions and bodily movements, we can know with almost certainty that a friend of ours is sad, angry or disappointed, but we cannot fully explain in words what we are so sure of. This knowledge, the knowledge of human nature (*Menschenkenntnis*), although fallible, is an important feature of our life with others (Boncompagni, 2022, p. 30).

Inferring from Boncompagni's statement, the reason why imponderable evidence cannot be measured is that it has a qualitative character. Another scholar that draws attention to this qualitative character is Gier. He argues that Wittgenstein's idea of human life cannot be reduced to the biological level and opposes organic explanation and prefers a sociocultural reading. Because human life is qualitatively different from animal life and such a qualitative difference cannot be reduced to an empirical difference. Gier elaborates that the organic and cultural explanation need not be in contradiction, but the former fails to capture "the entirety of a conversation". Hence, biology is a necessary but not sufficient condition for life forms (Gier, 1980, p. 255).

Highlighting the same point, Baker and Hacker argue that reading Wittgenstein's words out of their original context is a misstep. For some aspects of life forms are "biologically natural", but others are "culturally natural" or "natural to us" after a certain training. Thus, the idea that certain conceptual structures are necessary for us by nature is false (Baker & Hacker, 2009, p. 220).

In passage 25 of the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein gives some examples of human natural history. According to him, things like giving orders, asking questions, telling stories and having conversations are as much a part of our natural history as walking, eating, drinking and playing games (Wittgenstein, 2009, § 25). Therefore, it is necessary to include the social and cultural dimensions of human life, which the biological



narrative leaves incomplete, in the natural history of human beings. This area, which biology's empirical examination of human life often neglects, is the imponderable area of reality.

As can be seen, Wittgenstein doesn't limit the study of human life to biology, which reduces it to empirical data. Because when one goes beyond empirical data and the factual domain, one encounters the intangible aspects of reality. Thus, it's crucial to recognize both the measurable and immeasurable aspects of reality to represent it authentically.

With these thoughts on the natural history of human life, Wittgenstein tried to look at reality via the lens of cultural anthropology. Thanks to this point of view, he inspired many studies and in some of these studies, he was seen as a "philosopher of culture" (Cavell, 2013, Chapter I). Sufficing with this information about Wittgenstein's anthropological nuances, let's move on to the different examples he gave about imponderable reality.

Let's attempt to re-enter the imponderable grey area of reality using the "shadow" metaphor Wittgenstein employs in the *Notebooks*. According to this metaphor, a painting casts its own shadow on the world it paints (Wittgenstein, 1984b, p. 27). Knowing the shadow that the painting casts on the world is the subject of a deep mystery, and according to Wittgenstein, this mystery is the mystery of negation. It shows how things are not rather than how they are (1984b, p. 30).

This mysterious situation, expressed through the metaphor of the shadow, refers to the fact that when we focus on a certain point of reality, other points naturally escape our attention. Hence, when thought makes any point of reality its subject, it casts a shadow on that point. In another part of the *Notebooks*, Wittgenstein explains this mysterious situation with the example of a stove.

"When I contemplate a stove, I analyse it as a single thing among many things in the world. When I contemplate the stove, it is my world, and everything else, unlike it, is colourless" (1984b, p. 83). Through the shadow metaphor, the relationship between representation and the represented, and between thought and reality, is highlighted. When a painting functions as a representation of reality, it sheds light on a particular segment while leaving the rest in the dark. In this respect, the representing picture fulfils the function of a shadow in the world it represents.



As can be seen, there are two different uses of the word shadow here. Firstly, just as a painting emphasises the similarity between what it represents, shadow refers to the resemblance of an expression to reality. The second one, on the other hand, refers to an ambiguity and mystery since similarity is not reality itself. Because the shadow of something vaguely represents that thing. Thus, Wittgenstein explains this gap or grey area between thought and reality by the fact that reality has an imponderable character.

As previously stated, in the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein defined the boundaries of language by the confines of the world; however, in his subsequent work, he expanded these boundaries to encompass all of reality. With this expansion, thoughts articulated through language mirror the entirety of reality. Wittgenstein emphasises that if we want a picture of reality, the sentence itself is such a picture (Wittgenstein, 2007, p. 41). Yet, he shifted from grounding reality in an essentialist view of language to basing it on its everyday use and lived experience.

So, how is the ordinary language that mediates the realisation of reality grounded? One of the most fundamental things Wittgenstein tries to understand in all his works is what corresponds to a name. The correspondence meant here is a correspondence that doesn't require represented by another image. *The Blue and Brown Books* explains how the command "Fetch me a red flower from that meadow" should be understood.

Wittgenstein has an objection if the person who wants to fulfil this command says that he carries an image of red in his mind and goes looking for a red flower and compares it with flowers to see which one has the same colour as the image. Although an explanation of how the mind works is possible, it is not Wittgenstein's explanation.

Wittgenstein explains the above linguistic command by describing immediate experience as it is. Thus, we go to the meadow to pluck a red flower and look around us. We walk towards a flower and pluck it without comparing it with anything. To see that this is the process of fulfilling the above command, let us imagine that we are imagining a red stain. In this case, we do not be tempted to imagine a red patch that will serve us as a pattern for the red patch we're trying to imagine (Wittgenstein, 2007, p. 3).



What Wittgenstein calls a temptation is the way of thinking that everything is represented by an image, as in the word red. In this case, since there is no end to the question of which image represents the representing image, such an explanation loses its meaning.

If we continue to contemplate the term “red”, Wittgenstein questions whether the word red corresponds to a material thing manifested as redness in the visual field or to an immaterial state of cognition in the mind. This enquiry is closely related to the question of whether reality exists in the phenomenal domain outside our mind or in the conceptual domain inside our mind. This inner-outer dilemma, also known as the mind-body problem, corresponds to the age-old philosophical debate between rationalism and empiricism.

Wittgenstein, not in favor of addressing reality through such categorical constructs, emphasizes experiencing reality as it genuinely is. Thus, when dealing with the use of ordinary language, he describes the above action of "plucking a red flower" instead of giving the rules of language use. Because he argues that we cannot give the rules for using a language and cannot put concepts within clear boundaries. He likens the misconception that language has strict rules to the misconception that children follow strict rules when they play with a ball. It may be true for the sciences and mathematics to speak of language as a system of symbols with strict rules. In our ordinary use of language, however, this standard of precision is realised only in rare cases (2007, p. 25).

Wittgenstein's statement that mathematics and science can have strict rules is important. Because he has no objection to the scientific method dealing with the ponderable, measurable aspects of reality. His objection is that this method is misused to include the imponderable reality. He thinks that the most fundamental error of the scientific method, which deals with epistemological problems such as the conformity of propositions to reality and truth-falsehood, is the craving for generality (2007, p. 17).

What Wittgenstein means by the craving for generality is that the scientific method tries to make sense of the elements of reality by seeing them similar in certain respects (2007 Ibid). This method tries to categorise the elements of reality through extensional relations and tries to think them under common concepts. Thus, the ambition to make every part



belong to a whole lead to the mistake of seeing the more particular as incomplete and the more general as complete.

Wittgenstein states that, just as mathematics tries to reduce all theorems to a small number of axioms, natural phenomena are tried to be reduced to a small number of laws of nature (2007, p. 18). The scientific method passes reality through the filter of measurability and pursues a strict policy of indifference towards particular cases that don't pass through this filter. Wittgenstein highlights the drawback of using this method as the only and indispensable method for understanding reality. Because, specific cases that don't fit the filter of generality should also be included in the realm of reality (2007, pp. 19, 20).

Therefore, instead of defending a relativistic perspective of reality that is far from "objectivity", Wittgenstein criticises the adherence only to the criterion of objectivity of the scientific method. Since the scientific method tries to analyse experience by breaking it down into its parts, it considers that the imponderable, the unanalysable, can't be dealt with objectively. Thus, it tries to deal with the imponderable field of reality, which the scientific method cannot handle, through the description of experience.

When addressing experience, Wittgenstein uses the word grammar to correspond to the use of a word in everyday language (2007, p. 23). The fact that the imponderable evidence Wittgenstein speaks of emerges within a certain grammar shows that meaning always co-exists with experience. Attempting to comprehend the experience by analysing and decomposing it makes it no longer a certain experience. Wittgenstein likened grasping a sentence to grasping a musical theme (Wittgenstein, 2009, § 527). Just as music can only be understood by listening to it, a sentence finds its meaning in use. Since linguistic descriptions of the musical theme being listened to will always be incomplete, they don't reflect the specificity of the experience of listening. Hence, understanding a sentence is hidden in the use of that sentence that accompanies the experience.

For this reason, passage 43 of the *Philosophical Investigations* states that the meaning of a word is its use in language (Wittgenstein, 2009, § 43). At the end of the same work, Wittgenstein notes that it is wrong to explain concepts based on natural phenomena instead of usage. Since



concept formation isn't a task to be achieved through experimental endeavour by going to empirical experience, it isn't the subject of the natural sciences. For this reason, instead of going into the possible reasons for concept formation, Wittgenstein invokes the aphorism: let their usage teach the meaning of words! (Wittgenstein, 2009, p. 223e).

Wittgenstein addresses the justification of the above motto in his work *Culture and Value*. If the meaning of a word is explained by another word, there is no end to this, as it would be necessary to explain this word by another word. Hence, since the meaning of words cannot be expressed by other words, it is practice that gives words their meaning (Wittgenstein, 1984a, p. 85e). Moreover, if we examine how words such as thinking, intending, desiring are used, we will be saved from the temptation to look for an act of thinking that is independent of the act of expressing our thought, that is hidden in a unique realm (Wittgenstein, 2007, p. 43). Therefore, there is no point in looking for thinking in a pre-linguistic domain independent of the words that express thinking and the phenomena that accompany these words. Wittgenstein likens thinking to Schlemihl's shadow⁴ when he states that there is an inseparable unity between thinking and speech, which is an expression of thinking (Wittgenstein, 2009, § 339).

Thus, reality, which is accessed through ordinary language, becomes more apparent through use or experience. But are there rules or conditions of verification that the experience that mediates the emergence of reality follows? Wittgenstein has already stated that the language that enables access to reality doesn't have strict rules. Perhaps this is why, when describing the characteristics of a rule-governed language, he compared it to a language game.

Hintikka mentions the distinction between primary and secondary language game, which Wittgenstein doesn't use much but which he thinks has a very important place in his philosophy. In the primary language game,

⁴ Peter Schlemihl is a character in *The Remarkable Story of Peter Schlemihl*, written by German author Adelbert von Chamisso in 1814. Schlemihl encounters the Devil while looking for work, and the Devil offers to buy his shadow in exchange for a never-ending bag of money. Schlemihl accepts the deal but soon realises that his newfound wealth does not compensate for the loss of his shadow. The rest of the story largely consists of Schlemihl's efforts to get his shadow back without getting into even more trouble. For an illustration of Schlemihl selling his shadow, see: <https://www.oldbookillustrations.com/illustrations/schlemihl-shadow/>.



there is no place for epistemological concepts such as doubt, certainty, justification, knowledge, belief. All primary language games, like our statements about pain, function through immediate responses that are processed in the mind. In the secondary language game, on the other hand, there are uses such as "I know my own name" or "I know that that is a tree" which correspond to the meanings of epistemological concepts (M. B. Hintikka, 1986, pp. 287, 288).

While Wittgenstein didn't employ these specific terms in *Philosophical Investigations*, he often pointed to this distinction. If someone says, "I don't know whether I have pain or something else now", he doesn't know what the word pain corresponds to (Wittgenstein, 2009, § 288). Wittgenstein argues that doubting one's pain does not belong to any language game. Since one cannot doubt the immediate awareness of the experience of pain, this use of pain corresponds to the primary language game. However, the expression of pain's experience, is now subject to doubt, and this is where the epistemological dimension of Wittgenstein's view of the language game lies.

"if I assume the abrogation of the normal language-game with the expression of a sensation, I need a criterion of identity for the sensation; and then the possibility of error also exists." (2009, § 288). What is referred to here as normal language game corresponds to what Hintikka calls primary language game. The use of language, which Wittgenstein refers to as general language, requires certain truth criteria since it is a use in which epistemic concepts take place and in which fallacy is possible. Thus, truth is obtained through the identity established between the experience of pain and the expression or description of this experience.

As Hintikka states, Wittgenstein's likening of language to a game doesn't mean that he is talking about an arbitrary activity. Instead, what is meant is a language that operates according to a certain rule and has certain criteria of truth. In his *Philosophical Grammar* (Wittgenstein, 1974), concerning logic and mathematics between 1931 and 1934, a logical language is meant. When we learn such a language, we imagine it as a game with fixed rules. We compare it with this kind of game and adjust it according to this game (1974, p. 77). Therefore, a concept of language corresponds to a rule enabling a particular game's play.



Although a language operated with concepts resembles a game played with rules, it is impossible to know the grounds of the rules. Hence, Wittgenstein adopts a dogmatic position on the grounds of rules by saying "You cannot get behind the rules, because there isn't any behind" (1974, p. 244). However, although he doesn't give information about how the concept of rule is formed, he doesn't refrain from stating that the rule operates according to certain criteria. He likens this situation to the fact that chess rules cannot be changed arbitrarily even if it isn't known how they came into being. The game of chess comes into existence through the correct application of chess rules.

Wittgenstein questions the limits of rule and criterion by discussing whether a chess game can still be called chess when certain rules are changed. In *Philosophical Investigations*, instead of focusing how the rule emerges, he is interested in how we are guided by the rule. In this way, he articulates that rules guide our rule-following activity (Wittgenstein, 2009, § 198). Wittgenstein uses the expression "What forces itself on one is a concept" (Wittgenstein, 2009, p. 215e) to emphasise the commanding role of rules.

So far, Wittgenstein has not mentioned much about the truth criteria of the rules that make the relationship between language games and reality possible. So, how can one tell whether a rule is true or not? Wittgenstein posits that it isn't possible to give a general explanation of how the rule governs our actions. Even more radically, he argued that we follow rules blindly (2009, § 219).

When Wittgenstein states that we follow rules blindly, he implies that there must be a basic form of rule following that isn't subject to any internal or intentional conditions (Glüer et al., 2023, sec. 2.2.3). The idea of blind rule-following, which doesn't depend on internal conditions, puts us in contact with the objective dimension of reality. But does this not negate the subjective nature of the meaning corresponding to the intentional state?

Miller argues that blind rule-following doesn't mean giving up the orientational dimension, but rather the refusal to apply a general rule to an intentional state involving inference. Blind rule-following should be interpreted in terms of the causal connection between the acceptance and



application of the rule, where the former causes the latter "in the right kind of way" (Miller, 2015, p. 411).

According to Miller, Wittgenstein stated that there is a blind rule-following to reject the unilateral and determining effect of the rule on the intentional dimension. In other words, the direction of the causal relation between the rule and its application gives function to the intentional dimension by ensuring that the rule is applied after its acceptance.

In *PI* § 219, Wittgenstein notes: "When I follow a rule, I make no choice. I follow the rule blindly". Miller explains this by referencing Wittgenstein's words in *PI* § 201: "There is a way of grasping a rule which isn't an interpretation, but which is exhibited in what is called 'following the rule' and 'going against it'" (Wittgenstein, 2009, § 201).

Departing from Wittgenstein's statement, Miller argues that there is no opposition between "blind" and "intentional". Rather, the real contrast lies between "blind" and "interpretation". Thus, to say that following a rule is ultimately blind is to say that following a rule doesn't rely on interpretation (Miller, 2015, p. 411). Therefore, an intentional dimension is needed to grasp the rule, and this dimension requires the subjective nature of meaning. Yet, the objectivity principle is preserved by the fact that this comprehension is not a subjective interpretation. Thus, Wittgenstein defended an objective epistemology that also preserves subjectivity through the view of blind rule-following.

Conclusion

Wittgenstein's conception of imponderable reality is anchored in three distinct rationales. Firstly, it concerns the inadequacy of merely empirically-based biological explanations of reality. Wittgenstein thought that this deficiency could be overcome by including human life forms into the realm of reality. By stating that human life forms are self-evident as well as imponderable, he illustrated his pursuit of an objective conception of reality.

The second is related to the criticism of the essentialist view of language that violates the subjective nature of meaning, which he put forward in the *Tractatus*. Since the semantic theory Wittgenstein formulated in the *Tractatus* was valid only in factual discourse, he wanted to develop an account of language that could be applied beyond factuality. He developed



this new conception of language through everyday language, which also reflects the imponderable dimensions of language.

The third justification is based on the criticism of the objectivity criteria of the scientific method employed by positive science. When the scientific method tries to analyse experience by breaking it down into its component parts, it excludes the imponderable from the sphere of objective scrutiny. Yet, Wittgenstein states that the laws of nature that make it possible to examine natural phenomena do not have factual content. This situation has shown that even natural science has imponderable, not measurable dimensions.

In this study, it is argued that Wittgenstein's conception of imponderable reality, which he developed based on these reasons, is objective. This objectivity is tried to be justified through the philosopher's search for rules and criteria in his works after *Tractatus*. Thus, Wittgenstein's discussion on rules and criteria ensures that imponderable reality is self-evident, non-relativistic and objective.

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Öz: Bu çalışmada Ludwig Wittgenstein'in felsefesine literatürdeki erken dönem-geç dönem ayrımı yerine, bir bütün olarak bakmayı deniyoruz. Bunun için, Wittgenstein'in gerçeklik anlayışını yakaladığını düşündüğümüz tartışma vurulamaz apaçıklık kavramına odaklandık. Bu kavram tartışma vurulabilir olan Tractatusçu fikirlerle tartışma vurulamaz olan Tractatus sonrası fikirler arasındaki bağıntıyı sağlamaktadır. Wittgenstein, Tractatus eserinde söylenebilir ve söylenemez (gösterilebilir) ayrımı üzerinden gerçekliği ele almıştır. Aynı eserde, söylenebilir olan şeyleri söylediğini ama esas yapılması gereken işin gösterilebilir olan olduğunu ifade ederek Tractatusçu projeyi sonlandırır. Çalışmamız, Wittgenstein'in Tractatus sonrasındaki fikirlerine dayanarak gösterilebilir olanı, yani tartışma vurulamaz olanı konu edinmektedir. Çalışmamızın amacı, Wittgenstein'in analitik felsefedeki algılanışının aksine, tartışma vurulamayan gerçeklik anlayışının nesnel olduğunu göstermektir. Tartışma vurulamayan gerçeklik, anlamın öznel doğasının nesnel bir biçimde felsefi söyleme dahil edilmesi fikrine dayanır. Wittgenstein anlamın öznel doğasını felsefi söyleme dahil etmek için Tractatus sonrası eserlerinde belli kural ve kriterler belirlemiştir. Dolayısıyla bu kural ve kriterlere bağlı olarak ele aldığı anlamın öznel doğası, tartışma vurulamayan ama apaçık olan bir nesnellik anlayışını teklif etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Wittgenstein, tartışma vurulamaz apaçıklık, gerçeklik, anlam, nesnellik.



